THE HISTORY OF ROCK

1971

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF NME & MELODY MAKER

A MONTHLY TRIP THROUGH MUSIC'S GOLDEN YEARS

THIS ISSUE: 1971

STARRING...

JOHN LENNON

"This'll show 'em"

THE FACES

THE BAND

DAVID BOWIE

ELTON JOHN

ISAAC HAYES

CURTIS MAYFIELD

THE ROLLING STONES

T. REX

PLUS! SLADE | McCARTNEY | SYD BARRETT | WHO | MILES DAVIS | JOHN PEEL

WorldMags.net

1971

MONTH BY MONTH



Welcome to 1971

THE BIGGEST STARS of the previous decade are locked in verbal conflict. On his new album, our cover star John Lennon presents a song called "How Do You Sleep?", apparently addressed to Paul McCartney ("or maybe it's about some old chick…"). Meanwhile, McCartney can't stop himself unpicking The Beatles' disputes – even when he's meant to be promoting his new band.

"Please get him talking about Wings," pleads a weary advisor. "That's what we're here for, after all…"

Elsewhere, though, the heaviness of the previous year has been tempered with a new sense of fun. Proud "yobbos" Slade deliver their first hit singles, and a rowdy live show. Elton John is doing handstands on his piano keyboard, while Marc Bolan's T. Rex are creating the kind of fan pandemonium unseen since The Beatles. Band of the year is the Faces, whose singer Rod Stewart presents an exciting proposition: composer, performer, lad-about-town. *Melody Maker*'s Richard Williams puts it nicely after observing Rod in the studio: "What a great man."

As the maturing, increasingly history-conscious music press is well placed to point out, Elton, Rod, even Marc, didn't come from nowhere – but were dues-paid musicians with a rich and occasionally chequered history in the business. Longer interviews probe deeper into the roots of their present art.

This is the world of *The History Of Rock*, a monthly magazine which reaps the benefits of their understanding for the reader decades later, one year at a time. In the pages of this seventh issue, dedicated to 1971, 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. In Cannes with the Stones. In John Lennon's kitchen. At the BBC with John Peel, discussing sex at *Top Of The Pops*.

Join them there. And get it on.

WorldMags.net

1971 MONTH BY MONTH

Contents

6 News
Laura Nyro plays in London. Introducing Genesis and The Carpenters. Farewell, Fotheringay and a chat with *Monty Python*'s scourge of deceased parrots, John Cleese.

14 T. Rex
Marc Bolan explains the changing face of his band, seemingly now destined for very big things.

20 Elton John
A three-part interview with the year's first superstar. From his days playing pubs, to his major breakthrough – the former Reg Dwight tells all.

26 Isaac Hayes
The jobbing songwriter turned artist presents material for a sophisticated, aspirational black America.

32 Ivor Cutler
A meeting with the eccentric poet, educator and – incidentally – friend of The Beatles.

36 David Bowie
At home with the artist in Kent, where he explains – among other things – how a Texan with a gun permit will respond to an effete Englishman in a flowing dress.

42 Syd Barrett/Pink Floyd
The Madcap drops in for a rather vaporous chat about his future plans, as well as his history with the Pink Floyd. Later, Roger Waters posits a new direction.

47 Letters
What price George Harrison? Adieu, Fotheringay, Marc Bolan's lyrical gibberish and other correspondence.

48 News
Mick Jagger weds. Introducing Funkadelic. Plans for Rolling Stones Records. And life after the Stones for Andrew Loog Oldham.

54 The Faces
A crack at America with Rod and company, still up-and-comers at home. "We have gone on sober…" admits Ian McLagan.

58 Fleetwood Mac
The terrifying tale of Jeremy Spencer, once a characterful performer, now a "vegetable" member of the Children Of God cult.

62 Singles/albums
Two giants of contemporary keyboards – Elton John and Leon Russell – review the singles. Nick Drake's second album reviewed.

64 John Peel
The only disc jockey worth listening to presents his views on "progressive" music, pop, and his own record label, Dandelion.

68 Rolling Stones
The band embark on their tax exile in France with a low-key press reception. Nonetheless, there is an opportunity to reminisce with Keith and to talk *Sticky Fingers* before the party breaks up.

74 The Byrds
Roger McGuinn and Clarence White debate the West Coast outfit's evolution from space-rock band to good ol' country boys. "I was waiting for UFOs…" McGuinn confides.

78 The Band
Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko explain the origins of their art and talk Sammy Davis Jr, Bob Dylan and the true nature of "Canadian music".

84 News
Bloodshed at the Weeley festival in Essex. RIP, Jim Morrison. Introducing ELO. A report from George Harrison's Concert For Bangladesh.

90 Slade
The former skinheads and self-confessd "Black Country yobbos" present their ribald rock to a delighted young crowd. "We want the audience to be our mates…" they explain.

94 The Who
Big houses. *Who's Next* explained. The state of rock. "I'm 26," says Pete Townshend. "I've seen and done it all."

100 Curtis Mayfield
A live performance in the UK allows a meeting with a revolutionary talent as he promotes a live album and a sophisticated, political new recording, *Roots*.





EYEVINE

WorldMags.net



Rod Stewart and the Faces – pages 54 and 116





106 Singles
Emerson, Lake & Palmer air their views on some recent releases. "It's just some chick singer…" moans Greg Lake.

108 John Lennon
Films. Books. Art. All this and some remarks on Paul McCartney, to boot.

116 Rod Stewart
"What a great man…" In the studio and in deep conversation with the Faces frontman. "I'll never forgive Long John Baldry…"

122 News
Miles Davis phones to complain. A chat with Van Dyke Parks and Acid Queen Bette Midler. Introducing also former milkman Benny Hill.

128 Paul McCartney
The former Beatle is meant to be talking Wings, but instead talks litigation, money and grievances against John.

132 T. Rex
On tour with the year's pop phenomenon. "The revolution has come," says Marc Bolan. "It is here."

138 Albums
John Bonham returns from Japan to give the lowdown on Led Zeppelin and their new, untitled fourth album. "To me the cover says, I'd prefer to live in an old house than a new one," the drummer confides.

140 The Kinks
The rejuvenation and critical rehabilitation of Ray Davies continues with a new album called *Muswell Hillbillies*, about "the petty things", Davies explains. "Like paying the electricity bill…"

145 Letters
John Lennon takes issue with Paul McCartney as their public war of words about the legal affairs of Apple continues, toxically.

CHRIS WALTER

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 1971 is *Cowboy Movie by David Crosby* **DEPUTY EDITOR** John Robinson *Skunk (Sonicly Speaking) by MC5* **ART EDITOR** Lora Findlay *In The Land Of Grey And Pink by Caravan* **PRODUCTION EDITOR** Mike Johnson *Back Street Luv by Curved Air* **ART DIRECTOR** Marc Jones *Ernie (The Fastest Milkman In The West) by Benny Hill* **DESIGNER** Carol Briggs *Bryter Layter by Nick Drake* **PICTURE EDITOR** Kimberly Kriete *When I Paint My Masterpiece by The Band*
COVER PHOTO Syndication International **THANKS TO** Helen Spivak **MARKETING** Charlotte Treadaway
SUBSCRIPTIONS Sonja Zeven **PUBLISHING DIRECTOR** Ed Beale **COVERS PRINTED BY** Polestar Wheatons
TEXT PRINTED BY Polestar Chantry | **WWW.UNCUT.CO.UK**

Time Inc.

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

WorldMags.net

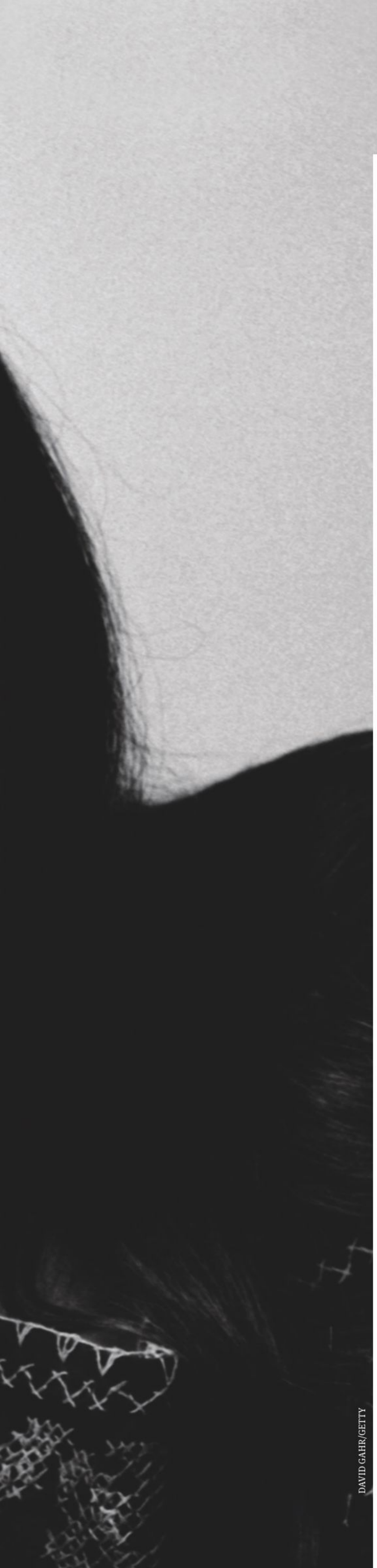


1971

JANUARY – MARCH

T. REX, ELTON JOHN, ISAAC HAYES, DAVID BOWIE AND MORE

WorldMags.net



DAVID GAHR/GETTY

"As if possessed by benign spirits": Laura Nyro at home in New York City, April 1971

Superbly theatrical

MM FEBRUARY 13 Laura Nyro and Jackson Browne wow London's Royal Festival Hall.

WHEN AN AUDIENCE can greet Laura Nyro the way they did at the Royal Festival Hall, London on Saturday night, then I've got to admit it's getting better, it's getting better all the time. To me, she symbolises the breadth of pop music – the way it can embrace such widely disparate performers. Nyro is at one end of the spectrum, and she has it all sewn up.

There can be no question that the concert was a personal triumph for her. True, the audience was on her side from the start, and would probably have applauded had she just sat there mumbling and never sang or played a note. But a large part of her achievement was the conquering of her extreme pre-concert nervousness, which manifested itself in her rather unsteady gait and occasional tight half-smile.

The first strident notes of "Stoney End", though, dispelled all doubts in the hearts of both her and the audience. A couple of minutes later, no one present could have argued against the assertion that she is certainly more effective live than on record; the arrangements for voice and piano are more sharply focused, the emotional registrations more exact, than the recorded orchestral treatments.

She was an extraordinary sight, wearing an off-the-shoulder Spanish dress, her hair floating down to the piano stool as she leaned back ecstatically at the end of each number while the spotlights dimmed to a pinpoint and died. It was a superbly theatrical performance, yet one never felt any sense of falseness because the music is true and the trappings somehow enhance that honesty rather than give the lie to it.

She gave us 11 of her own compositions, all familiar from the albums, outstanding among which were "Timer" for its vocal virtuosity; "Been On A Train", for its dark autobiographical melancholy; "Emmie", for its sense of personal loss; "Map To The Treasure", for a stunning display of highly percussive pianistics; and the climactic "Christmas In My Soul", which she delivered as if possessed by benign spirits.

Unexpectedly, she also read a brief poem called *Coal Truck* which emphasised her way with words, and her final encore took the form of a medley of two old favourites: "He's Sure The Boy I Love" and "Spanish Harlem", bending them to her will and making them sound as though she'd written both.

The concert was opened by Jackson Browne, who used to compose and play guitar for Nico. His warm voice, rough but driving guitar and piano and sad songs made a strong impression before the interval, but the first glimpse of Miss Nyro drove all else out of everyone's head. It was a most memorable occasion. *Richard Williams*

WorldMags.net



They've only just begun: Richard and Karen Carpenter photographed at A&M Records' Hollywood studios

"I guess you could call our songs soft rock"

NME JANUARY 23 Introducing... The Carpenters, a brother-sister "love-rock" success story who plan to visit the UK – the land of their parents' birth.

SOMEWHERE IN KENT there's a middle-aged man who keeps a particularly sharp eye on the charts and for news of The Carpenters, who're hoping for a second British hit with their new single "We've Only Just Begun". He is the duo's uncle – and he's the only member of the Carpenter family who stayed behind when the brother-and-sister duo's parents emigrated from this country 40 years ago.

"We're hoping to get to England within the next six months," brother Richard told me from Hollywood a few days ago, "and when we do, we'll be bringing our father with us. He's never been back. What a meeting that's going to be for him, after 40 years. Wow!"

His sister Karen told me the duo had only just got back to Hollywood, after a long time on tour, and that they'd just put the finishing touches to a new US single called "For All We Know", which is a song featured in the new film over there, *Love Is Another Stranger*.

They'll be working for the rest of the month, she added, and then they start work on an album for release in March.

I asked her if the new record broke the pattern of the material they'd given us on disc so far. Said Karen, "The thing is that everything that hits Richard right away, when we come to record material, happens to be a rhythm ballad. Richard takes these decisions, and it's almost like every song we look at is a rhythm ballad. Yes, "For

"Karen's voice is great. And she is a natural drummer, right off the bat. It really rolls"

GETTY

"Love rock' Carpenters a British export

hits Richard right away, when we come to record material, happens to be a rhythm ballad.

"Richard takes these decisions, and it's almost like every song we look at is a rhythm ballad.

"Yes, 'For All We Know' is in that pattern.

"I guess you could also call our songs love rock

Both of them confess that their musical influences are pretty mixed, and Richard says that in his time he's been into Guy Mitchell, Eddie Fisher, the Beatles, the Stones and classics and jazz.

"The first instrument I learned was the accordion, which my dad digs



All We Know" is in that pattern. I guess you could also call our songs love-rock or soft-rock. People have labelled us as that in the past. We try to make our music soothing.

"We produce our own records with Jack Dougherty at A&M. He's a great guy we met through a friend of a friend of a friend, and it was Jack who said, 'I know Herb Alpert,' and who got us with the label. When we do our stage act, I play drums and Richard plays piano, and we also have four others who help us reproduce our record sound. Getting a good sound, to us, is really important.

"I guess some brothers and sisters argue a lot and that it could be really difficult being together so much – but we really have very few conflicts, even though it can get really rough with one-nighters. Give me a week in one place... that's really nice.

"There's not much I can say about me except that I'm not one of those party-going people. But Richard... he's so talented it really scares me. Not only does he write; he also does all our arranging, orchestrating, and he plays every keyboard instrument they ever made."

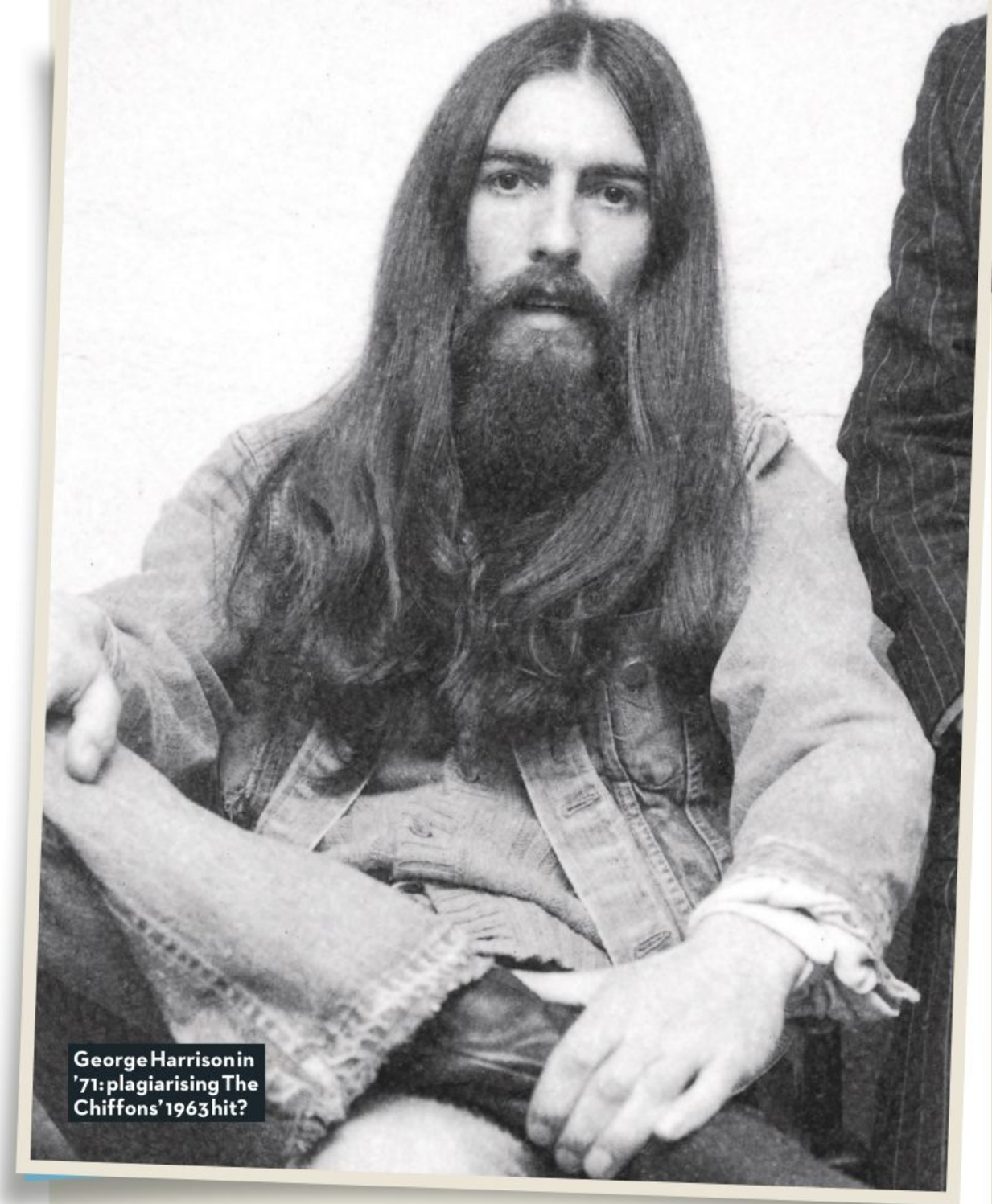
All these glowing compliments intrigued me and I asked Richard Carpenter for some thoughts on his sister. After all, girl drummers still come pretty thin on the ground and the usual reaction to girl musicians is still one of bemusement. "I think her voice is great," he glowed, "and she is a natural drummer right off bat. It really rolls, and she's good. Her drumming is no gimmick. She also doubles on bass."

Both of them say they want to make their British visit into a vacation as well as a business trip, and that they regard it as a necessary experience to visit Beatle-land. They aren't quite sure when the tour could take place but it's likely, they say, no later than the end of summer.

Both of them confess that their musical influences are pretty mixed, and Richard says that in his time he's been into Guy Mitchell, Eddie Fisher, The Beatles, the Stones and classics and jazz.

"The first instrument I learned was the accordion, which my dad digs, and jazz became my most important musical love. Jazz music and the accordion didn't strike me as compatible, however, so I switched to piano... a truly great jazz instrument. I played the usual stuff with the high school orchestra, and learned my trade playing freestyle in the small clubs and bars around New Haven, Connecticut, which is our hometown. But that began to stifle me in the end, and I got working on my folks to move to Los Angeles... where I sensed it would all happen for me."

So obliging was Dad Carpenter – a printing worker – that after 25 years in the same job he willingly sacrificed security and pension rights to move to LA to give the duo the chance they longed for. He says – understandably – that it's a move he's never regretted. *Richard Green*

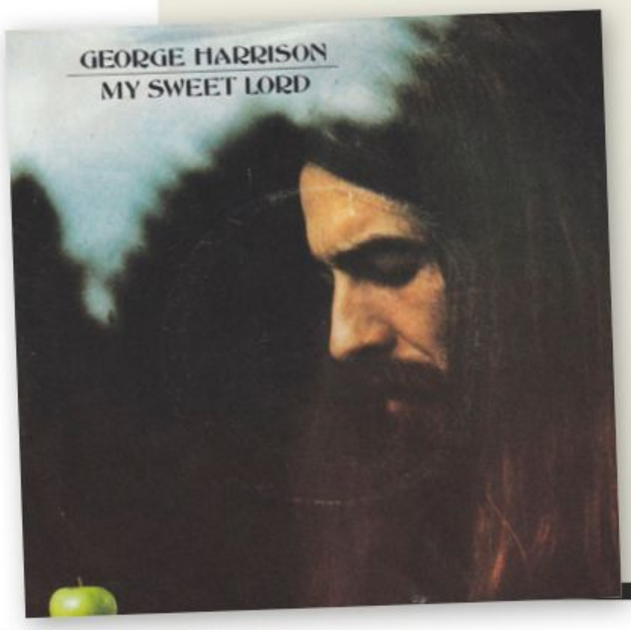

George Harrison in '71: plagiarising The Chiffons' 1963 hit?

Royalties frozen

NME FEB 27 "My Sweet Lord" has grossed £1 million sales. But who will keep the money?

GEORGE HARRISON'S PUBLISHING company and Apple are being sued on the allegation that Harrison's world hit "My Sweet Lord" infringes the copyright of The Chiffons' million-seller of the '60s, "He's So Fine". Action is being taken on his behalf in this country by Keith Prowse Music – KPM – who hold virtual world rights on "He's So Fine".

Details published in connection with this week's court action in London, by Paul McCartney seeking to dissolve The Beatles' partnership, indicate that "My Sweet Lord" will earn more than £1 million this year. But one effect of this new move by the "He's So Fine" publisher is that royalties would be frozen until such time as the copyright infringement allegations are dealt with.



"Only one facet"

MM JAN 2 Gilbert O'Sullivan says he has more to show.

FOR GILBERT O' SULLIVAN, who smashed to success late last year, 1971 starts quietly. Despite his chart success the singer-songwriter with the eccentric style in dress remains at his Weybridge home writing songs. He told the *MM* this week, "I am halfway through recording an album and very anxious to get it finished, so people will see 'Nothing Rhymed' is only one facet of my writing. The album should go out before the end of February together with a new single, for which I am probably choosing an uptempo song."

Plans for 1971: "I want to play some clubs and ballrooms instead of just playing to TV cameras and recording engineers. Most of all I want to do a concert with an orchestra at somewhere like the Royal Festival Hall."

JANUARY – MARCH 1971

➤ A John Lennon single, "Power To The People", is to be rush-released by Apple next Friday (5). A spokesman for him described the song as "an alternative to 'The Red Flag'". **NME FEB 27**

➤ In written evidence during this week's High Court Beatles action, Ringo Starr said that Paul McCartney was acting like "a spoilt child". Harrison said McCartney had always adopted a "musically superior" attitude towards him. **NME FEB 27**



➤ A spokesman for the Robert Stigwood Organisation this week denied continued rumours that negotiations were going on for Paul McCartney to sign with Stigwood. One report was that McCartney's father-in-law, American attorney Lee Eastman, had been in London for negotiations. The spokesman said, "I can deny this categorically. The rumour seems to have started because former Beatles personal assistant Peter Brown has joined us from Apple." New York attorney Seymour Barash is publisher and was producer of the song, and his Bright Tunes Music Corporation will be versus Harrisongs Music Inc, Broadcast Music Inc and Apple Records. **NME FEB 27**

GETTY (2)

WorldMags.net



James Brown on stage in London's East Ham in March '71

"Every day that I live is history"

NME MAR 20 An audience with the founding father of funk, James Brown.

JAMES BROWN – broad and stocky – America's Soul Brother Supreme, with a warm smile etched deep into his granite face – perhaps the very first man that the black community can fully identify with. As he stood before me casually dressed in denims, it was hard to believe that this majestic ebony specimen of sheer health and vitality suffers from a chronic heart condition. One which causes him to flirt mercilessly with death every time he bursts into just one of his numerous strength-sapping stage routines. When he collapses on his knees with his shoulders hunched, the entire audience holds its breath – is it just part of his act or is it for real this time?

But here he was alert and eager to talk, the man who the previous night had worked two London audiences into a state of utter exhaustion and could have done it all over again had he chosen to. So what is this urge that drives James Brown on? Surely not the monetary gain, for he has long been a multi-million business tycoon.

"My driving force is people," he replied, as he proceeded to answer each and every question in a most articulate and quick-fire manner. "Yes it's people. For I know that in the ghettos there is so much that can be brought out in educational institutions." Indeed it is common knowledge that James contributes large sums of his enormous income towards helping such environmental and social establishments.

"I want to do things for people. I want to help them get their message across. They see what I have done with my life and it helps to give them both hope and confidence. Every day that I live is history, 'cause I'm part of history."

But at such an unrelenting pace, how long does he feel that he can survive?

"I can last as long as I live," he answered with a broad grin. "I can tell you this," he continued between sips of his vodka and orange juice. "I'm in much better physical shape than either Clay or Frazier. They are both very good friends of mine and they themselves told me that."

James Brown then went on to elaborate upon his personal credo of human dignity. "I support progress. I want things that will benefit the black man – the white man – the whole country. I'm a black man – I stand up – I don't back up. I don't want to live in a country where I pay taxes and then get treated like a tourist. It's all a question of pride and dignity. A man has to be able to control his own destiny. I want to be free as anyone else – free to go wherever I want. Free with human dignity."

To many his Cassius Clay type banter could easily be misconstrued for arrogance and egotism. Quite the contrary, it's just that he's proud of his achievements both musically and socially and determined to fulfil the numerous tasks which he has set himself. Though he has been a hitmaker since the mid-'50s, it has only been during the last few years that he has emerged as a figure for the black race. "My tunes could have been big hits years ago, but personally I feel that I arrived with the revolution."

A native of Augusta, Georgia, James Brown is a product of the ghetto. Coming from a broken home, he has known extreme poverty, shined shoes and seen the inside of a reform school. With sheer guts and determination he escaped his environment to carve out a successful career against overwhelming odds. If he is the idol of millions; he is also a painful thorn in the side to the militant minority. For while they tightly clench their fists and scream hatred, Brown, with just a few well-chosen words of sense has on many occasions brought calm instead of violence to America's racial blackspots.

"You see, I've been able to give the black community pride. A thing which they have always been denied. I've had success simply because I never left the people who made me – and I'm not gonna start now."

By virtue of his background, he can relate to the problems of a majority minority. And the almost soul-destroying bitterness and prejudice which is as commonplace as eating three meals a day – that's if you've got the bread.

American by birth, he acknowledges Africa as his motherland. A continent where his reputation is rapidly gaining momentum. Of his recent tour of Africa he has this to say: "It's the same in any country that I visit… take the suits and collars off and everyone's the same. Touring Africa was a tremendous and heart-warming experience for me 'cause I'm so well loved over there. Everywhere I went I was given an overwhelming reception. We'd stop the plane at some remote town to refuel and I'd be aroused from my sleep by hundreds of people trying to break into the aircraft to see me. So I had to get out of the plane, into an open car and wave as we drove through the crowds."

From his tone, it was obvious that this had been a most moving experience for him. For offstage Brown isn't prone to emotionalism. He then went on to reveal that for the time being he has temporarily curtailed expanding his empire to concentrate his energies into broadening the scope of soul music.

"I want to have soul music everywhere, so that the Queen or the President will take their shoes off and get it down. The black people knew where their thing was years ago, but economically they just weren't able to get it down… Now things are changing. I live my music… it's not hard for me to write lyrics. I don't sing love songs… I sing about life.

"Sex is a part of a man's life. You have to be able to exercise your manhood." He added with a hoarse laugh, "It's a man's world." A statement which I'm sure will bring forth shoals of letters from irate supporters of the Women's Liberation Front. James Brown is a man of ambition, and though he has been feted at Presidential functions, rumours persist that it has been more than just a passing flirtation with the White House.

"There's not one black kid who thinks that he could be President – only because there hasn't been one. If I felt qualified now to run for the Presidency, I would like to think that at least I had the opportunity." *Roy Carr*

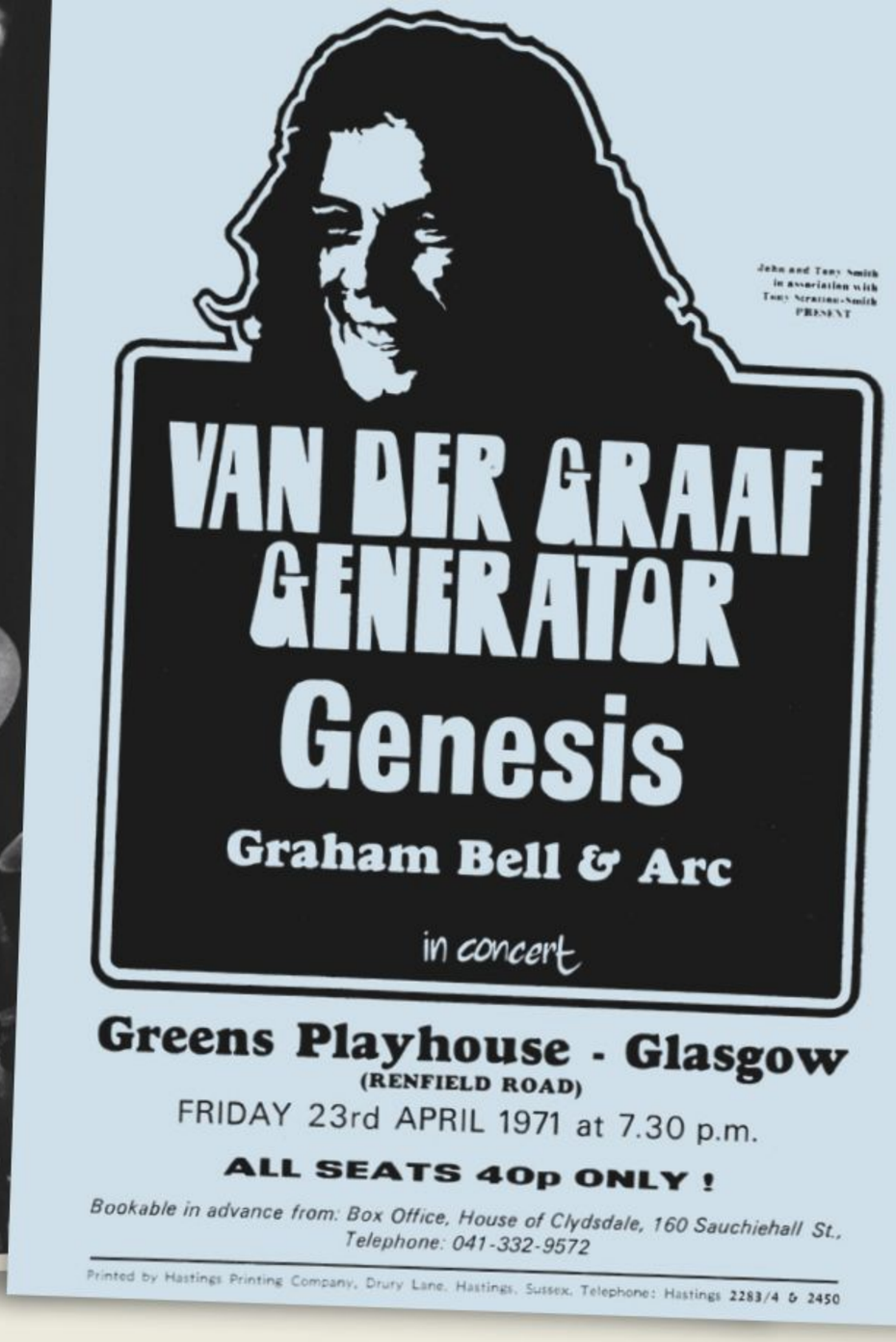
"I'm a black man. I stand up. I don't back up"

GETTY

WorldMags.net



"Sad romantics": Genesis – (l–r) Steve Hackett, Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, and Tony Banks (Mike Rutherford out of shot)



"I'm not a performing animal"

MM JAN 23 Introducing Genesis, as seen through the eyes of their singer Peter Gabriel.

THE RECORD LABEL was quite ecstatic over him. "He has a touch of evil about him when he gets on stage," said Tony Stratton-Smith, solemnly and slowly, in a long-gone conversation. "He almost reminds me of Jagger at times."

Jim Morrison? Lou Reed? No? Er, um. Well, then, Iggy Stooge. Wrong again, huh. The truth is, he doesn't look much of a charismatic figure off stage. Like, he's sitting in this office while we're talking and he's wearing this shapeless sweater and nondescript slacks; and an anxious, painful little smile keeps flickering across his face, and every time you ask him a question he looks at this other guy, another member of the band, as if he wants to be reassured that he is not talking out of turn.

He is a most unlikely pop star is Peter Gabriel, but then pop stars are most unlikely people. Maybe "star" indeed is an unlikely word to use as yet about him. Gabriel, in fact, is lead vocalist with Genesis, a five-piece band who last year made *Trespass*, an album which, in its lyrical depth and flawless technique, constituted a minor masterpiece.

His vocals are among the best things on the album: with an expressive hoarseness but mostly steeped in a desperate romanticism; reaching out for something he can't quite grasp. The band essentially began in 1966 as four songwriters, Gabriel, Tony Banks, Michael Rutherford and Anthony Phillips. Some of their demo tapes were heard by Jonathan King and they got a contract with a record company, whence their releases disappeared into oblivion. "Fame and fortune somehow evaded this merry combo," their press handout puts it whimsically.

> "I was very nervous – it was a shocking performance"

Since then they have run the whole group gamut: the country cottage, the Soho hustlers, the big evanescent promises. They found a friendly soul in Stratton-Smith, however, the Matt Busby of the record business, who signed them to his recently formed Charisma label. Under his avuncular direction they are achieving a reputation as one of the country's "thinking" bands.

Over the four years the personnel has altered, not surprisingly, with Phil Collins, ex-Flaming Youth on drums, and Mick Barnard, formerly of a band called Farm, replacing Phillips on lead. I said that from their album they seemed very much a studio band. Some critics have even suggested that *Trespass* was essentially the creation of its producer, John Anthony.

"I don't agree; it's not a producer's album." He paused. "I think he did a good job, a very good job, but it's always a compromise. We look on him as another member of the band, rather than the one with all the power. The group did all the arrangements and we considered the type of sound we wanted before we went into the studio."

Was he pleased with the outcome?

"I don't think people are ever really satisfied, are they? By the time the album comes out the original conception has gone. You lose a part everywhere. The stage it is at its fullest is in your head, and you lose all along the line from there.

"Personally, I think some of the songs were too long. We started very ambitious for more adventurous things, getting out of pop but with straightforward melodies... We take music there and work around that, as a piece, not as a song. With the addition of Phil and Mick, it's made me more rhythm conscious."

The band had a spot not long ago on [TV show] *Disco 2*, which was fairly disastrous. What had been the reason for that?

"Well, I've always got an idea of what the songs should sound like, but John [Anthony] is our cohesive force. Left to ourselves, as we were on television, we were a drag. With insufficient technical knowledge. On that show the backing track was the same as the album, but I did the vocal on top and I was very nervous. It was a shocking performance and I'm not trying to excuse it. I'm just not a performing animal being put through his tricks, which is how the sound engineer saw it.

"You should have a say in shows like that. You should have some control, like you do with an album sleeve. I think the BBC has a condescending attitude to pop and pop musicians. It's only entertainers who are required to give a good performance every night, to put on a show. To try and get a BBC producer to understand what you want to do in a programme... They don't believe the intricacies of sound balance make a difference to us. They think it's a fuss about nothing.

"When we first went out on the road we thought we'd just get the music out and play behind a black curtain, but it wasn't working out. So we have to perform a bit, but it's now just as a means to an end, to get the music across."

He paused, clenched his hands together and smiled. "I see the band as sad romantics, you see." He said, quietly. *Michael Watts*



GETTY

WorldMags.net



Pining for the fjords?: *Monty Python*'s Michael Palin and John Cleese fail to see eye to eye over a "Norwegian Blue" parrot

"Normal people are no fun at all"

MM FEB 6 John Cleese from *Monty Python's Flying Circus* discusses the TV comedy show's unique appeal. Particularly to youths in stations.

THE SUCCESS AND effectiveness of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* lies partly in its realism. And it is funny because it is frequently frightening, and occasionally cruel. John Cleese has emerged as the most outstanding member of a close-working team. And his ability to make his roles – a bullying doctor, an incompetent announcer – believable is the stroke of genius that has made *Python* the first true successor to *The Goon Show* of the '50s.

The show is saved from television blight because a creative team have been allowed freedom from either commercial interests or the dogged pursuit of "what the public want". If asked, the public would probably have flatly rejected the idea – without the evidence.

The evidence is that already small boys are hounding John Cleese with catchphrases on railway stations: "Just lacking in grey matter," he observes. And in any pub the morning after a show, small knots of men who one would normally expect to disregard major news events like an Apollo launch in favour of football, discuss avidly, in detail line by line, the previous night's episode.

The aforementioned cruelty is only that on which all classic humour is based. It can be found in Korky the Cat and Charlie Chaplin. Discomfort, pain, humiliation – all evoke hearty laughter. Apart from the nightmarish quality which frequently pervades Terry Gilliam's brilliant animations, there is a music-hall tradition carried on in the gags and sketches, and the classic "Confuse-A-Cat" sequence would seem to recall a medieval miracle play.

Last week, the cast of the show took part in the Lancaster Festival. Is it a sign that *Monty Python* may yet take to the theatre? Already a full-length film is being made. At any rate, Mr Cleese is a busy man, and when I contacted him some days before the Lancaster venture, there was a certain amount of calling back and consulting with agents before he could take time out to discuss the show.

But he talked with enthusiasm and the speedy eloquence of those who aim for perfection and are never fully satisfied with the results. "I don't know when it was we decided to do Lancaster. I think it was suggested by Eric Idle and we all quite liked the idea. It's a nice theatre, and of course the recent series hadn't been seen in the Midlands and we could use some of the material. A lot of people have asked us if we would ever do a full show in a theatre. But I do feel the prospect of doing the kind of material we do, for six months, would be terribly tedious, night after night."

How long does it take to prepare the TV shows? "One edition takes two-and-a-half weeks. One week writing, three days filming and the rest editing and dubbing. There have been 26 shows. No – we didn't have to fight to keep the show on. We suddenly realised it was happening after the first show when the audience was excited and really interested."

Was it treated as a minority interest show by the BBC? "Well, it's like the chicken and the egg. You can claim it is a minority show if you put it on at 11pm on a Sunday. But the BBC has been very helpful. I don't think the late, great Tom Sloan had the slightest idea what it was all about. The nicest thing is that the BBC just let us go away and do the show with scarcely any interference. If only you knew the immeasurably number of amazingly stupid people there are in filming with a strange lack of formal education."

"If it's not enormously funny, keep it going – don't give people time to think"

Obviously there had been some stumbling block in transferring *Monty* from the telly to pictures. How popular was the show abroad?

"It's very popular in Canada apparently – there is a small but enthusiastic audience. It will never be shown in the States. It's terrible how TV there is tied to a formula. It could never be shown because it would be considered too offensive."

How many complaints does the show receive per minute? "We have had two complaints. And they were about blasphemy and us making fun

ALAMY



It's getting too silly!

Because I'm on the box you do get yobbos who come to shout and jeer

"I did that sketch about the stupid boxer, and you could say: 'Think of all the people with idiot sons.' But you can't make fun out of normality. Normal people are no fun at all. The principle is

I'm always critical. Many of the shows in the second series were not terribly good. I think two out of three were cracking good shows and the rest had good things and bad

of the Church. Some people object to this, but there is nothing one can write that is not offensive to somebody. You could make a reference to the Black Death in a sketch and somebody might have a relative who had just died of Black Death out in the East. I did that sketch about the stupid boxer, and you could say, 'Think of all the people with idiot sons.' But you can't make fun out of normality. Normal people are no fun at all. The principle is – if it's funny, it's acceptable.

"Four million people watch the show, and after a time it gets an audience of fans and those who don't like it, don't switch on. Ninety per cent of those who are going to be offended aren't going to be watching."

Many compare the *Circus* to the radio tradition of *ITMA*, *Goon Show* and *I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again*. Says John, "*Monty Python* was not born from radio. Rubbish. I think it came from three sources, firstly *The Goon Show* – all of the cast are totally devoted to *The Goon Show* and regard Spike Milligan as head and shoulders about the rest – *The 1948 Show* and *Do Not Adjust Your Set*."

How did John regard the show's massive success? "To be perfectly honest and totally cynical, when the show is widely acclaimed, I notice people's critical faculties go into suspension a bit. I'm always critical. Many of the shows in the second series were not terribly good. I think two out of three were cracking shows and the rest had good things and bad. I thought two of them were slightly obscure… for example, the one where I was introducing the show from a cafe… speed is very important. If it's not enormously funny, keep it going – it creates a good impression. If you leave it too long, it's just enough time to say, 'My God, that's not very funny.' It's the *Laugh-In* principle – don't give the audience time to think."

How are the show's baffling filmed inserts compiled? "They are screened in the same order, the order they are made. I think the first show of the second series was actually number 12 in sequence. We film for several shows in one day – five or six different shows can be terribly confusing.

"People ask us, 'What sort of humour is *Monty Python*?' – and I haven't the slightest idea. It's true I'm a comedian, I suppose, and not an actor, and I've no desire to do straight acting. We are that strange animal the writer-performer."

Was John much aware of the work of musical satirist like the Mothers Of Invention or the Bonzo Dog Band? "Not really. I've never really followed it, I'm sorry to say. However, I will say that I am totally out of contact with it."

How has personal success smitten Mr Cleese?

"Because I'm on the box you do get yobbos who come to shout and jeer. They don't mean any harm. It's just that they haven't any grey matter. Sometimes I wish the ground would open up. There were some people creating a disturbance on Brighton station the other day. Four or five kids saw me and hid behind the corners of pillars and shouted catchphrases. It was rather disturbing being pursued by this strange group and profoundly embarrassing."

Chris Welch



September 15, 1971: Sandy Denny at the *Melody Maker* Pop Poll awards, winning Best Female Singer for a second time

"I don't think I was ready before"

MM JAN 9 Sandy Denny quits Fotheringay to go solo.

FOTHERINGAY, ONE OF the great white hopes of 1970, has split, barely 12 months after its creation. The joint decision, made just before Christmas, means that the five members of the group will go their own separate ways. There will be a special farewell concert at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall on January 30.

Sandy Denny, voted girl singer of the year in the *Melody Maker* 1969 Pop Poll awards, told *MM* this week that her main reason for wanting the band dissolved was so that she could make her first solo album.

"I've been wanting to do it for a long time, but I don't think I was ready for it before," she said. "Because I was in the group I didn't have the time to make it, and we weren't a rich band. We couldn't afford to take time off from being on the road since we needed to work to keep going. I'm not sure yet how long I can be without a group. Apart from the album, I don't really know what I'm going to do; I haven't quite made up my mind."

"I'm not sure yet how long I can be without a group"

The album, she said, would be started soon. The majority of the songs would be her own. She had composed four already. Was it true, as rumours suggested, that the band split because it could not get any gigs? "No, not at all," she protested. "We've got loads of gigs coming up, which we've just had to cancel because of this decision."

Trevor Lucas, singer/guitarist with the band, plans to widen his musical career by learning record production and engineering. He will continue to write songs, both with Sandy and by himself, and hopes to make a solo album. Talking about the band, he said, "It was getting a bit high pressured for all of us. It got to the point where there was such a lot of work and so many different things happening that I didn't have time to relax."

Drummer Gerry Conway and bassist Pat Donaldson plan to continue playing sessions and concerts on a freelance basis. "The music scene," said Conway, summing up their feelings, "is now turning more and more to people playing not in one group, but with other musicians."

Lead guitarist Jerry Donahue will also be working freelance for a time but is considering various offers to join other groups. Lucas stressed that the decision to split was amicable and came from within the band.

But Tim Sharman, manager of Daddy Longlegs and a friend of Fotheringay, told the *MM* he believed they had parted because of a combination of lack of venues, management hassles and a lack of public reaction to their music.

Karl Dallas, writing in the *MM* at the end of November, also stated his doubts about Fotheringay's future. He commented on their failure to live up to their early promise, their lack of fire, and their failure to gel completely. "What's going to happen to Fotheringay?" he asked.

MIRRORPIX

WorldMags.net

1971

JANUARY – MARCH

T. Rextasy takes hold: "Lots of funky things happened on the tour... and a lot of frightening things"

WorldMags.net

“We did get all that Beatlemania stuff”

As MARC BOLAN and band round off a year of phenomenal success, young crowds run riot during the winter tour. “Marc gives the kids strength,” says tour compere Bob Harris, and Marc does not disagree. “The revolution has come,” he says. “It is here.”

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

WorldMags.net

— MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 20 —

IT'S DOUBTFUL WHETHER T. Rex will ever play Wigan again. One thing's for sure: if the manager of the ABC theatre has any say in it, Marc Bolan can cross the town off any future date list. Really. The fact is, there was a slight altercation at the ABC, Wigan, last Wednesday. Some 400 young kids, mostly girls, were moved by the spirit, got up out of their seats, and headed for the stage, where T. Rex were well into "Thunderwing".

Two chief inspectors, half a dozen cops and several policewomen looked on as the balustrade encircling the orchestra pit cracked under the combined weight of young pressing bodies trying to get a hold of one or both of Bolan's lime-green Anello & Davide girl's shoes while his feet were still inside them. But look out, kids, the manager's coming!

The manager has sleek blonde hair and a florid face that is getting hotter under the collar with every passing minute. He's new to this theatre and he can't bear the thought of a single red-upholstered tip-up chair being ruined. So the house lights go up, the music peters out. The manager goes on stage and tells the audience that unless they resume their seats the show can't go on. Listen, he's got to be joking!

Bolan, guitar slung round his shoulder, draws himself up inside his gold-threaded coat with the red lapels and buttons and looks fit to bust. He calls the very reluctant manager back on stage. "We've played 15 concerts on this tour so far and not one chair has even been touched," he yells at him over the microphone. "I'm telling you, man, I don't know if we even should go on!"

There's a perceptible sob from the chicks out front.

Manager: "There's a likelihood that people will be maimed if this concert goes on and the people remain there."

Shrieks of derision.

Bolan: (*addressing the audience*) "You're not going to do any damage to this theatre, are you?"

Kids: "Noooo!" Young lungs at bursting point. Pretty convincing sound. So of course the show goes on, and sure the kids stay exactly where they were. Which all goes to prove that off-screen drama does occur at Wigan cinemas. And not only that; it shows that Marc Bolan and T. Rex have taken a startling grip on young British rock fans.

T. Rex completed last week a 17-date tour of Britain, at the end of which the band, but more particularly Bolan, have shown signs of being that fabled commodity: A Successor To The Beatles. This may seem like overstatement, but the evidence, both on paper and from personal experience, is strong. Believe me; I went to some of the gigs.

In business terms, T. Rex's three singles this year – "Get It On", "Ride A White Swan" and "Hot Love" have outsold all the singles of The Who and Hendrix put together, and the band has grossed 3.5 per cent of the whole British record market in sales. If the figures are not extraordinary enough, the events of the tour may raise a few eyebrows. In the space of a month, fans put out of action no less than 11 cars in which the band travelled. Without exception they stripped the vehicles of everything that could be taken away as a souvenir: windscreen wipers, mirrors, door handles – all went.

To get away from concert halls means running a gauntlet of hands that pull at the body like young piranha fish. The cars are not just means of transport; they're getaway vehicles. The roadies are not just there to lug equipment; they're bodyguards. Police guard the hotels where the group stays. The general atmosphere of excitement engendered among the audience is comparable to that created by the Stones and The Beatles in their early days.

No one recognises that more than The Beatles themselves. John Lennon in a *Scene And Heard* [BBC radio] interview a fortnight ago, and Paul McCartney in this week's *Melody Maker*, both see in T. Rex their own successors in the creation of audience mania. Ringo told me six months ago that he thought the band was "fantastic" and "one of his favourites", while comparative "outsiders" on the tour were fascinated by the phenomenon.

> "The reaction has been equal to that of the Stones in the very old days"

Tony Smith, one of the biggest rock promoters in the country, has been in business for the past nine years and has handled most of the major tours in this period, including those of The Beatles and Stones. He promoted this last T. Rex tour and says it's the story of the Stones and Beatles all over again. "It's been amazing from

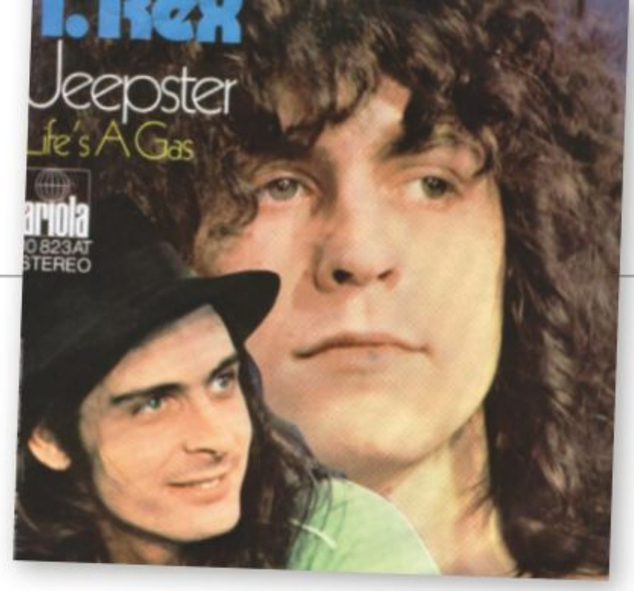


Bolan in the back of a limo with his wife June, née Child, a capable music-biz secretary and former lover/minder of Syd Barrett

GETTY

Prophet of the New Generation

WorldMags.net



the point of view of audiences. Marc speaks to a whole new generation of young kids, whose average age seems to be about 15, if not younger.

"To my way of thinking, the reaction has been equal to that of the Stones in the very old days, right from the beginning of the tour. At some places it's taken us one-and-a-half hours to get 'em away from the gig. We literally couldn't find a way out."

No one has been more bemused by T. Rex's reception than the disc jockey Bob Harris, who compered the tour. A friend for the past five years of Bolan, he also deejayed on the band's other tour of Britain this year. The audience awareness was growing then, he says, but he still seems shaken by the mobbing that has accompanied this one. The explanation? Marc, he says, is to the kids of today what The Beatles were to those in '64 – the projection of all their own fantasies.

"He's very beautiful, a very beautiful man, and his songs are tremendously communicative to young people. They represent not a polarisation but a drawing together of sympathetic ideas. No one has captured the spirit of these times like Marc has. I think Marc and T. Rex have got to be the next Beatles, if they're not already."

That the comparison should be generally made with The Beatles and not the Stones is interesting, and one I think valid. What we are really discussing is images, and T. Rex don't carry that reputation for sex trips and adolescent rebellion which the Stones flaunted right from the onset. They don't represent decadence in any way. Their appeal is sympathetic and non-aggressive. They're cute in the way The Beatles were when they emerged, and as Harris says, The Beatles were not only a fantasy but also they guys next door: "They were the living proof that we were important, that being 15- and 16-year olds meant something, and Marc gives the kids that strength, that 'there is someone like me'."

This sense of identification is conveyed very strongly through Bolan. Bolan, the guitarist and leader of the band, is also its personification. Standing at not much more than five foot, he looks, with his tousled hair, soft features and delicate mouth, like the 19th-century illustrator's idea of a changeling; a character from *The Ingoldsby Legends* or *The Water Babies*, maybe, if that's not too ludicrous a comparison for a 1970s rock star. Certainly, he both looks and seems to feel very young and nearer the age of his audience than his own 24 years. This explains a good deal. His audiences, which appear to be composed of girls aged from 11 to 16 mainly – and on average a year or so younger than were those for the Stones and Beatles – can relate very acutely to someone who looks very much like them.

Bolan himself thinks he is bisexual in appearance, and he accentuates the feminine aspect by such devices as the shoes and the use of glitter around his eyes, while offstage he wears a fur coat, albeit ripped, of his wife's mother. His Fellini-esque features, indeed, gave rise to a curious little incident after the group's performance in Wigan. Relaxing in the foyer of the hotel, where the members of the group were talking amiably to two policemen, on duty in case of trouble from fans, one of the cops suddenly turned to him and remarked that he recognised his face from *Top Of The Pops*, because of "the stuff around yer eyes".

"I bet you thought, 'He's a right poof', didn't you?" smiled Bolan sardonically. "The words I was thinking of were much stronger than that," replied the cop. He was only half laughing.

Talking to Marc later, he asked me if I could envisage the scene in that policeman's home when T. Rex appeared on television: "You know, the guy getting more and more uptight as he watches television, while his daughter is going through an erotic experience and really being turned on." He was amused at the idea. He's well aware that his attitudes freak people out. He tells another story, of how he recently went to London's Speakeasy and three or four chicks came up to his table and said, "Bolan, you're a fag."

Yes, he agreed, and had they got any little brothers at home? He gives a look of mock horror in imitation of their expressions.

Overt sexuality, however, is not a strong facet of Bolan's appeal. He doesn't attract predatory groupies, and says he never sleeps with those chicks anyway. His girl fans, whose average age might be put at 13 or 14, seem to have a teenage crush on him rather than nurturing notions of pubescent lust. It's the story of the first-form girl with a bad case of puppy love for the heart-throb fifth former. Sex is part of it, but it's sex courtesy of The Magic Prince, who's going to deflower the young virgin in an atmosphere of blissful romance. She'll wake in the morning to a kiss from Marc – it's straight out of one of those true-stories magazines.

In this respect T. Rex are unlike The Beatles, whose corporate image was breezily sexual as well as lovable. But then, social awareness has changed in eight years and it's extremely doubtful if the exact likes of Beatlemania will be seen again for a decade or so. Moreover, the rock scene has diversified in that time. When The Beatles first hit with "Love Me Do" there was no demarcation line between pop and what was soon to be called rock. The music scene operates now on at least two levels, and T. Rex are on the outer fringes of pop. Whether they, too, can embrace all tastes is another question.

Musically, Bolan has moved within two years from a cultist, though profitable (£500 a gig), stance as the better half of Tyrannosaurus Rex, playing acoustic music in front of elitist audiences, to a set-up within T. Rex where the music is heavily amplified and the devotees are hung up more on the group's personality rather than what it is trying to say.

Some original fans, consequently, have cried that he's sold out. To this accusation his friends and admirers reply that his six years in the music industry have constituted a process of leading up to what his is doing now: turning people on to a certain state of mind and lifestyle. They say that since electrification his songs have hardly changed at all; that if the public turns off tomorrow, Marc will not change.

That T. Rex flourish on Bolan's appeal rather than the group's musical equation is undeniable. Although their »

WorldMags.net

singles, made with American producer Tony Visconti, fit all the requirements of goods 45s (ie, they are economical, catchy and eminently danceable) their live performances reveal them as musically naive. Mickey Finn's congas are frequently lost in the mix, and the rhythm section of Bill Legend (from the Southend band Legend) on drums and Steve Currie on bass is often too inflexible, although Currie has the potential to develop into an excellent rock bassist. Bolan's guitar playing, furthermore, while arresting and inventive in some solos, as often as not tends to the derivative; it comes off like Clapton-Hendrix pastiche.

Yes, it's limited, and yes, the riffs do sometimes seem to go on ad infinitum, but none of the groups that emerged in '63 ad '64 showed great musical innovation either. I think that most people over the age of 24 will be unable to comprehend the relative hysteria that T. Rex concerts have evolved into. The rock cycle has come round again and teenagers have once more found a music and, just as importantly, a group with which they can identify.

The resultant group/audience relationship bears comparison with Beatlemania, allowing for the generally increased sophistication in attitudes since those days. There isn't the mindless frenzy that accompanied those early Mersey tours, because the group and the audience are much closer together. But that's not to say it couldn't develop on those lines if one accepts that it's all just beginning for T. Rex.

Marc Bolan has his hands on the reins and knows exactly where he is going in this situation. Although Mickey Finn, who replaced Steve Peregrine Took after the latter left, gets a percentage of the take, Currie and Legend are paid salaries. Bolan is indisputably boss, and for the first time in his life he is living the role of the rock'n'roll star. Although he can't drive he has recently bought second-hand a white Rolls-Royce for £2,000, which will stand in the garage of his Little Venice house with the AC sports car. He would learn to drive, he says, but he loses concentration.




"I believe that nothing can hurt me": Bolan with T. Rex congas player Mickey Finn in 1971

Charming and "natural" in conversation, he is nevertheless an astonishingly self-assured young man. With total conviction he told me one night that he considers himself a cross between Dylan and Lennon; not in musical styles but in terms of his own artistic importance. He has met both Dylan and Lennon. "Neither of them are better than me," he said, "and they know it. They know where I'm at. I'm different, like them. I've always known I was different, right from the moment I was born."

There is about him this sense of destiny. When he was 13 and a half, his picture was taken by Don McCullin for *Town* magazine and he became known as the first mod. His picture, showing him with ultra-short hair and a sharp little box suit, still circulates in several music paper offices. For a time he was boy actor on television's *Five O'Clock Club*. He got his first break in the pop business when someone sent the acetate of "Hippy Gumbo" to Peel, who played it once and got 4,000 requests for the record (although in fact it only sold about five copies, he says). His first book of poems and stories, *Warlock Of Love*, has sold 20,000 copies, while the poet Brian Patten's work tops the poetry charts with 2,000 sales.

All these achievements, he believes, have been forms of preparation for making him what he is today. He is a curious mixture of materialism and otherworldliness. In the same breath he will refer to record sales and his conviction that the Greek god Pan still exists on Earth. He talks of the spiritual levels of existence and of how he practised black magic for two years. Much of it is contained in his writing. It would all seem mere feyness if he didn't communicate his beliefs so convincingly.

He tells the rather chilling story of how he lay in bed one night with his wife June staring at a picture of a tyrannosaurus on the bedroom wall. As he looked it seemed to him that the picture began to take positive shape and to move: "I was afraid, but I knew it was me that was doing it; that my imagination had brought it to life. I also knew afterwards that if I hadn't turned my mind off it would've destroyed me. The tyrannosaurus would've eaten me and there would've been blood on the bed. I could feel it, and so could June. Since then I've been strong. I believe that nothing can hurt me."

This, and other stories, could be ascribed to a febrile imagination. But he doesn't smoke; at one period in his life, however, he was seen by two psychiatrists, who informed him they couldn't understand him at all. They were, says Bolan, totally freaked out by him.

Before every performance on the last tour the members of the group and several others of the entourage held hands in a circle, while Bolan hummed a single note. This hum they all took up until it built to a crescendo. The object was to symbolise unity and to get a lift of energy. Bob Harris, always one of the circle, says that he invariably felt uplifted after each occasion.

In effect, Bolan has reversed the pattern of the wealthy pop star turning to some sort of spiritual life as a mental and emotional outlet once riches have come his way. After having had "more managers than I can remember", he is only too well aware of the need for a good business head. Although he has always kept a firm grip on his own financial interests, two months ago he brought in as his new manager Tony Secunda, former manager of the Moodies and The Move and a man who likes to think of himself as "a gunslinger shooting faster than the next man" [sic]. Mr Secunda, you can take it, is well known as a shrewd businessman.

Marc says he has signed no contracts, however. No matter. These are heady days for all concerned with T. Rex. For once, the times really do seem to be a-changing.

WorldMags.net



— NME DECEMBER 13 —

ONCE UPON A time there was a little monster all of a half-dozen rejected singles and four moderately received albums high. Across the land the little monster loped spryly with a song for whoever would listen, a little sad but not dejected that few spared him their time, until one day the tiny beastie discovered destiny and the magic power of electricity and proceeded to grow and grow, lumbering devastatingly out of its Notting Hill lair to wreak its mighty will upon the nation. "*Get it on*", roared the monster, swelling like mountain, "*bang a gong… Hot love, ooh-ooh-ee*".

I mean, it's really approaching a phenomenon how, in the space of 12 months, the former Tyrannosaurus Rex, darlings of cross-legged highbrow floor squatters, has escaped its minority-interest pigeon hole and ballooned into the colossus T. Rex, conquering the airwaves and setting the nation's teenage hearts a-flutter in a manner long thought dead and gone.

And if that piece of whimsy fails to impress upon you the extent of T. Rex's domination, here are the facts 'n' figures to supply the substance: from last December to this, the four T. Rex singles have occupied placings in the *NME* Chart for 42 weeks out of 52.

It doesn't seem so long ago that Marc Bolan and I were sitting in his Notting Hill attic – "Penthouse, please," he interrupts – with the Tyrannosaurus Rex leader despairing over the "intellectual barrier" the public and media appeared to have erected against his band, allowing their records far short of the unprejudiced hearing he felt they deserved.

And here we are, some good few months later, in the front room of the Bolans' Little Venice house surrounded by a dazzling array of lighting, sound and camera equipment property of ATV, who are filming our interview for a television documentary. With a touch of irony, a nice case of the mountain coming to Mohammed's front room.

That's some transformation of status, I note, as we sit in front of the cameras and lights, solaced by June Bolan's home-made red wine and trying hard to ignore the army of black polo necks weaving around us.

"We had a period when we didn't get played on the radio, basically because the music wasn't conventional enough," Bolan rejoined after a smile at my comparison.

"What happened was that, after doing the Tyrannosaurus Rex thing for two-and-a-half years, things were slowing down. I wasn't getting bored; I just wasn't happy with the response to the music.

"I decided to clear my head and get down to playing electric. I shortened the name to T. Rex, too, and the whole thing had a nice fresh feel to it. There were obviously hundreds of people out there who had never heard of us. We did 'White Swan', then we did a TV show, and that was it. From then it has been a very strange year for us. The strangest thing is that we started the year as a minority band and have become, at the end of it, the biggest media band."

And the intellectual barrier? That obviously went somewhere along the way.

"I hope so, because you write for people. You don't write for intellectual reviewers. Basically, at the beginning, I wrote for myself. But the emotions began gradually to come through more and more, where they were possibly screened off before. Music is such a personal thing. It just gets my rocks off. It has been a groovy year and the next will be even more interesting."

In many ways, though, the really phenomenal part of the T. Rex phenomenon didn't become apparent until the band went on the tour of Britain that finished last month. That is, the band's elevation to a "teen idol" status reminiscent of the mid-'60s peak of fan idolatry.

"You mean like Cliff Bolan?" smiled Marc, adjusting his cross-legged position on the settee to concur with the producer's demands. "It has been an exciting year, and I suppose the tour was the capper. For a long time kids have wanted to boogie at concerts. I know that, because that's what I wanted to do. The mood of the country has been right for it. I certainly dig those kinds of concerts.

"We did get all that Beatlemania stuff, I accept that, but I was really just being myself and I would rather it was happening to me than some plastic Ricky Steele. It's surely nice that people warm to you in that way, and in my own way I have integrity. We don't have any cigar-smoking dudes behind us. It is down to me what happens, and I find that exciting and stimulating.

"Lots of funky things happened on the tour, cars being smashed up. And a lot of frightening things. We were in Newcastle stuck in a car with kids banging on the roof. You could see it caving in and it was a bit frightening, but then these five little faces came over the top and the all looked like me. They all had Marc Bolan T-shirts and corkscrew hair. It was really weird, but it was nice that they were getting involved in a way. We found out afterwards there were hairdressers doing the Marc Bolan cut."

The camera whirs into silence. Technical hitch.

"Can you come in on that again?" requests polo neck of Marc.

"One of the nicest things I really flashed on," Marc is telling me later in the kitchen when we get a break from the filming, "is people like Lennon, McCartney and Ringo saying nice things about us. I am not assuming we are the new Beatles, but if we were totally lame they might be uptight.

"I think there is a new phase beginning. Because the revolution has come, it is here. Like five years ago the whole T. Rex thing would not have happened without an entourage of showbusiness people behind us. We didn't have any of that. The next record we put out will be on our own label."

Back on camera, after Marc had again gone through several changes of posture to satisfy the continuity department, I asked if he felt he had now turned his back on old Tyrannosaurus Rex followers, or if they had turned their backs on him.

"I have never had any evidence apart from a few letters in the music press, and if you look at them they all come from the same handful of people. The progressive thing was decided on album-selling qualities, and *Electric Warrior* has been in the charts for three months. Taking your audience seriously… that, for me, was what the underground was all about, and that I still do. People talk about how I move about on stage, but it is very hard to wiggle when you are sitting on the floor.

"Then again, someone came up on tour and said why don't you do stuff like *Beard Of Stars* any more? Well, *Beard Of Stars* was primarily electric. On another occasion, some little guy of around nine came up and asked why we didn't play acoustic. That night I had done a 40-minute acoustic spot. The changes in the music have been so gradual.

"I mean, Elton John is a good example of somebody who has had to put up with that sort of jive. It is very easy for people to rip you to pieces. There seems to be a group of people like that, a little group who look around for someone to knock. I remember reading an interview where Rod Stewart said that if 'Maggie May' was big he wanted to avoid that knocking. Four weeks later he had exactly the same thing. It was his turn then, and they backed off me for a few months."

> "We did 'White Swan', then a TV show... and that was it"

With sound recording over now and the crew using film only, and between requests to turn first this way and then that way a little more, I ask Bolan how he reacted to the side of the new-found T. Rex appreciation that has seen his face spread across a thousand teenage girls' bedroom walls.

He goes silent for a minute.

"Is it not nice for people to care for you? Do you not think so?"

And after further reflection: "I don't know. The most unexpected thing was the sexual overtones that have gone down. But isn't it nice that someone can be concerned enough to put you on their walls? I mean, in my music room upstairs I have pictures of Lennon and Hendrix and Salvador Dali. Better that it be me than Shane Fenton. Surely it is funkier for you to interview me, someone who has something to say."

"It is really down to credibility. Dylan suddenly made The Beatles seem more important. He gave them respect for themselves. I always had that, and because I had that, and basically because of the history of the band, it has made me a credible person. I really think people were pleased that we made it."

Filming over, we flee from the chaos to Marc's music room, where I'm played a tape Bolan has just acquired of him making a demo at 15 – strongly influenced by Dylan but the T. Rex feel was well developed even then – and then brought up to date with a play through of the four new tracks under consideration for the band's next single.

"After seven years of trying to do something," muses Bolan, "having actually done it is a very strange feeling." *Nick Logan* •

WorldMags.net

1971

JANUARY – MARCH



February 24, 1971: Elton John in concert at Imperial College, London. "I really look forward to that bit, the end, where I can freak out"

“Very few people call me Reg now”



A new year, a new level of success for ELTON JOHN. Following *Tumbleweed Connection*, Elton discusses his roots and work so far, while retiring lyricist Bernie Taupin also airs his view: “I believe Reg to be a truly great rock artist.”

— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 6 —

DESPITE ITS NEW-FOUND measures of intelligence and integrity, pop music hasn’t stopped thriving on the superstar syndrome. The difference in 1971 is that the superstars are likely to be musicians with something to say, unlike the talentless, characterless puppets who engaged the fancy of the public in an earlier era.

One such modern hero is Elton John, whose sudden rise to notoriety has been greeted with cheers from those who dig his music and with snide boos from those who imagine that he’s some kind of Johnny-come-lately, striking it lucky first time out. »

MICHAEL PUTLAND/PHOTOSHOT

WorldMags.net

Well, Elton's paid his dues. For seven years he struggled like any other unknown professional musician, and what he has to show for those years in the wilderness is a confidence and depth of talent which keep his feet on the ground in his current situation.

What were the first stirrings of musicality in you? When I was young, I was brought up on my parents' pile of 78s, people like Guy Mitchell, Frankie Laine, Rosemary Clooney, Kay Starr, Billy May… all that early-'50s stuff. My first favourite of all was Winifred Atwell; I was knocked out by her. Then my mother came home with two records – "ABC Boogie" by Bill Haley and "Heartbreak Hotel" by Elvis Presley. I'll never forget that: one was on Brunswick and the other was on HMV. I really freaked when I heard them, and I went on from there. The first thing I ever read about Elvis was in a barber's shop, and I couldn't believe it.

You must have been eight or nine then? Yeah, I used to get a certain amount of pocket money each week, and I remember buying a Little Richard record – "She's Got It" and "The Girl Can't Help It" – and my mother wouldn't let me play it. She liked rock but not Little Richard, and I was really annoyed because it was my favourite record. I was really starstruck, and pop music was my whole life. Then I started playing piano at the academy, and I was always playing pop things.

I was about 14 when I met a guy called Stuart Brown, who was the boyfriend of a friend of my cousin's. I was extremely fat at the time, and when I told him that I could play the piano he just laughed. He was a very moody sort of fellow, he played guitar, so I showed him and went through my Jerry Lee Lewis bit, at the age of 14, and that was it. So we got this band together that played in Boy Scout huts and we never had any amplifiers or anything, and that all faded away. It was just a pastime.

Then a couple of years later I ran into him again, and he said, "Listen, let's try and get a band together again", so we did. It was originally a four-piece – this was when I was still at school – and at that time I played piano in a pub up the road to me every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, playing and singing Jim Reeves-type songs, and I was earning a fortune. People used to give me money, and with that I got my first electric piano and an amplifier.

When did you actually start playing piano? When I was four… I just picked it up by ear. My father played trumpet with Bert Weedon in the Bob Miller Band, I think.

Did you love pop music when you were a kid? Oh yes, ever since I can remember, it's always been pop music and, to a lesser extent, football. Anyway, Stuart and I formed this band called Bluesology, with Stuart on guitar and vocals. I used to do a bit of vocalising, but Stuart always wanted to be a singer. We decided to add some brass, so we put an ad in the paper because we were getting some semi-pro gigs and we had a manager of sorts, and we got a tenor player and a trumpeter who were much better musicians than us. At this time I'd left school and I was working at Mills Music as a tea-boy, and someone saw the band and said, "Would you like to back famous American stars?" So we thought 'yeah' and we went and did an audition for Wilson Pickett, who wanted a different backing group. But the guitarist he'd brought over couldn't stand the drummer, so the first person we backed was Major Lance. I looked incredible at that time, my passport displaying photographs of a bespectacled fatty. I really was exceedingly tubby and Billy Bunter-ish – I always had a terrible inferiority complex, which I'm only just getting rid of.

Anyway, it was really hard work because we had to work three or four gigs a night and we didn't have a roadie or anything. But it was fun and after that we backed Patti LaBelle, who also didn't like our drummer, Doris Troy, The Ink Spots, which was a fiasco, and Billy Stewart, who stood head and shoulders above everybody else. We turned pro at the start of the Major Lance tour, and I left Mills.

How did you come to join Mills? I was about to take my music A-level at school, but all I really wanted to be was a rock'n'roller. Then two weeks before the exam my cousin, who was a footballer, told me that he knew someone in the music business who had a vacancy for a tea-boy. So I left school – the music teacher went mad but I wasn't interested – and I was knocked out about getting £4 a week for packing up parcels.

That's when I met Caleb Quaye, who used to take the piss out of me because he was a runner for another office. I told him I was in a group and he'd stand there and laugh at me. I really hated him. Then the first time I went up to Dick James Music to do a demo, he was the engineer there and I nearly died. But it was great – he didn't recognise me.

> "I'd never had the confidence to sing when I was fat"

When you were backing all these soul singers, were you actually into soul? Oh yeah, I was a collecting freak – I used to buy so many singles, not albums. All the early Stax and Motown stuff. I used to pride myself on being able to say, "Have you heard this great record by Darrow Fletcher called 'The Pain Gets A Little Deeper'?" which nobody ever listened to. Very snobbish. But backing all these people really wasn't much fun after a while. So we had to try and make a go of it by ourselves.

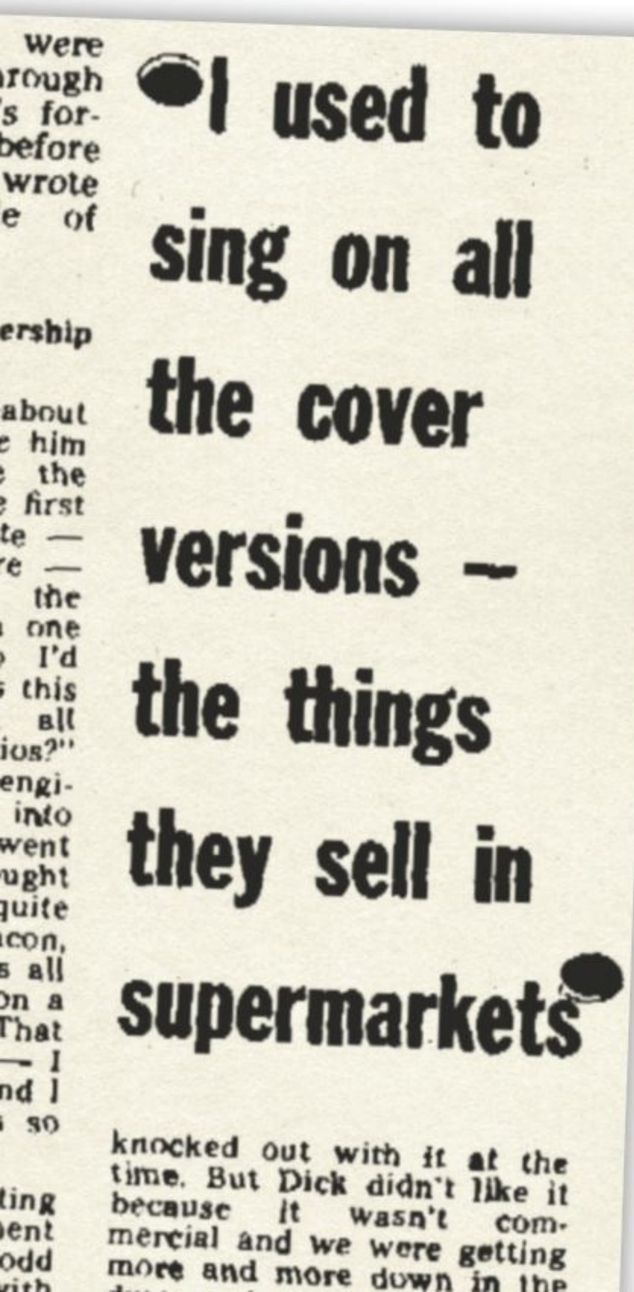
We did all the £40 gigs, and spent a year mostly playing abroad. We went to Sweden for three weeks, and just before we went John Baldry came up to us at the Cromwellian and said he was forming something like the Shotgun Express or the Steam Packet. We joined him when we came back from Sweden – I lost about four stone in three weeks, I'll never know how – and he got Marsha Hunt and another singer called Alan Walker. I remember doing an audition with Marsha which was just hysterical… the only thing she knew was "Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing", and she didn't know what key she wanted so she sang unaccompanied. Some in the band said she was awful, but Baldry said no, she looks alright. She was knocked out, and we started doing this big soul package thing.

But I was getting very depressed. I'd always wanted to sing, but I'd never had the confidence when I was fat. So I thought that now I'm thin, I'm going to do it. John was going to let me sing but Stuart didn't want me to, so that was that. Then John had his big hit record, and Stuart and Marsha left. We started doing cabaret, which brought me down even further.

Is it true that Baldry used a pre-recorded backing tape of "Let The Heartaches Begin" in clubs, instead of the band? Oh my god, that's right. He did it for three or four weeks, singing over this tape. Good thing the union never found out. I remember at one little club, all the girls were screaming for him and he started singing. The girls grabbed him, and instead of lapping it up he shouted, "You break my microphone and you'll pay me £50." I collapsed. In the end we managed to learn the song, but I used to turn up at gigs and just sulk. I got so depressed playing "Knock On Wood" every night.

So I gave him notice and started looking round for something else. I didn't want to join another group, because I wasn't a good organist, and the only thing seemed to be to write, which I didn't think I could do. But I saw an ad in the paper and went up to Liberty, where a guy called Ray Williams asked me what I could do. I told him I must have a lyric-writer, and he told me about a guy in Lincolnshire and showed me his lyrics. I was quite impressed – I'd have been impressed by anything – and I went away for a month and did nothing with them.

Eventually this guy came down from Lincolnshire, after I'd joined The Hollies' publishing company, which Dick James was also involved in. Liberty didn't want me. So I went up to do demos for The Hollies, and met Bernie Taupin there. He'd come down from Lincolnshire and didn't know London at all; in fact, his mother had posted the original letter to Liberty after he'd thrown it away. He was quite bemused by it all. *Richard Williams*


were
rough
's for-
before
wrote
e of

ership

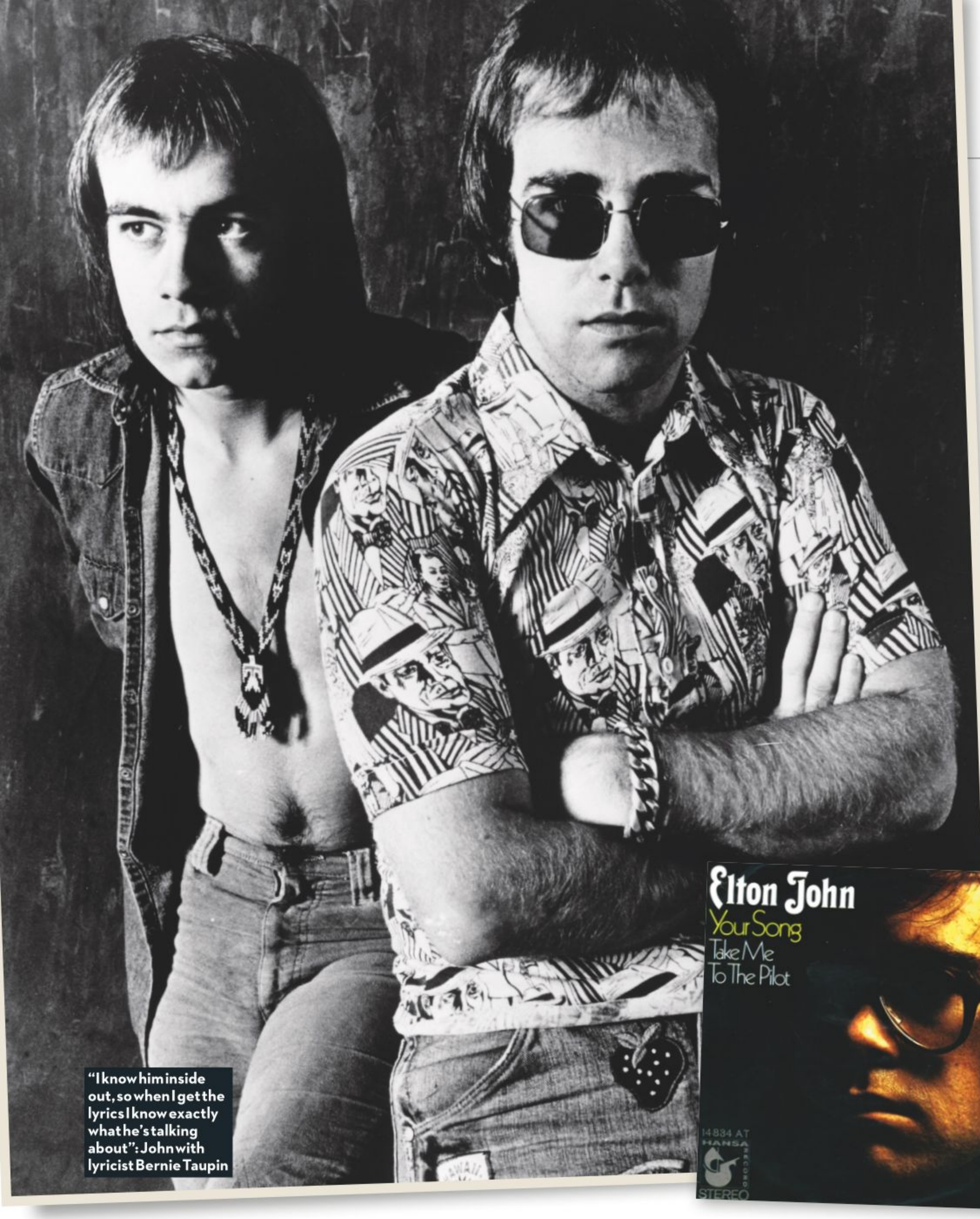
about
e him
the
first
te —
re —
the
one
I'd
this
all
ios?"
engi-
into
went
ught
quite
con,
s all
on a
That
— I
nd I
so

ting
ent
odd
with

"I used to sing on all the cover versions – the things they sell in supermarkets"

knocked out with it at the time. But Dick didn't like it because it wasn't commercial and we were getting more and more down in the

WorldMags.net



"I know him inside out, so when I get the lyrics I know exactly what he's talking about": John with lyricist Bernie Taupin



— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 13 —

MAYBE GREAT SONGWRITING partnerships, like marriages, are made in heaven. Reg Dwight met Bernie Taupin, however, in a London music publisher's office when Reg was a struggling maker of demo discs and Bernie was a totally unknown lad from Lincolnshire.

Right now, they're just about the most in-demand composers around, with every kind of artist fighting to record their songs. It's no accident, because they've hit on a blend which contains a wide range of appeal as well as undeniable quality. Elton and Bernie were brought together through Ray Williams, Elton's former manager, and before they'd met, Elton wrote tunes to a couple of Bernie's lyrics.

How did the partnership begin? I met him, but for about six months I didn't see him at all – just wrote the tunes to his words. The first 20 songs we ever wrote – crude things, they were – were published by The Hollies' company. Then one day Dick James, who I'd never met, said, "Who's this Reg Dwight spending all that money in the studios?" and Caleb Quaye, the engineer, who was quite into what we were doing, went in and told Dick he thought the stuff was quite good…

He saved our bacon, because Dick said it was alright and signed us up on a £10-a-week retainer. That was when I left Baldry – I had a wage coming in, and I could live on it. It was so exciting.

We just started writing songs, and to supplement my wages I used to do odd demos and sessions with people. In fact up to the very time I left for the States I was still doing people's demos… I did the original demo of The Brotherhood Of Man's *United We Stand*, and I used to sing on all those Avenue records – you know, the things they sell in Tesco supermarkets, the cover versions. I had to do Stevie Wonder, Andy Fairweather-Low, the whole lot… I had a ball, we'd have a right laugh on the sessions.

Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway were very instrumental in helping us get on – we owe a lot to them, and they gave me a lot of sessions. We weren't all that familiar with Dick at the time; he wanted us to write Top 40 stuff and so he signed me to a recording contract as well.

In fact we made a whole album that never ever came out. I heard it the other night… it was so embarrassing, even though I was knocked out with it at the time. But Dick didn't like it because it wasn't commercial and we were getting more and more down in the dumps because we were writing what he wanted. He actually entered one of our songs in the Eurovision contest and it got into the last six. We were brought down with that as well.

Then a guy called Steve Brown arrived and said, "This isn't very good stuff – write what you want to do", which was very courageous of him at the time because he was just a plugger. We were desperate for someone to help us, and from then on we wrote for ourselves.

It was such a battle with Dick at first, because he thought we should still be writing Top 40 stuff, but Steve gradually worked his way in and won him over. It was a hell of a struggle, but I'm glad it happened like that. It was amazing the disappointments we had – people were going to record such-and-such songs of ours and it never happened, because primarily then we were songwriters, and I'm certainly not proud of the songs we wrote then.

The first record I ever made was on the Philips label. It was called "I've Been Loving You"… you wouldn't believe it. Actually, we made a couple of singles as Bluesology, both on Fontana. One was called "Come Back Baby", written by me, and the other was "Mr Frantic"… the mind boggles. Then we made one on Polydor, written and produced by Kenny Lynch, called "Since I Met You Baby", which also never got anywhere.

Then I made "I've Been Loving You" as Elton John. Not many people know that; most people think that "Lady Samantha" was the first. "I've Been Loving You" was a sort of Engelbert Humperdinck-type thing.

When and how did you become Elton John? The last thing I ever did with Baldry was a gig in Scotland, and I flew back from there with Caleb, who was also with Baldry, and the record was coming out. I said, "Look, we've got to think of a name", and Elton Dean was playing in the band at the time, so I said let's pinch that. But we couldn't really pinch Elton Dean, because he might get a bit uptight, so we just thought of a name that was short that went with Elton. It had to be done in a bit of a rush. Nobody liked it – it was awful, but it was the only one we could think of and it was certainly better than Reg Dwight. Poor old Elton Dean's gone on to greater things as well, after I pinched his name.

Do you ever hope for a time when the world will know you as Reg Dwight? Not really – it's only a name. Reg Dwight is exactly the same as Elton John. It did me a lot of good personally, because with Reg Dwight I had a terrible inferiority complex, and to change my name helped me get away from it. At one point I wanted to change it again, but no one could come up with anything better.

How do you feel about that now? I couldn't get used to it. Even now, when people call me Elton, I think they're putting me on, being flash or sending me up. But very few people call me Reg now – even Dick's started calling me Elton, which is very strange. »

GETTY

WorldMags.net

— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 20 —

DESPITE, OR PERHAPS because of, the wide acclaim which has greeted Elton John in the past six months, he's recently come in for some fairly heavy criticism. Much of this centres around his stage act, because he's the first new star for a long time (save perhaps Tiny Tim) who's actually preferred to go on stage wearing something other than the clothes he normally walks around in. He's been bad-mouthed for the way he ends his shows, with an orgiastic rock'n'roll trip that usually sees him standing on the piano, lying under it, and exhorting the audience to clap along while he plays the keyboard with his boots.

How do you react to the criticism? Yeah, well, that's valid. Fair enough – people don't know what sort of upbringing I've had. They just think I'm a moody songwriter. What they're saying is that Elton's got enough talent; he doesn't need to do that. That's a nice thing to say, but they don't realise that rock'n'roll is really basically where I'm at, how I was brought up. The first big influence in my life was those two records, "ABC Boogie" and "Heartbreak Hotel". If you play piano, it's great to play like that, banging away, and I just like doing it. I don't have to do it to prove myself… I really look forward to that bit, the end, where I can freak out and do what I want.

If they don't like it then that's fair enough, because beforehand in the show they've had the bits of music that they can dig. But I really enjoy it, and in fact we've written a couple of new rock'n'roll things. It's all a part of me – I like doing soul songs, and gospel-type songs and the rock'n'roll songs. They'll have to accept it.

Do you always end the show with the rock'n'roll? Isn't it risky, if the audience hasn't gone along with you? Not really, because every gig we've had since we left for the States the first time, we've started with a quiet solo number, then we build up gradually and by the end the audience just can't wait for it. We really have the most amazing receptions – it's just the critics who don't like the rock'n'roll. Going by audiences, basically that's all they want, especially in the States. I heard Larry Coryell do the most amazing set at Fillmore West, and nobody wanted to know. So he did a send-up of "Johnny B Goode" and they went mad. That's basically what the kids want – a lot of them, anyway. But I couldn't do an all rock'n'roll show; it would be a drag for me.

Are you writing a lot now? Yeah, we wrote three last week. There's a lot of things that we haven't been able to do live because they need a guitar, so we're taking Hookfoot with us on the next American tour, partly so that Caleb [Quaye] can play guitar with us. We've been very lucky as far as criticism goes. We're getting knocked now, but own up, people must be getting sick to death of reading "Elton John – Wonder Human Being". I'm getting a bit cheesed off with it myself, so a little bit of criticism is good.

Obviously you take notice of it – I read all the music papers, I don't read anything else. There was a thing in the *MM* that really annoyed me – an interview with Patto, where they were being very bitter about people not making it for themselves. I used to feel the same way when I was in Bluesology. Patto said that it made them sick to work so hard for years and then someone like Elton John comes along and gets written about and all that. It really upsets me because they don't realise that I've been through exactly the same thing.

What do you think are Bernie's main strengths as a lyricist? The main strength is that he writes very rarely. When he first started he wasn't all that pretentious, but there's a couple of tracks on *Empty Sky* – like "Hymn 2000", which is really awful, just terrible. He's got over that, and he's got down to saying things very simply. He's finding his own way, and he's only very young, not 21 yet. He's very good because he's sentimental; he's found his niche. He doesn't churn things out; I really have to pressure him to write, because I can't do a thing until he's produced some lyrics. Also he only writes about personal things, which is great because I know him inside out, so when I get the lyrics, I know exactly what he's talking about. Like "Your Song"… I knew what chick he was involved with at the time.

How did you get involved with Paul Buckmaster? Steve Brown produced our first things, and then he said he didn't feel experienced enough to produce any more – he'd never done anything like that in his life – so he suggested that we look around for another producer and arranger. We called up all the usual people, George Martin and so on, but they were all busy, they couldn't do anything for five weeks. It dragged on and on, and we had all this material waiting. Anyway, Tony Hall said he'd got a bloke called Paul Buckmaster who'd just made the Sounds Nice record. We had nothing to lose, so we went round to see him. We played him "Your Song" and he said he didn't want to touch it because it was too nice. Then he played us some

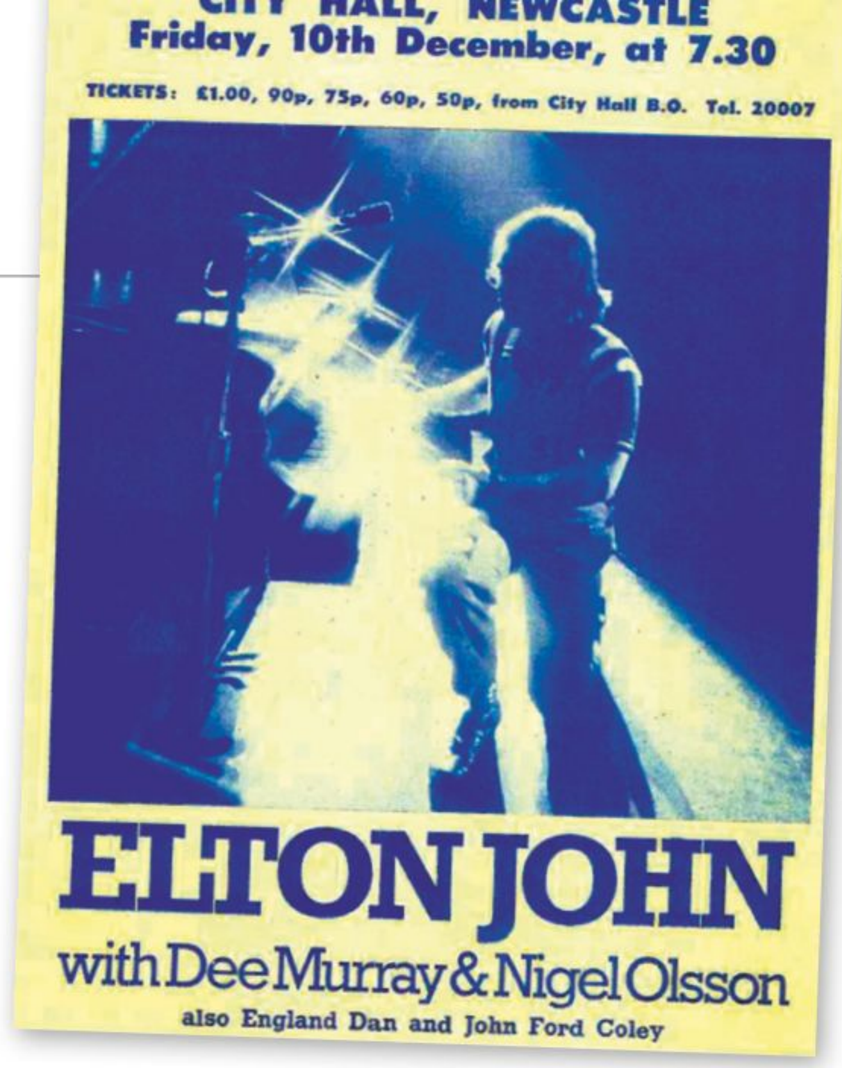




GETTY

January 14, 1971: Elton John performs his breakthrough hit "Your Song" on *Top Of The Pops*

WorldMags.net



things he'd done, and we agreed to work together. We asked him if he knew a producer and he mentioned Gus Dudgeon and that he felt comfortable with him.

Steve took our songs to Gus, who liked them but wasn't very keen, but eventually we got down to it and really worked that album out. The first session we did was "Take Me To The Pilot", and it just clicked from the start. I don't see Paul very much because he's busy with The Third Ear Band.

I told him that if ever he wants to stop doing our albums he can, because I know his head's way above what we're doing. But he enjoys doing them, and if he stops getting enjoyment out of it then we won't mind if he doesn't want to work with us any more. He's probably the most humble arranger I've ever met – he really doesn't like what he did with "60 Years On"; he reckons it sounds like a 1930s horror movie score. He's always apologising, but his head is amazing.

Have you enjoyed the past year? Yeah, I've had a ball. But I don't want to get to the point where I become obsessed with sales figures. If it all ended tomorrow I could go out and get a job. I really enjoy it – so many people can't enjoy success. That's why I'm frightened about turning sour. I can understand now why people go away and become hermits.
Richard Williams

— NME FEBRUARY 13 —

IT WAS AN advertisement in the *New Musical Express* that originally led to the chance meeting and subsequent multi-million-dollar collaboration of Elton John and Bernie Taupin. That must have been all of three years ago. At a time when Elton John (née Reg Dwight) was looking for a lyricist to put the words to a batch of songs that he'd written – and a frail, fresh-faced Lincolnshire lad called Taupin was seeking the services of a sympathetic composer to complement his reams of poetry. With this in mind and hope in their hearts, they both replied to an advertisement placed by Liberty Records which offered fame and fortune to naive unknowns.

"Well… as it turned out we didn't sign with Liberty, but we did arrive at the conclusion that Reg and I were both musically compatible," Bernie began, while apologising for his late arrival for our interview due to the wonders of British Rail. "At that time, I was writing some very banal stuff and Reg was writing straight commercial pop tunes. The first things that we did weren't very good at all… our hearts just weren't in them. Actually, you wouldn't believe it if you heard that early stuff. It's really corny and I suppose quite funny now. Thank goodness it's locked away in the vaults."

After a year without producing anything that gave them any semblance of self-gratification, they both agreed that the only way in which they could yield any positive fruition from their newly formed partnership was to use their own discretion and write for themselves. With the result that the much covered "Lady Samantha" and "Skyline Pigeon" were the very first songs that they were proud to put their respective names to.

If Elton John is the outrageously attired extrovert of the duo, then Bernie Taupin must clearly be the complete antithesis of pop imagery. His only concession was a sweatshirt that he was wearing under his leather jacket. Lighting a cigarette and casually thumbing through the week's pop press, he gave an insight into the somewhat bizarre method in which they both work – for apparently they never actually compose a song together.

"It's always the case of me writing a set of lyrics, then passing them onto Elton, who after studying them, fits a tune around them… It's as simple as that. Funnily enough, it works quite well… Most of the time I've been very pleased with the outcome."

As to why this particular method should work so well, Bernie is not quite sure. However, he is content in the knowledge that their rapport has resolved itself in such a successful unity, his conclusion being: "I assume it's the fact that we are completely opposite to one another in our respective lifestyles."

While Elton has gone on to capture the limelight on both sides of the Atlantic as the performing half of the team, Bernie is quite content to sit back in the solitude of the countryside and let his alter ego get on with the splendid job of selling their songs.

Without displaying any signs of discontent or frustration, he openly admits to having no aspirations whatsoever of also becoming a performer.

"I very much doubt if I'll ever do any public appearances," he confessed, continuing this line of conversation. "I'm quite happy with the way things are. My only interest is in writing. If Elton gets all the limelight then that's alright with me."

If his admiration for Elton as an artist is without restraint, then his displeasure about some of the recent uncomplimentary asides that have appeared in print about Elton's onstage cavorting prove to be a source of irritation. "I'm pleased for Elton because I personally feel him to be a talent in his very own right and so it annoys me when people get the wrong concept of him. What particularly annoys me is that the so-called 'in crowd' who were continually predicting great things for Elton are now knocking him since he's become big… It really is a sickening state of affairs. People say why does he have to do rock'n'roll and wear all those funny clothes, but that's Reg. He's an eccentric in the nicest possible way. If it makes him happy it's fine by me. You get all those snide remarks like, 'When will Elton John get some dress sense?'"

Mr Taupin's frank opinion is that some of the less informed critics are continually on a power trip. Even if they do like something, they won't openly admit it – it's all down to being super-cool.

"I believe Reg to be a really great rock artist," he stated adamantly, in defence of Elton's talents. "A lot of acts just play rock to end their show, because the plain truth is that their act didn't go down too well, and so it's a good old reliable standby. But people like Elton, Leon Russell, Pete Townshend and Steve Marriott play rock all the time.

"The reason Elton goes down so well in the States is down to the fact that, apart from being a good entertainer, the audiences over there are far less inhibited. I think that over here, people are still trying to be ultra-cool. The next time he goes back to America he'll be phenomenal."

When perusing the excellent illustrated book of lyrics that accompanies *Tumbleweed Connection* and those contained within the gatefold cover of the *Elton John* album, one immediately becomes aware that Bernie Taupin is a writer of infinite imagination and perception.

As to where he draws his inspiration from, Bernie revealed, "*Tumbleweed Connection* was something that I'd always wanted to do, for I have always been most interested in the history of the Old West. In a way, I suppose you could say that they are just cowboy songs.

Most of those songs were written about the same time as the material on the *Elton John* album. As they all seem to be into a certain pattern, we decided upon using this as a concept."

As a complete contrast, he gave an insight as to how the theme of their current hit single "Your Song" was instigated. "That song was meant to have been written by someone who hadn't written a song before and didn't know how to write. Through it's a basic love song it's not supposed to be naive… I suppose it's very personal."

However, the Old West isn't Bernie's only source of creative inspiration, for he went on to relate, "I'm involved with children's books… from Tolkien to CS Lewis." And he admitted, "I live in a fantasy world… I'm not very realistic; I never read papers or listen to the news. To be quite honest, I can't take politics and violence. I always seem to live in the world of the book that I happen to be reading. I suppose it's because I was brought up in the country and on my mother's side there were relations who wrote." *Roy Carr* •

> "That early stuff is really quite corny. Thank God it's locked away"

WorldMags.net

The 28-year-old Isaac Hayes in his office at Stax Records in Memphis, Tennessee: "I think organisation is very important"

WorldMags.net

“I want to do something fresh”

ISAAC HAYES, once a jobbing songwriter, has devised a magnificent, symphonic take on soul. Not everyone digs (one US critic calls it “black muzak”), but those who understand know a quiet revolution is underway. “What we’re doing just reflects what is happening in the black world generally,” says Hayes.

EYEVINE

WorldMags.net

— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 13 —

ISAAC HAYES IS already a giant of black music. Yet three albums ago he was little more than one half of a very fine songwriting team that churned out hits for Sam & Dave, Carla Thomas, and other Stax acts. Neither Hayes, nor his partner David Porter, looked like potential superstar material.

But Ike has made it, and how. Those three albums – *Hot Buttered Soul*, *The Isaac Hayes Movement* and *To Be Continued* – have sold millions of copies, topping the American pop, R&B and jazz charts for months on end. Right now, he's one of the hottest contenders around.

The man himself is something of an enigma, at least to outsiders. His publicity pictures have him looking mean, moody and mysterious, bare-torsoed and hung with stark, symbolic chains, head aesthetically shaven, omnipotent. But when you meet him, he's charming to a degree.

He approves of his image of inaccessibility, though, and doesn't deny that he's known to surround himself with heavies. He doesn't intend to go the route of so many exploited black artists, and he's prepared to defend himself in that cause.

His office is phenomenal, the talk of the company. Reclining behind his long desk, he's surrounded by good hi-fi, a small colour TV, wild printed walls, fringed carpets and sci-fi lighting, plus a womb-like chair with speakers in the headrest. It's so freaky that, on my way out, I actually had to enquire which particular panel was the door.

How did you arrive at the idea of extended songs, like "…Phoenix"? Well, it wasn't really an idea; I just felt that to get the tune over the way I wanted to, it had to be a long version. I was given the opportunity to arrange and cut it as I saw fit, so I did it with no pressure. At the completion everybody said, "Yeah, it's hip, but it might be too long", but I took the selfish attitude that if it doesn't sell a copy I'm satisfied with the arrangement and the performance. When I was cutting it I wasn't conscious of the time; I didn't even think about that.

Did you do it in one take? "…Phoenix" was, yeah. I just started. I was sitting at the organ and we had kind of a rough time mixing it down because of the bleed from the organ onto the vocal track. I just started rapping and then went on into the song.

I wondered if maybe the idea came from the old style of gospel preaching? Looking at it afterwards it's kind of in that style, but I didn't think about it like that… I felt I had to do it to sell the tune, especially to get it over to the black market. It had been introduced to the pop and country & western markets, recorded by quite a few other artists, but it hadn't really gone over big black. So I took it on down to Soulsville, with a story that they could identify with.

Is everything you do aimed in terms of the black market? Yes, I guess… one reason is because of me being black, and the other reason is my approach to the songs. A large percentage of the sales on all my albums are black, but it's beginning to spread over to other markets; there's an almost immediate response on the jazz market.

How do you feel about going on the jazz chart? Well, when I was younger my understanding of jazz was a tune being improvised… chords, progressions, things like that, and also improvising even from a vocal performance. When I was rated as "jazz" I was in a sense embarrassed; I didn't consider myself a jazz artist. Sure I play with arrangements, and I like to get off into an idea musically, but when you get greats that I had admired for years, the acknowledged great musicians of jazz, and I beat them on polls and things, I get scared. But they rate me, and I accept it as long as someone is accepting what I'm doing.

Were you surprised by all the success? Yes I was, just by a lot of people saying it was a good album but it wouldn't make it because it's too long. I just accepted the fact that it wouldn't be a hit, but like I say I was well pleased with the performance and everything, and when it started to sell I was…surprised.

So, how did you approach the second album, in the light of this success? Same way. I didn't do any pre-planning… I feel as if you would pre-plan something like that it might not come out right with a natural feel, so I just waited until I felt it. A lot of times I'd get into the studio, producing other acts, and I'd work myself up, getting really keyed up and in a studio mood, and then ideas would just come. I'd think of a tune and say, "OK, let's cut it", and when I'd cut it I'd listen to the track and when I'm in the mood I'd put my vocal on. It all comes in moods… I'd get in a mood to put the strings and horns on, and then I'd get in a mood to call Dale Warren, my co-arranger, and I'd convey my ideas to him and he'd get them down on paper.

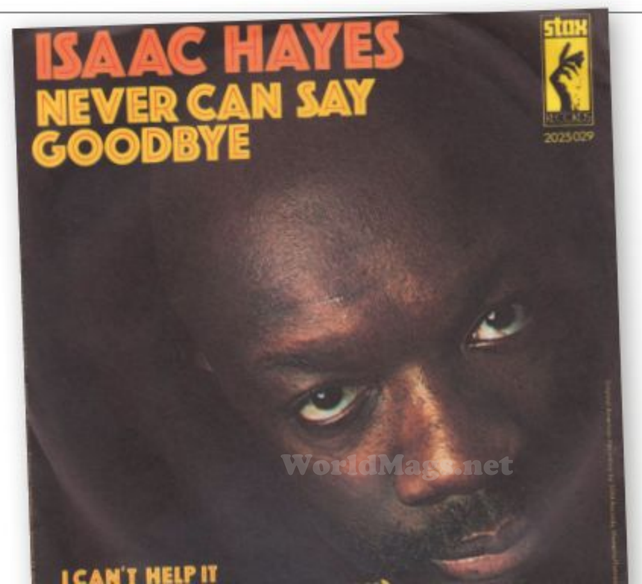
Do you write or read music? No, I can't. I can play the parts and give him the voicing of the orchestration. I hum the lines, and sometimes I put it on cassette, humming along with the track, and he writes it out and we iron out the bugs at the actual session. When that's done I give it to Pat Lewis, one of the singers, and she puts in the vocal background. Sometimes I inject some ideas that I might have, but basically I give it to her and she has a beautiful imagination for back-up singing, and when she's through all we do is mix.

One writer put down *To Be Continued* as "black muzak". How do you react to that? I read it. I was surprised, but I just chalked it up to ignorance of what I'm doing, of what I'm all about. You see, some writers when they don't understand a thing they attack it, and he doesn't see where I'm coming from. Like he says, a man who's written songs for Sam & Dave and people like that… sure, I can also sing like that. David and I at one time contemplated going into a duo, but that has been done, that has been proven. So I want to do something different, something fresh to the people.

It can't be so bad when you've got gold to prove it… it must be saying something that somebody wants to hear. But whenever something different comes along you're going to get criticism as well as acceptance, so I was ready for that the moment it happened. Everybody has a right to do what they want to do as far as music is concerned, because music is free and that's the way I did it. I feel that there should be no restrictions in music and arrangement, even in message. Music is the universal language – that's what keeps society together when nothing else will work.

He said it was a gimmick on "Our Day Will Come", the sound of crickets and that, but that was no gimmick – it was to try and give a clear picture of what was happening on the front end of that tune, and I've had letters from fans saying that they're in a similar situation, that it gives them something to hang on to. If it means something to somebody it's no gimmick. It's something that I feel. That critic made an ass of himself – he's no god to say what's what, and neither am I. I just do what I feel and if people don't accept it I don't try to force it on them. *Richard Williams*

> "I feel there should be no restrictions in music and arrangement"



— MM FEBRUARY 20 —

IT'S GIVEN TO few musicians to create any kind of new approach or style; most of them merely modify and extend existing methods. Isaac Hayes' recent rise to prominence has been based on a discovery which is halfway between innovation and modification: he discovered that the audience was ready to listen to songs given long, extended treatments, often preceded by an even longer monologue, and surrounded by complex, often lush orchestrations.

So many people have jumped on the long-song bandwagon that a new verb has been invented in the *MM* office: "to Isaac". Following the release of his third album, *To Be Continued*, mutters of discontent have been heard; mutters suggesting that he should now try something a little different.

Are you feeling any pressure to change your approach? Yes, I've always felt pressure to do something different; in fact I had urges even on the second album to go elsewhere. There are a lot of

things I want to do, but I think organisation is very important, sticking to an idea and pursuing it to the fullest extent and then get on to something else. If you just started doing everything, I think things would fall apart.

I've had some ideas to cut simple things, with just rhythm; I think that was proven on *Hot Buttered Soul*. There are some enterprises which I'm going into which are really going to be a production. It's going to go from one extreme to the other; I can't say what it is and I predicted it in a sense in that I suggested that someone else do it but he never did, and now the market is actually coming to that, this gospel kick. I suggested some time ago that Booker T cut a whole album of that, but they never did do it, and so I'm going to cut a thing…

It'll be a three-album thing; it'll take six months of production because I'm going to carefully plan it. I have the inspiration, but something this big has to be planned properly. It'll involve quite a few people – a bunch of voices, a big orchestral thing, and it's going to be a gas. It'll be my interpretation of these things, and it's got to be beautiful.

It'll be gospel songs? It'll be spirituals and gospel and so forth, but I'm going to do it in a commercial fashion. I know how to do it from my experience of producing and arranging.

Will you do it this year? I shall try. The release might be this year or it might be next year, because it's such a big project… like George Harrison's, was that his triple-album thing? About two years ago I had the same thing…

I always get ahead of myself. I hope I haven't waited too long to do it, because sometimes the trend changes so fast and I feel I can really get right to the roots of it; I know I can from recollecting my own experiences, from being in those small country churches that are no larger than this office, where people didn't have no piano or anything, just feet on the floor. I can remember when I was a kid it's so beautiful, man, and things like this are what I'm going to try and capture.

Did you ever hear work songs when you were young? Yeah, I can vaguely remember… I'm sure my grandmother would know them, because her mother was a slave. She tells me about those experiences. I used to sing spirituals in the rural areas of Mississippi and Tennessee and Arkansas. Also I started out playing blues. I used to play with a little blues band – I think it was Valentine & The Swing Cats or something – I played a little tenor sax sometimes. On Friday evenings, man, everybody's coming in from the fields, they fry the fish here and they're gambling there and selling corn liquor there and drinking wine right across the tracks. You know, one side of the tracks is white and the other side is black. We'd play right out in the porches of the stores, those country blues.

I'm going back to those places… I've been away from it so long that I'm going back to regenerate things. All this will help in putting together this album, because I'm not only going to include spirituals, I'm going to go the whole bit. It's going to be a picture.

Is it still like that down there? In some places, yes. As Rufus says, they're so far back you have to mail 'em sunshine.

And you still feel that background strongly? Sure.

Can you tell me about your live appearances? I've done quite a few in the last year, mostly auditoriums and stadiums, never clubs because the crowds are so large.

Who backs you? I have six pieces including myself travelling with me: organ and piano, two guitars, bass and drums. We have the three girls – Hot, Buttered and Soul – and then for the strings and the horns we employ local musicians, from the symphony orchestras, to get exact reproduction of what's on the records.

That's a philosophy which is expensive, but it pays off in the long run. You hear a record, and that's one thing, and then you go to a show and see maybe three or four pieces. It makes me sick. So why not give the people what they want? It's a different experience to have all those strings and things, man; the reaction of the people is fantastic. The strings are sometimes in the pit, and they see this little band come out, and the girls, and when you get to the song when the strings come in, the people go mad. It's beautiful, man. They applaud it sometimes. I just love to entertain people, and I love the vibration you have in yourself when you can control them and whatever you feel they feel. It's a beautiful relationship between the stage and the audience. *Richard Williams*



Hayes: "It's a different experience to have all those strings and things, man"

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 30 —

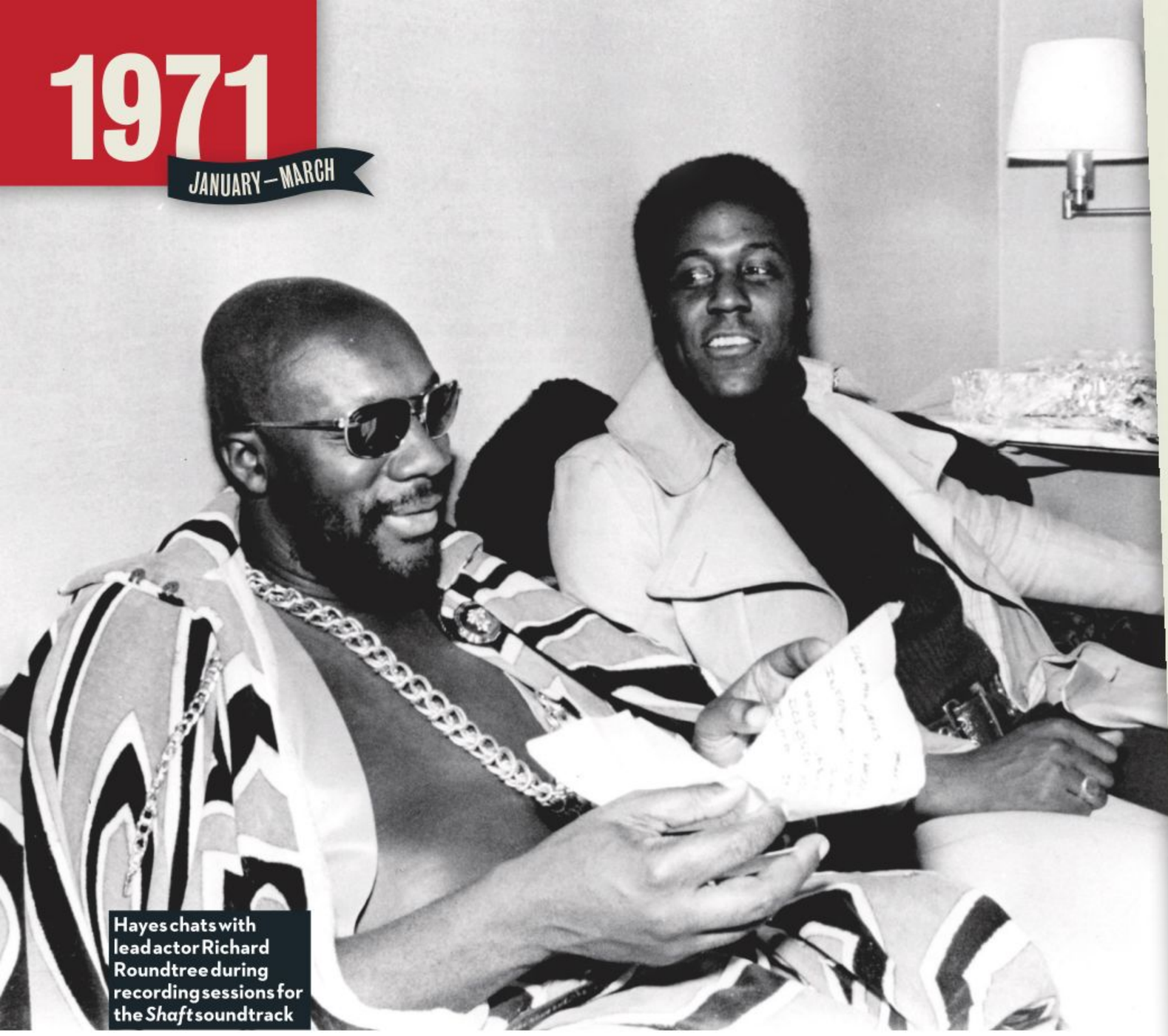
TWO YEARS AGO, Isaac Hayes was just a name in small print on the back of Stax albums. Together with partner David Porter, he was revered by soul freaks as a writer, producer and session pianist, but remained virtually unknown to the general public.

Today he is America's hottest black artist. His blend of downhome soul and complex orchestrations has brought him three gold albums in a row. And his latest, a double album soundtrack of the movie *Shaft*, is the fastest- and biggest-selling album in Stax's history, topping the US charts and selling over $3 million worth within a few weeks of release.

His music, combined with his sheer physical magnetism (with his shaven head, tribal chieftain clothes and general air of moody magnificence) have given him a charisma and a black following which challenges James Brown's claim to be Soul Brother No 1. Reports of his sell-out concerts in the States speak of adulatory audiences and of »

EYEVINE

WorldMags.net



Hayes chats with lead actor Richard Roundtree during recording sessions for the *Shaft* soundtrack



Hayes appearing in godlike splendour, surrounded by shaven-headed members of his group, The Movement, and by beautiful black ladies who reverentially remove his cloak before he ascends a golden spiral staircase to his white piano. His status, indeed, seems to be summed up by the title of his next album, *Black Moses*.

Small wonder, then, that he was asked to score the soundtrack of the black-private-eye thriller *Shaft*, the first movie venture by Gordon Parks, the brilliant former photographer for *Life* magazine. Hayes' music adds depth and impact to an unrepentantly violent and exciting, if fairly superficial, film. After its big success in the States it's due to follow Joe Cocker's *Mad Dogs And Englishmen* into British cinemas.

Isaac's involvement with *Shaft* was the result of a meeting between Stax vice-president Al Bell and Mike Curb of MGM, who had just bought the screen rights to Ernest Tidyman's novel. "Al asked me if I was interested in doing the music. I knew this was going to be a black picture and of course I said 'Right'," said Isaac over the phone from Memphis this week.

Did the success of the album surprise him?

"Well, yes… you see it took about seven weeks to do the score and it was pretty tough; I was in the middle of a tour at the time and I had to fit it in between dates. On top of that I'd just lost my orchestrator and I had to hire a new one. Another thing, I'd never done a movie before and I had to learn all the technicalities. So I was just glad to come through it all and was pleased that the director seemed satisfied. I never thought it would become our biggest album of all."

Inevitably the success of *Shaft* has brought more offers of film score work. "But I don't want to get too deeply involved in it just yet. There are so many other areas of communication: performing, writing, producing other artists. And I would like to get into acting myself. I have had offers of leading roles but it's a question of finding the right kind of role, so there's nothing definite yet."

To the general public, Hayes became an overnight success with the release of his first solo album for Stax, *Hot Buttered Soul* in 1969. Needless to say, it was not that simple.

Born on a farm outside Memphis in 1942, Hayes went to the city when he was about seven years old. His education ended with high school and he began singing around Memphis with semi-professional bands. By about 1962 he had cut a few unsuccessful sides for a local label and had started playing piano.

He gravitated to Stax, who were beginning to attract attention with artists like Rufus and Carla Thomas. There he was reunited with a former acquaintance, David Porter, who had also been a none-too-successful vocalist around town. The two discovered a mutual interest and compatibility in songwriting and eventually Stax put them on a contract.

A string of hits for Carla Thomas, Johnnie Taylor, Sam & Dave and others followed and the two men became among the most consistently successful songwriters/producers in soul. Hayes even released a solo album (for Atlantic) – an after-hours, jazzy work which bore little resemblance to his later work and which flopped. (Polydor re-released it here last year).

But by the late '60s the Memphis soul boom had faded, Sam & Dave had gone to Atlantic, Otis Redding was dead, the hits stopped coming. Stax entered an unhappy merger with the vast Gulf And Western conglomerate and found itself forced to churn out albums like a Detroit assembly line.

Paradoxically, it was this situation which was the springboard for Hayes' success. The company needed to come up with almost 30 albums for a big promotional drive. Vice-president Al Bell, casting around for sufficient material, suggested to Hayes that he cut a solo album. Hayes chose a few favourite songs, went into the studios… and the result was *Hot Buttered Soul*, which was to feature in the upper reaches of the pop, soul and jazz charts for months.

In terms of format and success, it set the pattern for his subsequent albums, featuring an elaborately arranged version of "Walk On By" and an 18-minute "By The Time I Get To Phoenix", which included a long (and claims Hayes) improvised monologue about life and love.

Hayes, it seemed, had hit on a valid and successful synthesis of traditional gospel-soul, progressive black rock and the best elements of enlightened "straight" arranging in the Burt Bacharach style. And if all those categories are too much for you, let's just say that the result was shot through with Hayes' own personality and proved to be valid and acceptable to his black audience.

"I can't really say anyone in particular had influenced me," says Hayes. "I've been influenced by all the music I ever heard… gospel, blues, R&B, soul, jazz, country & western, and it all comes out in what I do."

His seemingly overnight transformation from writer and producer of soul hits into a solo superstar with elaborate orchestral backing has surprised

> "It took about seven weeks to do the *Shaft* score… It was pretty tough"



GETTY (2)

many people. But Hayes himself sees it as a logical development. "I guess I always knew I had it inside me to be a solo artist. I just never thought it would get this big. As for the big arrangements… well, that's where my head was at all along. Some of the things we did with Sam & Dave. In some of the horn arrangements, I think you can tell which way I was going. But there's a limit to how far you can go in that kind of context."

Hayes is fully aware of the criticism from some quarters (including a white American rock critic who referred to his music as "black muzak") that he has strayed too far from traditional concepts of black music. But he doesn't accept it.

"These people just want to categorise black artists and put them in a bag. They just associate black artists with funk and they can't relate to what I'm doing now. But that's 'cos they don't know anything about it. The black audience can appreciate it because they know where I'm coming from. My audience is predominantly a black one, but more whites are coming in on it now. I give most of the credit for that to "Shaft"; it's given me a lot of exposure."

Many writers (including me) have waxed lyrical about the new directions in black music which artists like Hayes, along with Curtis Mayfield, Roberta Flack and others, are pioneering. But it's a role which Hayes seems reluctant to accept.

"I really haven't thought about it in that way… You see, I think what we're doing just reflects what is already happening in the black world generally. This is where the mind of the people is at today… their minds are open and they're ready for something a little deeper."

Hayes' next album, *Black Moses*, is almost completed. It is, he says, a little funkier than his previous albums, with more emphasis on rhythm. "A lot of the stuff has a similar feel to the 'Hyperbolic' track on *Hot Buttered Soul*.

His plans also include writing a black opera, which he hopes would emulate the success of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. "No, I wouldn't necessarily use people from the Stax family to perform it. What I would really like to do is develop some new talent. It would be written for the stage, with maybe an album to follow."

There's a chance Hayes may tour Europe next year. If he does, we're in for a treat, because he goes to tremendous lengths to reproduce his recorded sound on stage, hiring local string sections to supplement his rhythm section, The Movement, which includes two guitars, bass, drums and two pianos.

Several of The Movement, including guitarist Charles Pitts and drummer Willie Hall, can be heard on *Shaft* – "I've known Willie Hall from way back. He used to be with The Bar-Kays" – and Hayes intends to develop them as an act in their own right. "I'll be producing some records for them in the near future, and I'm going to do the same with my girl back-up singers, Hot, Buttered and Soul."

Hayes is helped in writing the charts for his big arrangements by Johnny Allen, who worked on *Shaft*. His previous orchestrator was Dale Warren.

"You see, I can't write anything down in musical form. So I have to dictate it. I work out the exact line that I want the chorus or the strings or the horns to play and then I hum it, sing it or play it on the piano and the orchestrator works out the individual parts."

The rhythm section on all Hayes' albums is supplied by The Bar-Kays, who were originally formed as Otis Redding's road band (some of the original members died in the air crash which killed Otis).

"Actually, I knew some of the band before they joined Otis. We had a band which played around town called Isaac & The Doo-Dats. That was just after we left high school.

"Stax isn't tight as it was," admits Hayes. "The thing has grown so big and everyone seems to have graduated into producing and we're all too busy doing our own thing. But we still get together occasionally… I haven't seen much of Booker or Steve Cropper, but the rest of us were in the studio quite recently… Al Jackson, Duck Dunn, The Bar-Kays."

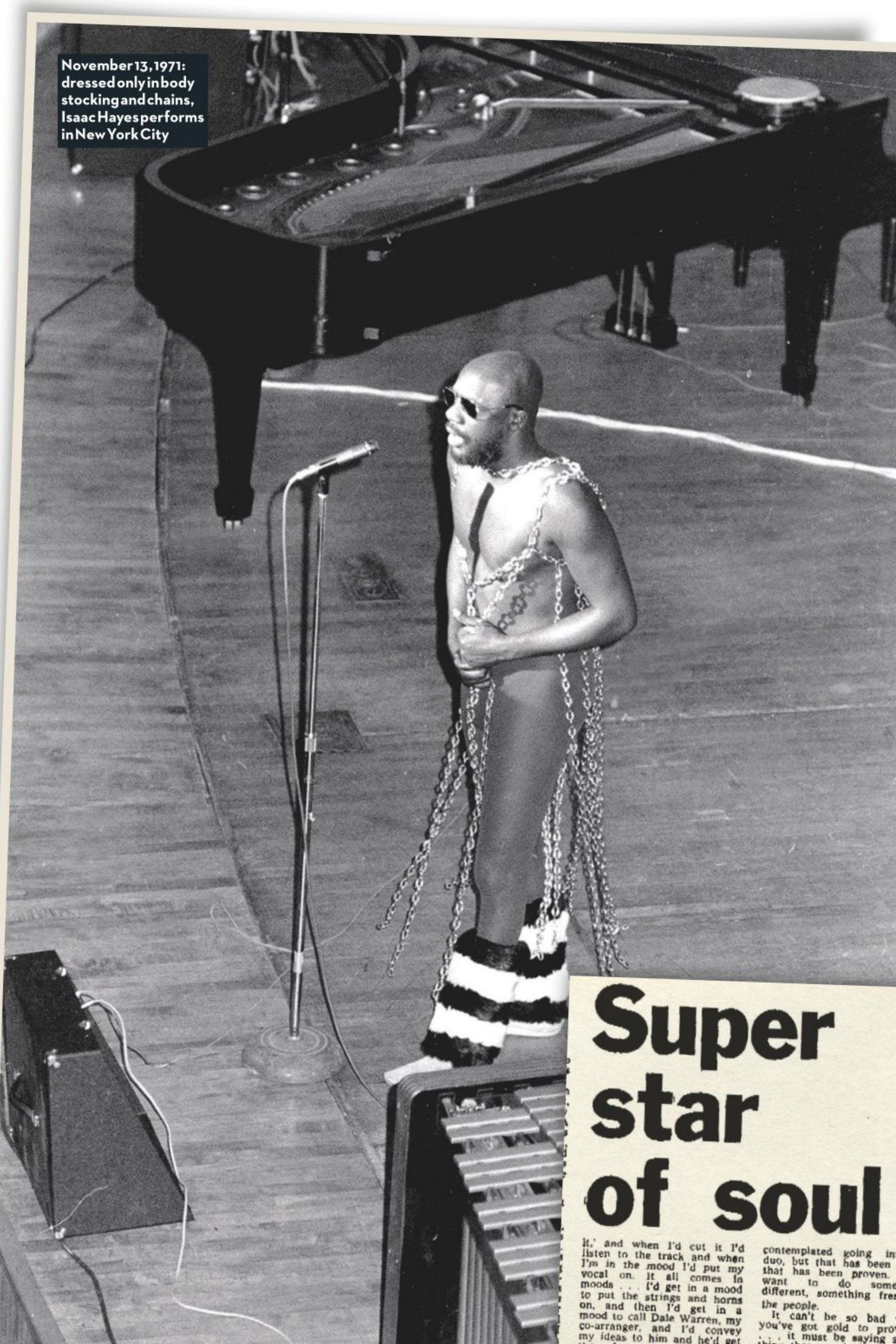
A few eyebrows were raised when Hayes began using the highly respectable Memphis Symphony Orchestra on his albums.

"They were pretty surprised when I first approached them… and a lot of people around town thought it was pretty weird to ask straight musicians to play in my bag. But I think they thought my arrangements were a challenge. It was really funny, though, the first time we played back the tapes. I watched their faces and it was obvious they weren't really interested in the music as a whole; they just listened out for their own little bit. I think they thought I had written the whole thing just for their benefit. But after that our relationship just got tighter and tighter."

Music aside, Hayes' chief concern is the Isaac Hayes Foundation, a newly formed charity through which he plans to help poor and needy old people. His first project is an old people's centre in Memphis.

"I guess what started me thinking about it was that I was raised by my grandmother. She raised a lot of other kids too and she had a real hard life, but just recently I was able to buy her a home, which I always said I would do if I ever made enough money. It occurred to me then that not all old people have someone to look after them like that.

"I try to keep out of politics. I'm approached all the time by various political groups, but I don't believe in getting involved with any particular group." *Alan Lewis* •



November 13, 1971: dressed only in body stocking and chains, Isaac Hayes performs in New York City

Super star of soul

it,' and when I'd cut it I'd listen to the track and when I'm in the mood I'd put my vocal on. It all comes in moods . . . I'd get in a mood to put the strings and horns on, and then I'd get in a mood to call Dale Warren, my co-arranger, and I'd convey my ideas to him and he'd get

contemplated going in duo, but that has been that has been proven. want to do some different, something fre the people.

It can't be so bad you've got gold to pro it must be saying

"People hate themselves because they think they're stupid and ugly": Ivor Cutler at his flat in Gospel Oak, North London

WorldMags.net

Teacher. Poet. Associate of The Beatles. IVOR CUTLER is an artist quite unlike any other. Having stealthily won a select audience, Cutler opens the door to his private world. "You either cut your throat or make a joke of life," he says.

"I suppose I'm a bit of a preacher"

— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 27 —

IT'S MID-SATURDAY MORNING. The streets of North London are grey and cheerless, damp with rain. The odd housewife can be seen doing the weekend shopping; her bags loaded with meat and groceries, the young kids hanging on to her coat chewing boiled sweets.

Up on the top floor of the corner house, a little scrubby-haired old man, wearing a dark, wine-red jacket and greenish skull cap, sits playing a chanter which he has taken down from an assemblage of musical instruments on the wall. He gives up playing after a few notes and sits back in his chair, breathing hard. "A difficult instrument to play at this time of the morning," he says finally.

His accent is Scots, and recognisably so, but its original fierce burr has been tempered to a warm edge, a process that has taken place over the last 20 years during his sojourn in England.

Bagpipes, he resumes suddenly, are found all over Europe. In Czechoslovakia they have them, and other parts of Eastern Europe. In Sardinia they have them without the bags. They just »

©ROGER KOHN

WorldMags.net





Paul McCartney and Ivor Cutler await the bus to take them on *The Magical Mystery Tour*, Allsop Place, London, September 11, 1967

suck in the air through their noses and use their cheeks as bags.

"I had an album of classical bagpipe music once – pibroch, mind – but I'd forgotten about the drone. It just kept going through my head."

Ivor Cutler picked up his tea again, sipped and eyed me warily. He is polite, but against journalists. "I've had several interviews done on me but there was only one who actually got it all right. That was by a woman, funnily enough."

I said nothing, but in the pregnant pause stared out of the window at the housewife struggling with her shopping. An extraordinary ordinary sight, I reflected. And Ivor Cutler is an ordinarily extraordinary man. I mean by that that he never ceases to amaze. He is an original. He is a painter who is a film actor, an actor who is a musician, a musician who is a writer, a writer who is a poet, and a poet who is a teacher. A teacher of young children. That, I think, is how he prefers to think of himself. Certainly, it is in classrooms that you will find him most days of the week.

I phoned him to ask for an interview. The best thing I could do would be to go along to this school in Paddington and watch him with the children, he advised me. An hour like that, he said, and I wouldn't need to speak to him on an interview basis.

Well, I never made that, but I regret it, because Ivor teaching, I feel, would have been an interesting experience. Like his songs. His music is droll and bawdy, whimsical and touching, humorous and sad; and he sings it in this very light-textured, plaintive voice, with a harmonium conjuring up vast cathedrals behind him.

Not too long ago he played his harmonium outside a transport cafe on the M1 in the early hours of one morning and several of us sang "Silent Night". With Ivor there, it somehow did not seem incongruous at all.

Incongruous. Remember Buster Bloodvessel in The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* movie? Ivor was that Sad Little Man in a funny old uniform who thought he was the driver. Sad Little Man. Not really. His eyes have a doleful turned-down look at first, but you quickly realise they are as sharp as a lizard's. His soulful look seems to be born out of an awareness of what his fellow men are really like. He is a seeker-out of hypocrisies.

"A lot of kids at my school are hypocritical," he says. "Everyone is. I'm hypocritical myself. If you're not as a kid then when are you going to be hypocritical? Most people never realise what they themselves are really like. I didn't for a long while. It took me a very personal experience to find out. My marriage broke up, and then I had a heart attack. I had to find a reason for living at all. Then I realised how great it is to be with kids when you work with them and see them smile.

"I do drama and music with my kids and it's fascinating to watch them come to terms with themselves and their hypocrisies. For example, in one piece of drama I demonstrated the reaction of a young child to the birth of another in a family. How the child hated it because it had taken its place in the mother's affections. And, see, they breathed a sigh of relief when they realised that what they thought was not unnatural. And then, if they go on to love the baby, wow!"

His teaching ideas have not always been popular. He has walked out of two schools in London because he and the heads did not see eye to eye. He has been in London, in fact, for several years but in teaching itself much longer – 22 years in all. Originally from the industrial area of Paisley, near Glasgow, he left Scotland in 1950 after a classical education and went to Summerhill, the progressive school in Suffolk. Teaching is his life, he says. "I've been in it 22 years and tears fall from my eyes that I should be allowed to teach such super kids. I'm trying to prise open their imagination."

Did he get many of his compositional ideas from the children? "It works both ways," he remarked. "It's not a direct inspiration. I never pinch things from actual life. Ideas stem from one's awareness of the world. I mean, you either cut your throat or make a joke of life, and I'm very much an optimist. I've never been accused of pessimism as a performer. Everybody has the potential for being loveable. If people as a whole realised they were loveable, you wouldn't have them going around letting off steam.

> "A lot of kids at my school are hypocritical. Everyone is"

"It's an awareness of people. People take it for granted that under their pants it's all dirty and nasty, but it's not just that. People hate themselves because they think they're stupid and ugly. I thought I was stupid until three years ago. Then, practising cosmology with my landlord, I realised I wasn't intellectual, but neither was I stupid."

He broke off and smiled slightly. "I suppose I'm a bit of a preacher."

The Magical Mystery Tour came out in 1967, but I asked Ivor about his part in it. "The Beatles just phoned me up – they'd seen my work – and said we'll expand and add bits as we go along. It was a sort of curate's egg. Good in bits. I think the film's been proved to be ahead of its time. I don't know – at the time I was too close to it to stand back and appreciate it properly. I suppose it was the break-up of scenes, *Laugh-In* style, the fact that it wasn't sequential, that made it different."

He stopped. "It was edited for television, you know. They cut out a scene where I was making love to the fat woman."

What sort of relationship did he have with The Beatles?

"I don't want to say too much about that," he said hesitantly. "But if you were looking for a thesis in psychology, it was fascinating to see the relationships in the bus to The Beatles, and when, on the last day, they realised it was all finished and they'd got to step back into the mud.

"Actually, I think I got on better with John Lennon than the others. Ringo and George were rather incoherent as people. John, I suppose, had the same kind of integrity that I have. I hope, by the way," he added hastily, "that you don't go away and write this as if I have a big head." He puts his hands either side of his ears to demonstrate.

Another person with whom he had some affinity was Lenny Bruce. He saw him work at The Establishment.

"To me, he'd be the guy for Minister Of Education. I wrote a letter to him, saying how great I thought he was, and the following night he read it to the audience. And when Lenny Bruce was banned, I asked the audience – because I was also appearing there – to write to their MPs, and they were all laughing, like bloody fools.

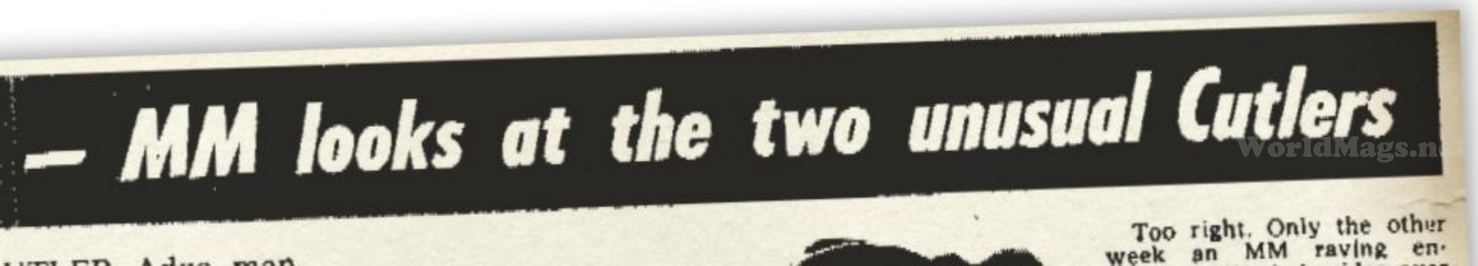
"I think he really loved people. I went to speak to him one night and tell him how good he was and he just shut the door in my face. He couldn't stand that sort of thing."

Ivor has already had out one album, *Life In A Scots Sitting Room*, and Julie Driscoll is thinking of recording some of his songs. At present, though, he is working on an album for Dandelion. Most of his writing, he says, he does on the bus to school. He tends to underplay his songs like that and stress the painter in him.

"I'm a painter, trying to make money to be able to paint. Then I found songs and I thought it was as valid a medium as any other. I've done lots of things, though. Cartooning – for *Private Eye* and a lot of papers. And reviews. Really, I'm pathetic. It's the story of the little boy trying to get attention from his mother. When you've explored one avenue, you move on to another. A lot of people do it all their lives. Everything I do, mind, is fun; if I don't like it I won't do it."

What else was he doing now? "I'm writing a book. A woman called Rita Parkinson is going to illustrate it. It's called *Odd Old Flora*." *Michael Watts* •

GETTY


— MM looks at the two unusual Cutlers

Too right. Only the other week an MM raving en-

"I like Alan Price – is he pop music?"

MM MAY 1 A perplexed Ivor Cutler listens to the latest sounds sight unseen in Blind Date. "I like a thinner sound so you can see the structure."

TRACKS REVIEW 1971



IVOR CUTLER IS a man of many parts, a singer, musician (mainly harmonium on stage), poet, novelist, cartoonist and – perhaps above all – a teacher. Yet he is a man who eschews intellectualism – is not even sure if he is intelligent. If one had to pick out the single quality that runs through his work and his personality it would be a healthy scepticism; a reaction, as he himself admits, to his early days of wishy-washy liberalism. His involvement with the pop scene is haphazard, touching it only at certain points. If you want to go and see him, look in on a Soft Machine concert some time. He could be playing somewhere on the bill. You can't miss him.

Third World War MI5's Alive
FROM THE LP *THIRD WORLD WAR*, FLY

(*Listens with head sunk in hands*) What can you say about that? (*Bewildered smile*) It's nice music to dance to, I suppose. It's completely dance music. You can hear the gimmicks. His voice, for instance, is very unusual. It must be funny getting his tonsils fixed in such a position so he can make this croak (*swallows hard and demonstrates*). It was impossible, though, to hear the lyrics. If they're relying on the quality of the lyrics and the singing, why don't they bring his voice forward over the noise? Oops! Sorry, I didn't mean that! Instruments, I should've said. It's original.

Nico The Falconer FROM THE LP *DESERTSHORE*, REPRISE

(*Repeats his previous posture, hunched in his chair*) I've no idea who it is. It's a nice voice but what really gets me is how you can sing right if you can't hear the words. The harmonium she uses sounds as if they've built it up and amplified the sound. I'm very irritated. It started off as a good idea but the things which make it interesting have just become repetitious (*winces at a false piano note from John Cale*). I'm looking for a structural quality and it's just not good enough. The thing with the piano was absolutely amazing; it was just out of sympathy with the rest of the song. Who was it? Oh, I've heard her before. I think I've seen her on the telly. It could be that the track you gave me was not the one to do her justice, not the one to make a judgement on. You know, talking about that harmonium again, I did a gig with Ron Geesin at the beginning of this week and he said everyone started off using electronics as an auxiliary to the music, but they take over, and this, I think, is what's happened to that.

> **"I'm looking for a structural quality and it's just not good enough"**

John Cale/Terry Riley
Hall Of Mirrors In The Palace At Versailles FROM THE LP *CHURCH OF ANTHRAX*, CBS

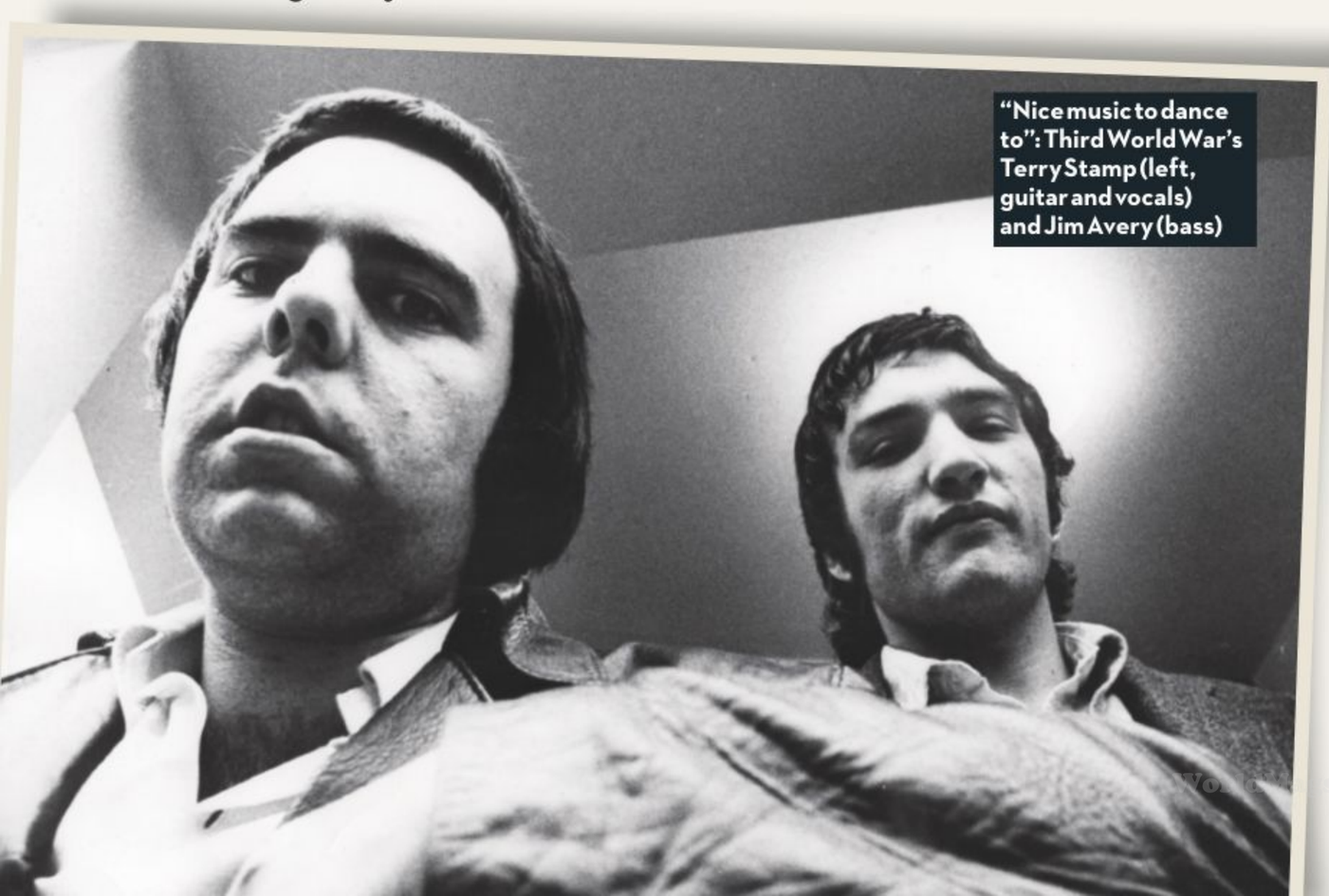
I like the basic harmonic idea, which is using the tonic and the dominant. I can see it's something you'd have to listen to a long time before you could appreciate it. It's the kind of thing you'd have to live with and get to know, you know. I've got a basic liking for the idea. It recalls the Miles Davis oldie, you know, the Spanish thing, *Sketches Of Spain*, yes, that's it! But it's also modern French Romantic. Actually, I know it's got an emotional content, but I haven't come to that yet, I'm listening for the point of view of structure. I think this might be pretty super as a live thing. Yes, it's great, they never leave go of the theme. It's quite a tour de force to go on and on. You know what it reminds me of? Its modern Japanese cinema, where you get something and it builds. (*Record ends*) Yes, it was fantastic, this inexorable build-up.

The Rolling Stones
Sister Morphine FROM THE LP *STICKY FINGERS*, ROLLING STONES RECORDS

(*After 30 seconds*) Oh it's such crap after that previous one! This is so corny, so commercial, so empty, and so insincere. You should've played these two records the other way round, so we could've got this over with (*bursts with laughter when told who it is*). Good, I'm glad! Isn't it pathetic after the last one? It's like listening to "Show Me the Way to Go Home" after hearing Mahler. If people do enjoy this it seems to be a cult thing. But what other reaction could you expect from a sophisticated musician? I suppose I could be said to be snobbish, but I don't spend my time listening to pop music. I like Alan Price – is he pop music? He once sang me a song which made me cry. It was a Randy Newman thing. Beautiful. I was just so irritated having to listen to that. Maybe it's an acquired taste. You learn to enjoy bitter chocolates. The BBC make such a big thing when the Rolling Stones are on television. I saw it with my kids and they were so excited. I couldn't see why. (*Looks at the Andy Warhol cover with the zip*) You know, I'm not a puritan about sex, I'm a romantic. But I wonder if more girls will buy this than boys. I wonder if they'll take it to bed and unzip it.

Soft Machine
Fletcher's Blemish
FROM *FOURTH*, CBS

It's such a relief coming after the other. (*Smiles at the drum sound*) It's a guy with a good sense of humour. Do you want to know the names that comes into my mind? Roscoe Mitchell and Albert Ayler, but not necessarily American. Mike Westbrook – that's a name that comes into my head as well. And I suppose Soft Machine, although it's not their instrumentation. No, it couldn't be them because they don't have so many instruments, though they had a seven-piece a long time ago, didn't they? I like a thinner sound than this, so you can see the structure. I don't like a fat sound, but that's no criticism of this, because I think it's a very respectable sound.


"Nice music to dance to": Third World War's Terry Stamp (left, guitar and vocals) and Jim Avery (bass)

"It's a pretty dress..."

A big house. Vintage cars. A growing songwriting empire... DAVID BOWIE is enjoying life post–"Space Oddity", and has a new sound to present. So what if his new flamboyant look earns him threats in the street? "I thought the dress was beautiful," he says.

— DISC MARCH 20 —

WHEN DAVID "BANGERS" Bowie came to meet me from the 2.40 from Blackfriars to Beckenham in Kent, I unguardedly climbed into his incredibly ancient mad old Riley. And as the car ambled casually from the station's yard, I remarked that David's appearance had changed considerably since his brief days of glory with his single "Space Oddity". His hair has grown longer and he was wearing blue velvet trousers with a woolly blue dressing gown-cum-coat.

We stopped briefly to pick up some shopping in the town and jammed a sixpence in the engine to keep it turning over. Then we bombed off again. I held on to the door as it appeared to be on the point of dropping off. "It won't come off," I was assured. "It's just a bit loose. And if you think this is old, you wait till you see the house and the rest of my old cars." »



David Bowie at home in Haddon Hall, Beckenham, Kent, in the Mr Fish man-dress he wears on the original UK cover of *The Man Who Sold The World*

MIRRORPIX

WorldMags.net



WorldMags.net

January 1971: on a US trip to promote *The Man Who Sold The Word*, but without a work permit, Bowie entertains at a party thrown by publicist and future nightclub impresario and DJ Rodney Bingenheimer at the LA home of lawyer Paul Figen

David and his lady live in a beautiful Victorian house which even has turrets on the roof and a gallery running around the first floor inside the house. It overlooks a kind of banqueting hall. There's also a huge garden, the domain of a very lazy King Charles spaniel.

Spread out on the floor of one room were numerous tapes of songs from an album to be released here in April, called *The Man Who Sold The World*. It's already selling well in the States, where Three Dog Night have covered three of the tracks. Bowie also has material for a new album he is working on and demos of songs he has sold to other artists.

Herman's next solo single, "Oh! You Pretty Things", was written by him, as were other tracks bought by producer Mickie Most, a song for the Sir Douglas Quintet and one for Gene Vincent. "Its funny how I suddenly seem to have taken off as a songwriter, but this is what living down here has done for me. I'm wrapped up in my friends and include them in the songs. One of my songs, 'Rupert The Riley', is about the car."

The Riley is one of four cars, in various stages of working order, including an enormous old wedding car with plush velvet seats which is soon to have a stereo system installed.

As well as looking after his own album career, David is producing two solo singers and a group called Arnold Corns, who were signed up to B&C records just as I sat listening to their demo single, "Moonage Daydream". It really is incredible and bodes well for an album they hope to do soon. Three of the band are schoolboys and the lead singer calls himself Rudolph Valentino.



David is also producing and writing for a solo singer called Geoff Alexander, who sounds rather like The Band's Robbie Robertson, and also has an old friend from art college, Calvin James, who designed the sleeves for the first T. Rex album and Gentle Giant. James' single is out on Bell next month.

Since "Space Oddity", David has left the singles market himself to concentrate on albums.

"I became disillusioned after 'Space Oddity'. The album was released at the same time and did absolutely nothing. No one even bothered to review it, and I'm personally convinced that some of the tracks were really good. I just decided to leave London and come to live down here. In fact, the only thing that gave me faith again was being asked to go across to America. If I'm into making it in records, I'll have to go and live there."

GETTY

WorldMags.net

David has just returned from a three-month stay in America. As he didn't have a work permit, he couldn't do any gigs, but went round some universities talking to students about the album and doing interviews for radio stations.

"In America, although you might not believe it, I'm regarded as an underground artist. They know nothing about my singles and see 'Space Oddity' as just as an LP track. But in America, music is a communicating force; people all relate to it. Besides, there isn't much bread to be made here at the moment."

A frenzied search of the house for a copy of the new LP was fruitless, but David talked about the talent of the two musicians who played on it. They are Mick Ronson and Woody Woodmansey, from a blues band in Hull. Although they felt they could make it if they teamed up as a permanent band, they returned to their group at home.

The songs are much heavier than one would expect and David thinks they were using a Moog long before many of the groups who use them now. The LP was actually recorded a year ago, so David has rather lost interest in it now, and legal hassles delayed its release here. An American review of the album mentions a tinge of bitterness, but David disagrees.

"I'm not bitter. I was disillusioned at first, but all that went long ago. I'd like to become an album artist in this country, but really I'm very happy."

I could see why as we walked round the garden, inspecting the gazebo. The country has been the means of David having time to write his songs.

Although he has strong feelings about politics, he never includes them in his numbers. "Britain just doesn't know what revolution is. The people should be fighting against the Common Market, but they won't until it's too late."

It was getting late, and it seemed only fitting that the accelerator should fall out of the car as David drove me to the station. *Rosalind Russell*

"I was in the depths of despair then," he says, talking about the days of his hit. "It was nearly two years ago and I don't forget about it, because it was an important period and I'm still living off it!

"It helped me to be accepted as a songwriter and now I've had songs accepted by Three Dog Night and even Gene Vincent. Mickie Most heard a song I wrote and although I really wanted Leon Russel to sing it, I suppose Herman has done it quite well. It's called 'Oh! You Pretty Things'. I don't know if Peter Herman knows what it means. It's all about Homo Superior. Herman goes heavy. He's going to be a slightly more adult entertainer. I don't know what that phrase means. I just want to be an all-round entertainer." (*Laughs*)

> "I've had songs accepted by Three Dog Night and even Gene Vincent"

Just what happened after Bowie's hit and why did he sink into renewed obscurity? "It's very weird. My father died and a week later I had a hit record. The juxtaposition was like a pantomime, a comic tragedy. Since that time I have had a complete change of management and have started writing again.

"My new LP is actually a year and a half old. But I've got my next one in the can and another half completed. I went to America a few weeks ago to promote this one, and I was going to Texas, I wore a dress. One guy pulled a gun and called me a fag. But I thought the dress was beautiful."

David revealed that at one time he was in danger of becoming bitter and twisted. "But I'm definitely happy now. I'm very content – which is worrying. I've become optimistic about things, and I never used to be.

"My writing was schizoid, but it's much more simple now. I've been working with Terry Cox of Pentangle and getting a group together to go on the road. I haven't done that for years, and I'm terrified. All the people I want are with other bands at the moment, and I don't want to start breaking them up! But when The Strawbs are free, I'd like to use Rick Wakeman and the guitarist from High Tide.

"I feel I'd like to perform again, but I don't like the club atmosphere, quite honestly; I'd prefer to work in the theatre. I prefer to work with a proscenium arch. I got very involved in mixed media once and it nearly broke me. I thought of working at the Gaumont Kilburn. That's a super theatre.

"I used to play tenor sax with the Gene Pitney band. God, it was awful." David fluttered across varying subjects with disarming illogicality.

"I talk a lot and say nothing," he revealed pleasantly. "I'm very scared to comment in a song now, since 'Space Oddity'. I just wrote a song about a spaceship and everybody expected me to be some kind of expert."

David has been waiting in the wings as a songwriter for some years since his memorable first album, distinguished by unusual songs and a vocal style with faint overtones of Anthony Newley.

Married, busy and with a future in music brighter than ever, David is still perverse enough to want to wave a pair of knickers in the face of society. Will they duck him in the village pond? Will they hang him high?

"Oh, the LP cover is purely decorative. It's just theatre. I don't know… England is tolerant."

So yer see, guy, it's just the way of these arty types. If he comes down your boozer looking like that, just stand him a Guinness, eschew violence and the world will continue to spin quite comfortably on its axis. *Chris Welch* •

— **MELODY MAKER** APRIL 17 —

Why does David Bowie like dressing up in ladies' clothes?

SO THERE WAS this geezer dressed up in ladies clothes and I fought, "Cor blimey," I fought. But it turned out, he was quite a straight geezer, know what I mean, like?

Frankly, it is somewhat difficult to know what David Bowie means. You see, he is tasting the fruits of life, not unlike the Prophet Ezekiel who, you will recall, spoke in his sermon at the vineyards of the tribe of Ishgosh: "Go forth and have ye a good laugh."

David Bowie means no harm when he poses in a gorgeous gown on the cover of his latest LP recording. "It's a pretty dress," he says simply. "I had to go to Texas, so I thought I would test the reaction."

At least one cowhand threatened to shoot him, but courteously explained that the laws of the United States somewhat frowned upon the extermination of Englishmen, even those clad in gals' clobber. It was the only reason he could conceive to restrain himself from drilling David with lead.

Mind you, dressing in drag is not entirely new to the pop scene. The Rolling Stones had a go a few years back to publicise one of their albums, and there was that Welsh rock'n'roll revivalist and inveterate wearer of ladies' wigs, Dai The Hair.

When Bowie, the man who hit with the clever and unusual "Space Oddity" a couple of years ago, appeared in my local boozer this week, he was not, I hasten to emphasise, garbed in anything more unusual than a blue wrap (not unlike the Lewisham Council public bath robe), a white see-thru blouse and spacious slacks, better suited to a buxom land girl of the type who ensured our carrot supply during the recent Anglo-German conflict than might be needed to accommodate his essentially spare frame.

"What ho, Dave," I burped cheerfully. "Wot have you bin up to lately?" I winked knowingly, downed three pints of strong ale and playfully punched a passing dock worker in the mouth. David, ashen of hue, and in obvious need of an oxygen tent, ordered a glass of strained carrot juice, kicked a nearby lumberjack on the shins and smiled. He also talked about his past. His new LP. And about the portrait on the cover, which has already intrigued sheetmetal workers and bargees from Newcastle to Glasgow.



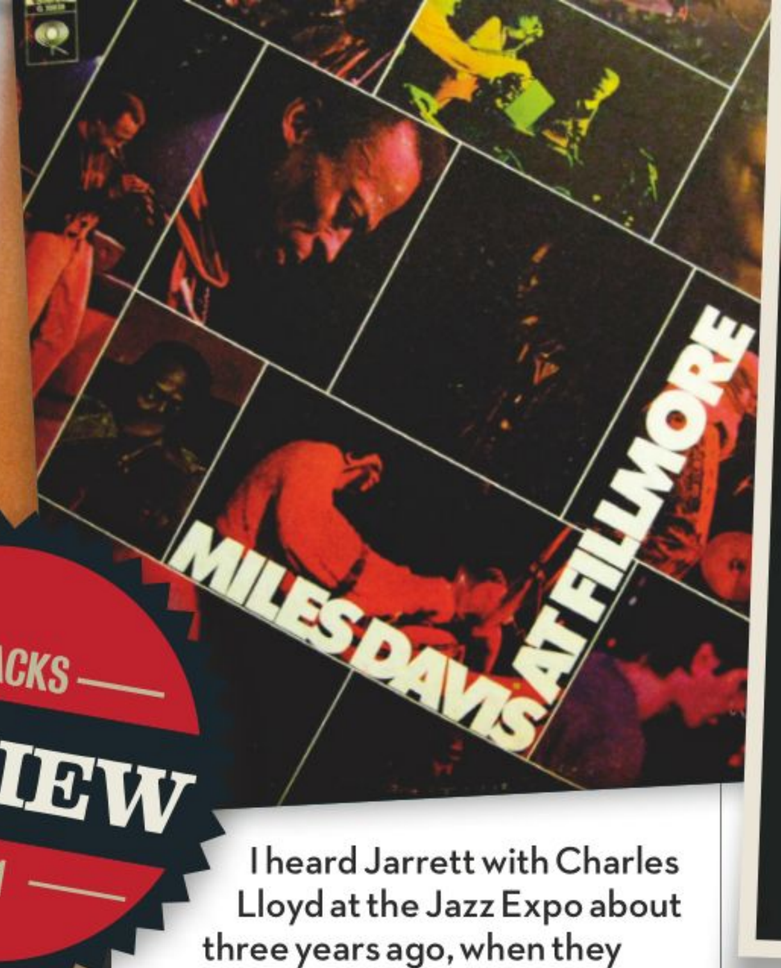
1971

JANUARY—MARCH



"I've got this..."

MM JAN 2 Elton John surveys some recent material, sight unseen, in Blind Date.



TRACKS REVIEW 1971

I heard Jarrett with Charles Lloyd at the Jazz Expo about three years ago, when they were booed because the crowd couldn't cope with it.

I liked *Bitches Brew*, but the whole thing seems to have got a bit out of hand. The trumpet is probably my least favourite instrument, along with the clarinet, and Miles is the only trumpeter I can listen to.

Miles Davis At Carnegie Hall is probably my favourite jazz album, but so many jazz musicians feel they have to put a bit of rock into their music, to make some money. The American top 20 jazz albums are always things like Herbie Mann, Ramsey Lewis, even Isaac Hayes and Chicago, but you don't get any really new names in there.



Van Morrison Domino

FROM THE LP *HIS BAND AND THE STREET CHOIR*, WARNER BROS

You hear this on the radio every five minutes in the States. It's the best track on the album, and it's almost certain to be a Top Five single over here. The track after this has the worst sax solo ever, and I know Morrison's capable of something better, particularly after *Moondance*, but it's good that he's got a hit single. Bernie says I sound like him, but I can't see it.

John Lennon Working Class Hero

FROM THE LP *JOHN LENNON/PLASTIC ONO BAND*, APPLE

Lennon. Ah, I've got this, and it's definitely something that grows on you. In fact, after hearing it again and again I'd say it's one of the best albums of the year, which is nice because George's album – and Ringo's too – were very good.

This is the best track on the album – it's very Dylan-ish, isn't it? I didn't think he was going to come up with anything very great, but this is excellent. Lennon plays some really good piano on it, which I didn't know he could do. That's like Dylan: he plays better piano than most people know about. Now let's see what McCartney does – he's taking long enough about it!

Creedence Clearwater Revival Pagan Baby

FROM THE LP *PENDULUM*, LIBERTY

(*After two bars*) The Kinks! No... oh no... I've got this as well. Creedence are the best rock'n'roll group in the world. They were having a big party in San Francisco just as we were about to leave, and everybody was going to it. Fogerty's amazing – he's so uncomplicated. It's just simple, hard-driving rock'n'roll with memorable melodies. He plays organ on the other side of the album. They're so big in the States – they're it as far as money and crowd-pulling are concerned, and they're a much better band than most people give them credit for. They've sold 80,000,000 records in the past year, or something equally ridiculous.

Miles Davis Saturday Miles

FROM THE LP *MILES DAVIS AT FILLMORE*, COLUMBIA

Oh dear. Is it the amazing Mr Emerson? It'll probably be someone like Engelbert Humperdinck. It sounds like a mixture of Sun Ra and Zappa. Ah, it's Miles at the Fillmore. There you are, as soon as he started playing I knew, didn't I? Is that Chick Corea? I'm a great fan of his, and Keith Jarrett too.

Robert Wyatt To Mark Everywhere AND Las Vegas Tango

(FROM LP *THE END OF AN EAR*, CBS)

Sounds English again – that's a very weak drum sound. I like the bass drum to come right out, and that's now I knew it was English. Is it Graham Bond or somebody like that? I don't like it, and I've no idea who it is. It'll probably turn out to be Dylan. Its music to drive me mad by. It's probably good, if you're in the right mood, but I can't take it at this hour of the day.

The Velvet Underground Rock And Roll

FROM THE LP *LOADED*, COTILLION

Velvet Underground? Great album... the best I heard in the States. I've never been a Velvet Underground freak, so it was something of a surprise to me. It's just a simple, relaxed album. They're a strange band, too... they made this album and apparently disappeared. You haven't brought anything I can really slate. Have you got Eric Burdon's new one, *Black Man's Burdon*? There's one track I like, but he should have been born black and given us all a rest.

REX


BLIND DATE

with Elton John

ori John opened the
at 10 am. seven floors
Marble Arch, and
d out from inside a
f shades. "I've always
ed to do Blind Date,"
aid. "I hope you've

WorldMags.net



"Play me an Elton John record..."

MM FEB 6 Another piano powerhouse, Leon Russell, reviews the new sounds...

The Allman Brothers Band
Hoochie Coochie Man
FROM THE LP *IDLEWILD SOUTH*, ATCO

It sounds like Paul Butterfield, but I don't know for sure. It was Muddy Waters who sang it originally, wasn't it? It doesn't really buzz me. I don't listen to all that many records. Records that really inspire me get me out of my seat to turn them up; the others I can't get up to. I really hate to judge other people's music. There is music for everybody, I suppose. That sort of reminded me of Junior Wells and all those people.

The Crickets
Well All Right AND **Peggy Sue**
FROM THE LP *ROCKIN' '50S ROCK AND ROLL*, CBS

This kind of reminds me of Buddy Holly. Let me hear the next track. That music was happening when I first started to become involved in music, listening to rock and roll. That is the first music I started to play. Listening to it now, it doesn't seem quite as violent as it did then. I don't care much for this music.

Ballin' Jack Street People
FROM THE LP *BALLIN' JACK*, CBS

I can't relate to it. It's very hectic at times. Is that a British band? Well, that is about the most concrete thing I can say – there's things I love, and things I can't relate to at all. And that's where that one falls into. It's difficult to say what I feel. People say the most bizarre things about my music; the only time it gets through is when they say something constructive.

Michael Nesmith & The First National Band
Silver Moon RCA

I kind of like the vocalist. I don't care much for the song. There's a rapport between the vocalist and the notes. I'm sorry I haven't anything else to say about it. What do you think about it? I understand the Irish are great country music lovers.

Neil Diamond
Sweet Caroline UNI

What can I say – play me an Elton John record, give me a chance to say something nice.

Stephen Stills
Love The One You're With
ATLANTIC

I like this one best of any you've played. I've heard it before, so you can take it off. Is this Stephen Stills? Yeah, I love this music. I haven't been able to make contact with him for years. He's good; I haven't heard the album enough to make a long comment, but some of it I didn't like. He is capable of making some really fine music.

Tim Buckley
Down By The Borderline
FROM THE LP *STAR SAILOR*, STRAIGHT

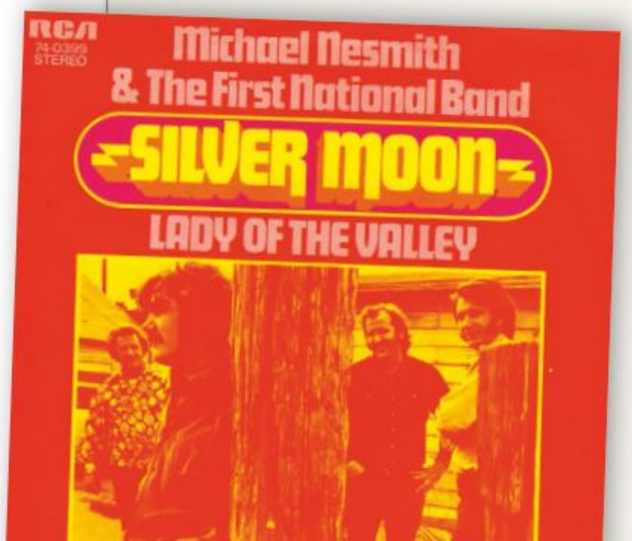
No, I don't much care for it. You know, I find myself in a really weird position, when it comes down to judging someone else's music. It's a personal thing. There's some music for everyone to like.

Lyn Anderson
Rose Garden CBS

Slight nod of the head to decide. Wow, what can I say about that one? Let me ask you what you feel, and then I'll tell you the way I feel. I have a special place in my heart for this type of music – I used to make them in the record factories of Los Angeles.

Marvin, Welch & Farrar
You're Burning Bridges
FROM THE LP *MARVIN, WELCH AND FARRAR*, REGAL ZONOPHONE

Seems like there's a lot of Crosby Stills & Nash influence in there. Bob Dylan once said an interesting thing to me: "Some of it's nice, but it doesn't move you from here to there." That seems to apply here; it doesn't cross the line. The guitar playing is nice.





ALBUMS REVIEW 1971

ALBUMS

Soft Machine Fourth CBS

With this album, the Soft Machine appear to have reached a new plateau of achievement. Mainly, the achievement here is in terms of relaxation; for me, *Third* felt strongly experimental, and there was a constant sense of personal boundaries being broken. *Fourth* has a feeling of ease, even when the musicians are negotiating tricky ensemble lines over difficult time patterns.

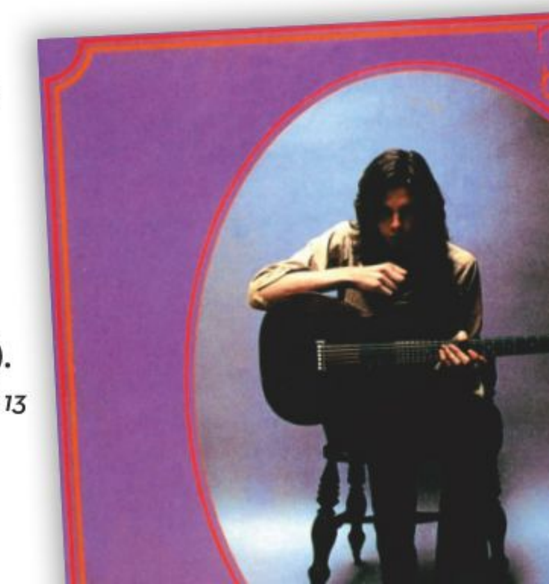
The album consists of four compositions: Ratledge's "Teeth", Hopper's "Kings And Queens" and Dean's "Fletcher's Blemish" on the first side, and the four sections of Hugh's "Virtually" on the second. At the moment, I find Hopper the most interesting composer: neither as skilled as Ratledge, nor possessing the free-wheeling atmosphere of Dean and Wyatt, his compositions retain a simplicity which belies the often complex foundations on which they're built. "Kings And Queens", for instance, sounds like a simple ballad in 3/4, but uses brief melodic statements and space in a highly organic way. "Virtually", which begins with string bass by Roy Babbington, has a free, open-ended feeling, but maintains considerable unity and is pleasantly unrhetorical. "Teeth", by contrast, is typical Ratledge: tight, almost crabbed figures accelerating up to riff passages which release the tension. It's a truly superb composition, set off by wonderful organ playing and a great horn ensemble in which Elton is abetted by Mark Charig, Nick Evans and Alan Skidmore.

"Fletcher's Blemish" has more of a blowing feel, featuring Babbington on Arco bass, Ratledge on piano, Charig tightly muted and Elton playing the menacing theme with hairy verve. Somehow, despite its comparative complexity, the Soft Machine manages to retain a link with their audience, and their progress has been invariably fascinating to follow. *Fourth* is yet another link in the lustrous chain. *Richard Williams, MM March 13*

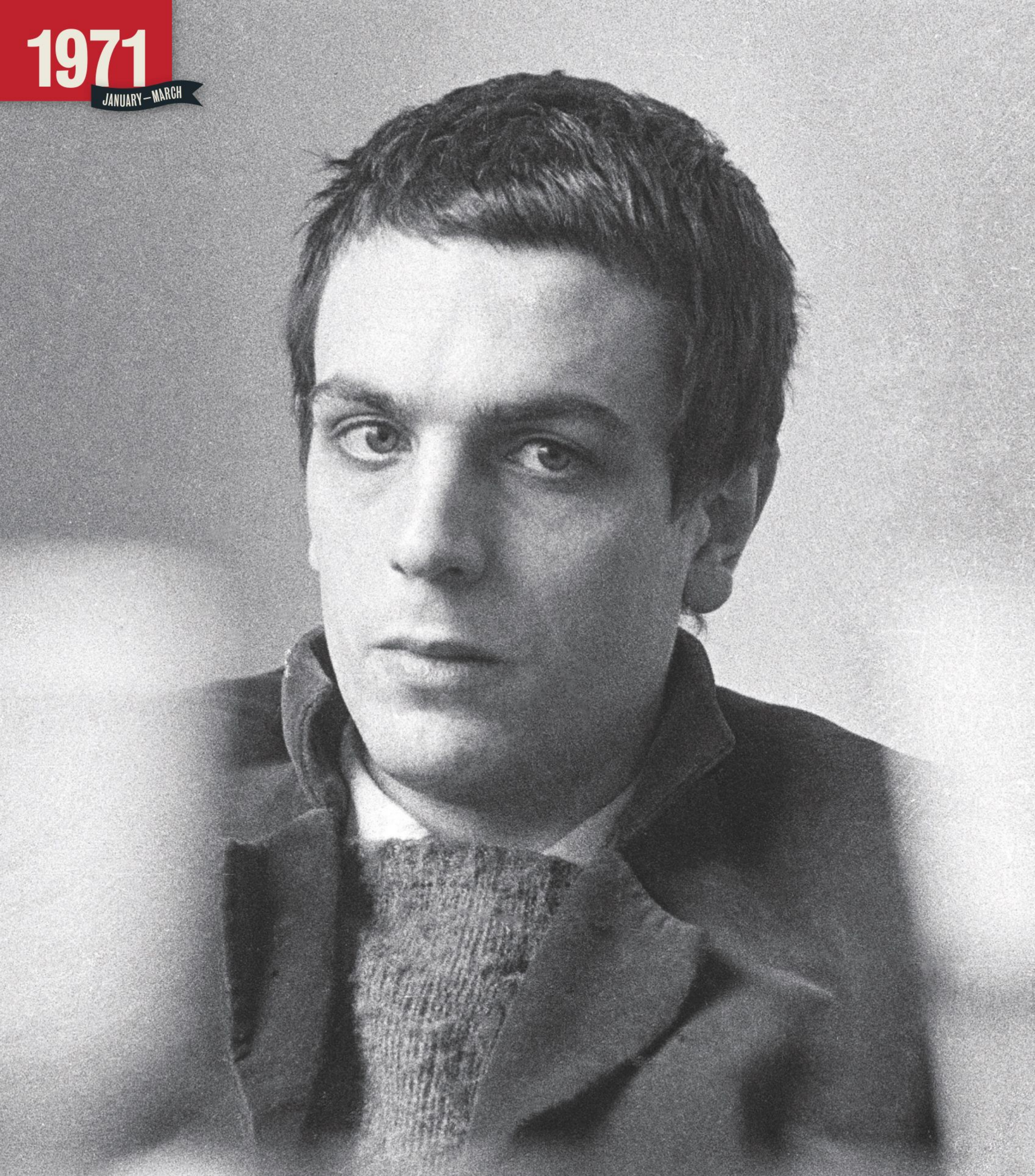
Nick Drake Bryter Layter ISLANDS

This is a difficult album to come to any firm conclusion on. For one thing the reaction it produced depends very much on the mood of the listener. It's late-night coffee'n'chat music. The 10 tracks are all very similar – quiet, gentle and relaxing. Nick Drake sends his voice skimming smoothly over the backing. Among the talents employed are Dave Pegg (bass) and Dave Mattacks (drums), both of Fairport Convention, Richard Thompson (lead guitar) ex-Fairport, John Cale (celeste, piano and organ) ex-Velvet Underground, Ray Warleigh (alto sax), Chris McGregor (piano) and Pat Arnold and Doris Troy (backing vocals).
Andrew Means, MM March 13

GETTY



WorldMags.net



Syd Barrett in early 1971: "I could be claimed as being redundant almost"

“I had an awful scene, probably self-inflicted...”

What became of PINK FLOYD frontman SYD BARRETT? Emerging from seclusion, a vaporous Syd attempts discussion of his life, and why he left a band of “uninteresting people”. Later in the year, ROGER WATERS discusses the road ahead – for the band, and the world.



— MELODY MAKER MARCH 27 —

STORIES ABOUT SYD Barrett are legion. That he became overbearingly egotistical, impossible to work with. That he was thrown out of the Pink Floyd. That he suffered a psychological crack-up. That he once went for an afternoon drive and ended up in Ibiza. That he went back to live with his mother in Cambridge as a part of a mental healing process. That occasionally he goes to the house of Richard Wright, the Floyd’s organist, and sits there silently for hours without speaking. Some of the stories are true. Roger Waters: “When he was still in the band in the later stages, we got to the point where any one of us was likely to tear his throat out at any minute because he was so impossible…

“When ‘Emily’ was a hit and we were third for three weeks, we did *Top Of The Pops*, and the third week we did it he didn’t want to know. He got down there in an incredible state and said he wasn’t gonna do it. We finally discovered the reason was that John Lennon didn’t have to do *Top Of The Pops*, so he didn’t.”

In the past two years he has made a couple of albums. One of them was called *Barrett*. The other was *The Madcap Laughs*. The cover of *Madcap* has a picture of him crouching watchfully on the bare floorboards of a naked room. A nude girl stretches her body in the background. The picture encapsulates the mood of his songs, which are pared-down and unembellished, unfashionably stripped of refined production values, so that one is left to concentrate on the words and the stream-of-consciousness effect. His work engenders a sense of gentle, brooding intimacy; a hesitant, but intense, awareness.

Syd Barrett came up to London last week and talked in the office of his music publisher – his first press interview for about a year. His hair is cut very short now, »

BARRIE WENTZELL

almost like a skinhead. Symbolic? Of what, then? He is very aware of what is going on around him, but his conversation is often obscure; it doesn't always progress in linear fashion. He is painfully conscious of his indeterminate role in the music world – "I've never really proved myself wrong; I really need to prove myself right," he says.

Maybe he has it all figured. As he says in "Octopus", "*the madcap laughed at the man on the border*".

What have you been doing since you left the Floyd, apart from making your two albums? Well, I'm a painter, I was trained as a painter… I seem to have spent a little less time painting than I might've done… you know, it might have been a tremendous release getting absorbed in painting. Anyway, I've been sitting about and writing. The fine arts thing at college was always too much for me to think about. What I was more involved in was being successful at art school. But it didn't transcend the feeling of playing at UFO and those sorts of places with the lights and that, the fact that the group was getting better and bigger… I've been at home in Cambridge with my mother. I've got lots of, well, children in a sense. My uncle… I've been getting used to a family existence, generally. Pretty unexciting. I work in a cellar, down in a cellar.

What would you sooner be – a painter or musician? Well, I think of me being a painter eventually.

Do you see the last two years as a process of getting yourself together again? No. Perhaps it has something to do with what I felt could be better as regards to music, as far as my job goes generally, because I did find I needed a job. I wanted to do a job. I never admitted it because I'm a person who doesn't admit it.

There were stories you were going to go back to college, or getting a job in a factory. Well, of course, living in Cambridge I have to find something to do. I suppose I could've done a job. I haven't been doing any work. I'm not really used to doing quick jobs and then stopping, but I'm sure it would be possible.

Tell me about the Floyd – how did they start? Roger Waters is older than I am. He was at the architecture school in London. I was studying at Cambridge – I think it was before I had set up at Camberwell [art college]. I was really moving backwards and forwards to London. I was living in Highgate with him, we shared a place there, and got a van, and spent a lot of our grant on pubs and that sort of thing. We were playing Stones numbers. I suppose we were interested in playing guitars – I picked up playing guitar quite quickly… I didn't play much in Cambridge because I was from the art school, you know. But I was soon playing on the professional scene and began to write from there.

Your writing has always been concerned purely with songs rather than long instrumental pieces like the rest of the Floyd, hasn't it? Their choice of material was always very much to do with what they were thinking as architecture students. Rather unexciting people, I would've thought, primarily. I mean, anybody walking into an art school like that would've been tricked – maybe they were working their entry into an art school. But the choice of material was restricted, I suppose, by the fact that both Roger and I wrote different things. We wrote our own songs, played our own music. They were older, by about two years, I think. I was 18 or 19. I don't know that there was really much conflict, except that perhaps the way we started to play wasn't as impressive as it was to us, even, wasn't as full of impact as it might've been. I mean, it was done very well, rather than considerably exciting. One thinks of it all as a dream.

> "One feels that Slade would be an interesting thing to hear"

Did you like what they were doing – the fact that the music was gradually moving away from songs like "See Emily Play"? Singles are always simple… all the equipment was battered and worn – all the stuff we started out with was our own, the guitars were our own property. The electronic noises were probably necessary. They were very exciting. That's all, really. The whole thing at the time was playing on stage.

Was it only you who wanted to make singles? It was probably me alone, I think. Obviously, being a pop group, one wanted to have singles. I think "Emily" was fourth in the hits.

Why did you leave them? It wasn't really a war. I suppose it was really just a matter of being a little offhand about things. We didn't feel there was one thing which was gonna make the decision at the minute. I mean, we did split up, and there was a lot of trouble. I don't think the Pink Floyd had any trouble, but I had an awful scene, probably self-inflicted, having a Mini and going all over England and things. Still…

Do you think the glamour went to your head at all? I dunno. Perhaps you could see it as something went to one's head, but I don't know that it was relevant.

There were stories you had left because you had been freaked out by acid trips. Well, I dunno, it don't seem to have much to do with the job. I only know the thing of playing, of being a musician, was very exciting. Obviously, one was better off with a silver guitar with silver mirrors and things all over it than people who ended up on the floor or anywhere else in London. The general concept, I didn't feel so conscious of it as perhaps I should. I mean, one's position as a member of London's young people's – I dunno what you'd call it; underground, wasn't it – wasn't necessarily realised and felt, I don't think, especially from the point of views of groups.

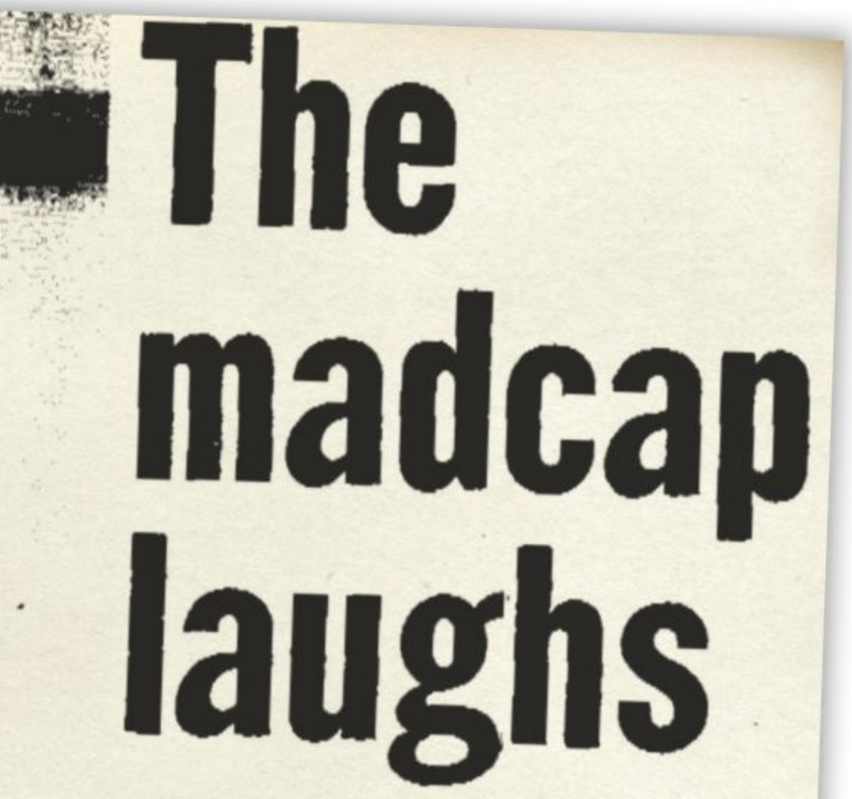
I remember at UFO – one week one group, then another week another group, going in and out, making that set-up, and I didn't think it was as active as it could've been. I was really surprised that UFO finished. I only read last week that it's not finished. Joe Boyd did all the work on it and I was really amazed when he left. What we were doing was a microcosm of the whole sort of philosophy and it tended to be a little bit cheap. The fact that the show had to be put together; the fact that we weren't living in luxurious places with luxurious things around us. I think I would always advocate that sort of thing – the luxurious life. It's probably because I don't do much work.

Were you not at all involved in acid, then, during its heyday among rock bands? No, it was all, I suppose, related to living in London. I was lucky enough… I've always thought of going back to a place where you can drink tea and sit on the carpet. I've been fortunate enough to do that. All that time… you've just reminded me of it. I thought it was good fun. I thought the Soft Machine were good fun. They were playing on *Madcap*, except for Kevin Ayers.

Are you trying to create a mood in you songs, rather than tell a story? Yes, very much. It would be terrific to do much more mood stuff. They're very pure, you know, the words… I feel I'm jabbering. I really think the whole thing is based on me being a guitarist and having done the last thing about two or three years ago in a group around England and Europe and the States, and then coming back and hardly having done anything, so I don't really know what to say. I feel, perhaps, I could be claimed as being redundant almost. I don't feel active, and that my public conscience is fully satisfied.

Don't you think that people still remember you? Yes, I should think so.

Then why don't you get some musicians, go on the road and do some gigs? I feel, though, the record would still be the thing to do. And touring and playing might make that impossible to do.



WorldMags.net

Don't you fancy playing live again after two years? Yes, very much.

What's the hang-up then? Is it getting the right musicians around you? Yeah.

What would be of primary importance – whether they were brilliant musicians or whether you could get on with them? I'm afraid I think I'd have to get on with them. They'd have to be good musicians. I think they'd be difficult to find. They'd have to be lively.

Would you say, therefore, you were a difficult person to get on with? No. Probably my own impatience is the only thing, because it has to be very easy. You can play guitar in your canteen, you know, your hair might be longer, but there's a lot more to playing than travelling around universities and things.

Why don't you go out on your own playing acoustic? I think you might be very successful. Yeah… that's nice. Well, I've only got an electric. I've got a black Fender which needs replacing. I haven't got any blue jeans… I really prefer electric music.

What records do you listen to? Well, I haven't bought a lot. I've got things like Ma Rainey recently. Terrific, really fantastic.

Are you going into the blues, then, in your writing? I suppose so. Different groups do different things… One feels that Slade would be an interesting thing to hear, you know.

Will there be a third solo album? Yeah. I've got some songs in the studio, still. And I've got a couple of tapes. It should be 12 singles, and jolly good singles. I think I shall be able to produce this one myself. I think it was always easier to do that. *Michael Watts*



"We're going to be much lighter and more efficient": Pink Floyd – (l–r) Roger Waters, Nick Mason, David Gilmour and Rick Wright – in Kanagawa, Japan, August 6, 1971

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 9 —

WHITHER THE WAY of the world? As the rock generation get older, if they don't get wiser, they get sadder. Roger Waters of the ancient and venerable Pink Floyd occasionally emerges from his VC3 synthesizer, stares about in disbelief and returns hastily to the inhuman and therefore clean world of sound. Like many marching through the twenties to 30, violence, intolerance and sheer incompetence, instead of receding in the face of progress, seem to be expanding.

Thus the intelligent and sensitive grow more despairing, even in England, quiet backwater of world events. Says Roger, "I work to keep my mind off a doomy situation. All over the globe it gets crazier every day. And the craziness seems to be accelerating at a fantastic rate. But it might just be that as you get older your perception gets faster, until the whole thing seems unreal, as I leaf through my *Guardian* every morning. It's running a series at the moment on the new taboos. I read the piece on Lord Longford, which seemed quite a laugh. One gets the impression everything has got completely out of control and nobody is in control of anything."

Roger lives with his wife Judy in a beautifully cosy house in one of the broad and seedy streets of Islington, London. In the garden, in the sound-proofed studio that Roger has assembled, was a synthesizer, a mixer, various tape recorders, drums, etc, all crying out to be switched on, fiddled and beaten. But the crumpets were ready and we adjourned to the morning room, there to discuss the future of Floyd and the world.

"There is so much going on, it's hard to evaluate anything specific. That whole Festival Of Light business. It's hard to evaluate how important it is. From my personal standpoint it is of very little importance. But you can't tell its effect on other people. They are trying to 'clean up the country'. But the whole thing is pathetic. So many important things need doing… well it's all been said. But why get worried about the odd pubic hair on TV and the growth of dirty bookshops when they could put their energies into something that clearly needs reforming? What about housing? And a job here and there would be nice. The whole tenor of their movement is repression, on the basis that people are corruptible and need protecting, which I don't believe. A lot more harm is done through repressing people's sexual attitudes, than by public displays of pornography.

"We actually went to a live show in Denmark which was extraordinary. It went on too long, and certainly before the end we were ready for hamburgers and chips. Let's go now. It was all very schoolboyish and patently obvious it was for people who didn't have the right schooldays. The shows are just a tourist thing anyway. I can't imagine the Danes going. It's only for old geezers of about 50. It's all unreal."

What are Roger's own plans for a better, saner world?

"Well, I'd like to help the revolution, when it comes. It would be nice if somebody could visualize the revolution, so we could have a slight idea of what to do."

Hadn't all the revolutionary theories been written?

"The trouble is, they all smell a bit. I'd sooner live here than in Russia and I'm not really into Soviet Marxism. The double bind is that the people who tend to involve themselves in politics do it for strong personal motives. Some have a social context but very largely it's an ego thing and the people who should be running the country are just pottering about in their gardens, and reading the *Guardian*! Altruism and power politics just don't go together."

What was the nature of the pottering that Floyd had been doing lately in the garden of rock?

"We've been rehearsing a John Peel show and recording. We go to America this week for our fifth tour, and we'll be gone five weeks. We'll be playing Carnegie Hall. The first time we went in 1967 we played the Scene Club, in New York. We've got three new pieces and as much stuff as before.

"We've just started to rehearse again. I can't remember the last time we had a rehearsal. I think that often the cause of groups splitting up is when people freak and can't come up with new stuff, which has nearly happened to us. The Who flipped once and did that New Vic thing, which fell through. But no – we're very healthy now.

"We'd like to get into a theatre thing. We'll do it sometime, but I can't see it happening yet. It's really back to the old mixed-media trip. The logistics of it are so complex. You have to get quadrophonics and projectors together and you need a clear vision rather than a vague idea that it would be nice to do something different. Creating something like that would be bloody hard."

One of the problems of Floyd and their special music is the enormous space their equipment takes up. It cost them thousands to ship their six tons of sound equipment to Australia this year. "We're trying to cut it down," says Roger, without much conviction.

"In January we'll be doing a whole tour of England, about 12 days, and we may do the Festival Hall, London again."

But what of the future of Floyd music, that weird revolutionary sound that set the rock world back on its ears in the mid-'60s?

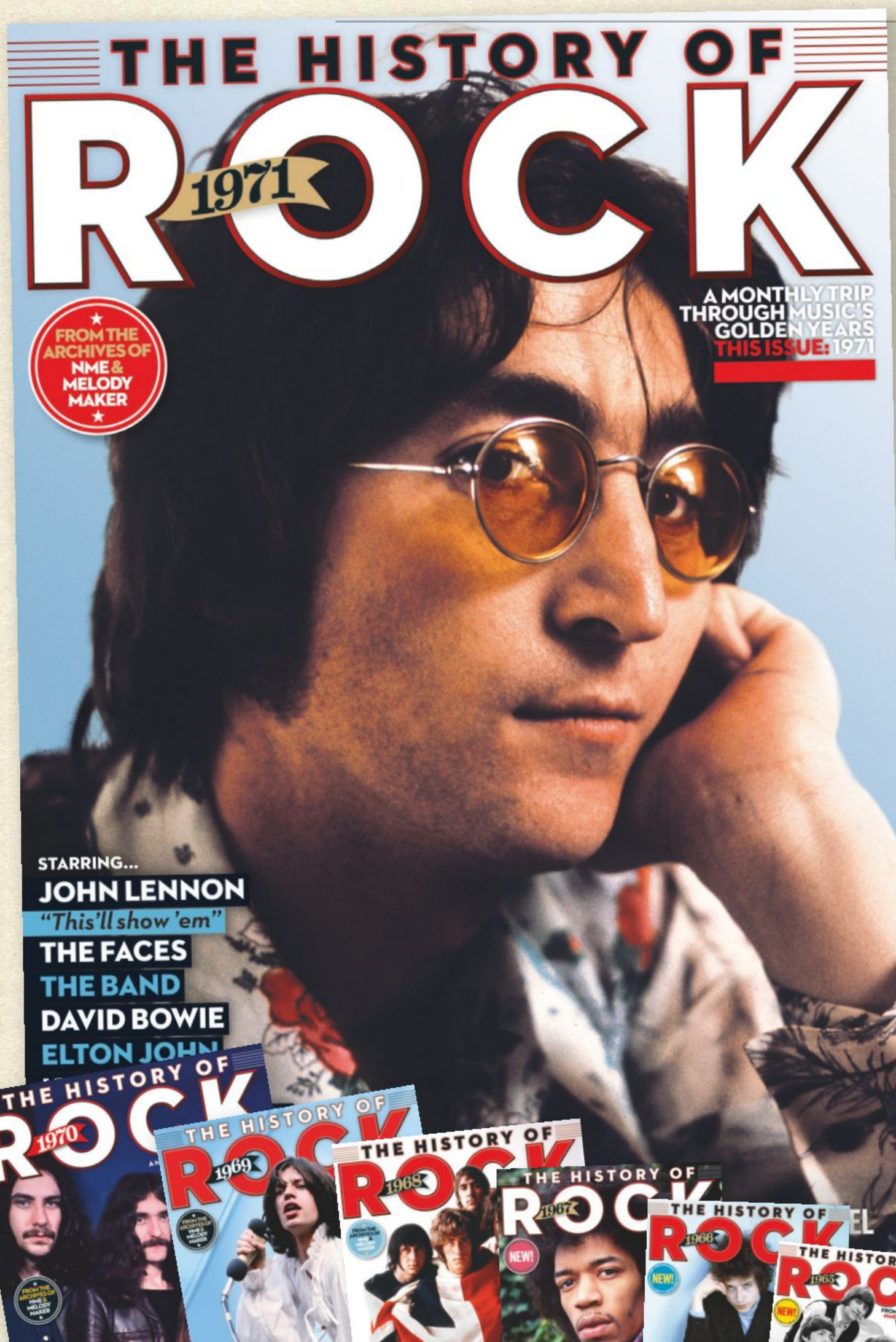
"I dunno really, I have no idea what is going to happen next. We're just going to be much lighter and more efficient." *Chris Welch* •

GETTY

WorldMags.net

The History Of Rock is a magazine series celebrating 50 years of the music that changed the world – starting in 1965.

Month by month, it builds up into an unprecedentedly detailed chronicle of the music and musicians we love.



ALSO MAKES A GREAT GIFT

Subscribe to our special offer today!

Pay only ~~£0.99~~ £7.75 an issue and get every edition delivered to your home.

VISIT WWW.UNCUTSUBS.CO.UK/HISTORYOFROCK1971

OR CALL 0330 333 1113, QUOTING PROMOTION CODE 10M

Closing date: 31/03/2016

For overseas orders please call + 44 (0)330 333 1113

NEED ANY BACK ISSUES? SEE PAGE 144

Readers' letters

MM JAN–MAR Harrison singled out, Bolan berated, *Loaded* lauded and more...

Dear George

I looked forward to George Harrison's solo album with anticipation but it costs a penny short of £5, rather a lot. True, it is three long-players, but surely George could have released a single from it like he has done in America? America is a wealthier country and they have a choice, not like us. George has outpriced himself in England and his music will now only be able to get through to a minority of record purchasers – sad not only for George but for record buyers.
GORDON McLEOD, *43 Eldon Road, Blackburn, Lancs* (*MM Jan 1*)

Isn't it a pity "My Sweet Lord" hasn't been released on a single!
DAVE PUXLEY, *43 Chelverton Road, Putney, London, SW15* (*MM Jan 1*)

I have just bought George Harrison's solo LP *All Things Must Pass*, and although I think it's a great album, I don't believe any of The Beatles can produce a solo album as musically varied as the albums they have produced together. So although I will buy, and probably enjoy, all The Beatles' solo albums, I still hope for the day they get together again.
JOHN ROGERS, *10 Geffrye Court, Stagway Street, London N1* (*MM Jan 1*)

Bashers knocked

When will the heavy/progressive groups realise they don't have to bash away mindlessly? Offenders are Santana, Cactus and on the British side, Slade and Black Sabbath. Listen to Traffic, Crimson and Floyd and you will realise that even the superb Led Zep are outmanoeuvred by "Freedom Rider", "Glad", "Moonchild", "Cadence And Cascade", *Atom Heart Mother* or *Saucerful Of Secrets*. Come on, "heavies" – leave the boredom to Iron Butterfly, Eric Clapton, Motown and Neil Diamond.
"MOG" KING, *Woodside, 28 Gib Lane, Blackburn, Lancs* (*MM Jan 1*)

Elf disservice

I have followed the progress of Marc Bolan from the days of Tyrannosaurus Rex (a unique band producing a unique sound with unique vocals, guitar and percussion) to the funky T. Rex of today – in my opinion, a band destined to join the ever-increasing ranks of the boring, commercial pop bands. I cannot see why he has made the transformation.
MICHAEL HILL, *8 Longmeade Gardens, Wilmslow, Cheshire* (*MM Feb 20*)



In an *MM* interview, Marc Bolan said the sole aim with his music was to communicate. But how can he communicate when it is well-nigh impossible to understand what he is singing? To me the words that are audible seem to be gibberish: "*She's faster than most and she lives on the coast*".
BEAU P, *23 Rectory Lane, Sidcup, Kent* (*MM Mar 27*)

Trad ahhh...

We mourn the death of Fotheringay. They were a group who by their intelligent and serious approach produced a sound which was too subtle for most. Those who saw a lack of drive in Fotheringay's music were surely oblivious to their sensitivity and musical drive in terms of ideas and under-play, to give room for Sandy and Trevor to put the songs over with noticeable clarity.

Their getting of an atmosphere to suit each song, and use of dynamics, both in Sandy's singing and by the whole group as a backing unit, was superb. The delicate and intelligent lead guitar of Jerry Donahue was outstanding in a group who had a great understanding between them.

Their treatment of traditional songs (perhaps "Banks Of The Nile" is the best example) was such that the true meanings and emotions came through more strongly than in most other folk interpretations, and in Sandy we must surely have one of Britain's finest songwriters, apart from her fabulous singing.

Having seen several of the group's live performances we can appreciate their difficulty in putting over sensitive music on stage in circumstances where technical expertise was the apparent yardstick used by audiences and critics alike. Still, we do have their beautiful album.
ROBIN & BARRY DRANSFIELD, *94 Palmerston Road, London N22* (*MM Jan 23*)

Long players?

While looking through my record collection I noticed that the LP *Super Session* featuring Bloomfield, Kooper and Stills has a total playing time of nearly 55 minutes, while many albums – *After The Goldrush* being an example – only run for about 35 minutes.

Similarly a comparison between one side of *Atom Heart Mother* (25 minutes) and a side of *Anyway* by Family (16 minutes). I realise that it is quality and not quantity that counts, and all these albums are extremely good, but it still makes me wonder if in some cases I am getting full value for money.

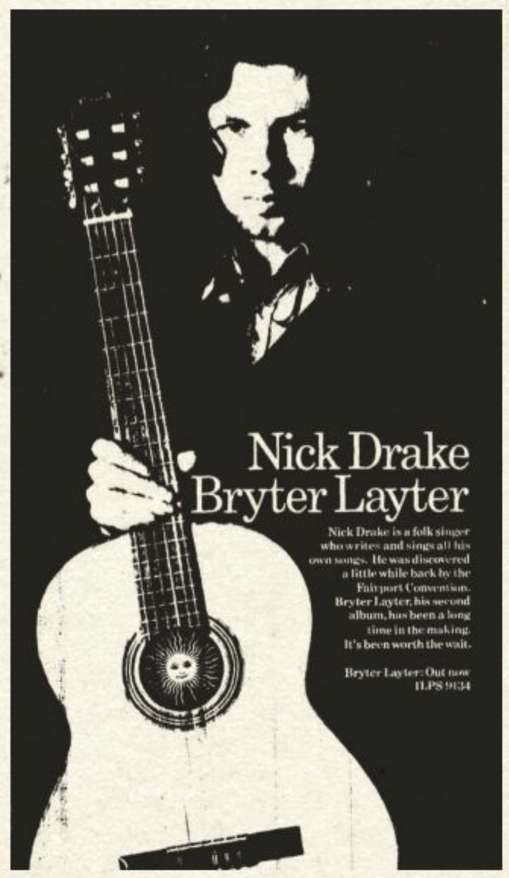
If there is a shortage of material, then they should wait till more is available, though I don't think that this is the case. I think a lot of people at the moment are writing and recording material and then trying to spread it over two albums, instead of putting all the best onto one.

Come on, record companies and artists concerned (you know who you are) – for the price we pay for albums these days haven't we the right to expect a playing time of 25 minutes a side, the words and details about the songs and a photo of the performers!
CHRISTOPHER DALE, *27, St David's Road, Southsea, Hants* (*MM Jan 23*)

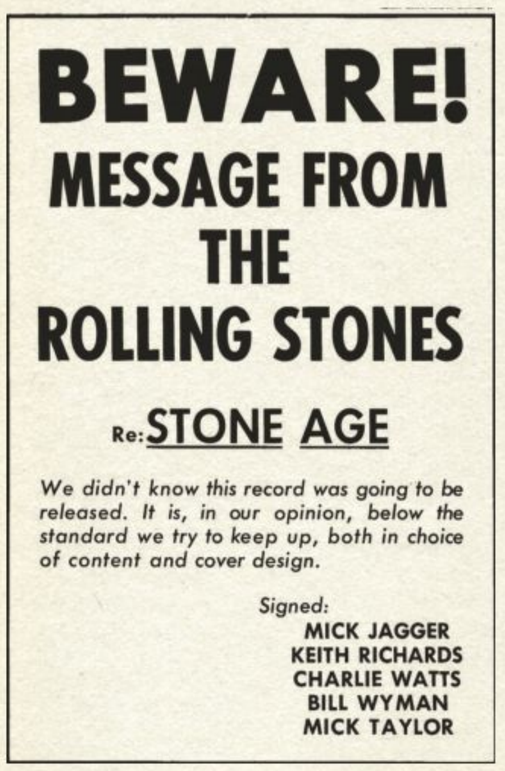
Velvet revolution

Having followed the progression of The Velvet Underground, and after purchasing an imported copy of their fourth LP *Loaded*, I am now more convinced than ever that Lou Reed is the most original guitarist, and an extremely talented songwriter. Their music deserves far more acclaim than the rubbish turned out by Led Zeppelin, whose idolatry by the masses is nothing less than a huge joke.
ROBERT HARDING, *30 Ardrossan Gardens, Worcester Park, Surrey* (*MM March 20*)









GETTY

WorldMags.net



1970

APRIL – JUNE

FLEETWOOD MAC, THE FACES, JOHN PEEL, THE BYRDS AND MORE

GETTY

WorldMags.net



May 12, 1971: eight months after meeting at a post-concert party, Mick Jagger and Nicaraguan-born politics graduate Bianca de Macias fight their way through a crowd in St Tropez after taking marriage vows in a civil ceremony at the town hall

"The bride was attended by local police"

MM MAY 22 The marriage of Mr Mick Jagger and Miss Bianca Perez Morena de Macias.

THE WEDDING TOOK place at St Anne's, St Tropez, France last week, of Mr Michael Phillip Jagger (27), musician, son of Mr and Mrs J Jagger, of Dartford, Kent, and Miss Bianca Perez Morena de Macias (21), unemployed, of Nicaragua.

The bride, who was given away, was attended by the local police. She wore a delicately spun white flapper suit, with matching white hat and roses on the top. The bridegroom, whose hobbies include singing with a beat group and amateur dramatics, wore a subtle white two-piece, pumps and no socks. Mr Jagger's father is a physical training instructor.

The couple, who met at a dance, plan to live in France, and are travelling for their honeymoon at "a secret destination". Guests at the reception included Mr Paul McCartney, formerly of The Beatles pop group, Mr William Wyman, Mr Richard Starkey, Mr Stephen Stills and many notables from the entertainment world. Music was supplied by Mr Freddie Notes & The Rudies. »



Parliament-Funkadelic in Liverpool, May 1971: (l-r) Fuzzy Haskins, Tawl Ross, Bernie Worrell, Tiki Fulwood, Grady Thomas, George Clinton, Ray Davis, Calvin Simon and (seated) Eddie Hazel and Billy "Bass" Nelson

"The act is pretty wild..."



MM MAY 8 Introducing... Funkadelic and their bad language and jockstraps.

EVER SINCE KEITH Emerson set fire to an American flag on the stage of London's Royal Albert Hall, the banning of groups from that particular venue has been headlined in stories in all the papers. To get their names in the papers is something all groups strive for – so in the case of some, it may be a good thing to be banned from the Albert Hall, especially if they never really wanted to play there in the first place.

And when the ban is extended to the Lyceum – central London's biggest rock venue – then another newspaper story is bound to follow. All this has happened in recent weeks to a relatively unknown American 10-piece group called Funkadelic, who apparently have a rather dubious stage act involving stripping down to a jockstrap. Recent record releases by the group have left something to be desired, so it's doubtful whether they would have filled half the Albert Hall had it not been for the publicity machine.

However, an aura of mystique now surrounds the group and they will probably fill their venues on their British tour with curious people anxious to see this controversial band. Moral of the story: Get yourself banned from the Albert Hall and you're laughing!

Last week I talked to Funkadelic's leader, George Clinton, on the transatlantic line.

GETTY

Anticipating a "freaky acid head" – or something like that – on the other end of the line, I jotted down a few hip phrases to make the conversation run smoothly, but I was pleasantly surprised to find myself talking to a level-headed and sensible young man.

"I think people misunderstand the appearance of the group," he said when I asked why their stage act caused such a controversy. "People misinterpret things we do and say on stage, like wearing jockstraps and using phrases like 'suck my soul'. The act is pretty wild but it's not designed to hurt anyone.

"We do a number about people praying to the dollar bill and people thought we were talking about the Lord's Prayer. People thought we were pulling the Lord's Prayer down, but we weren't."

George doesn't seem unduly worried about the group's banning. It happens in America and he admits that it helps their popularity in some cases. "Off stage we're very different people. The stage show is just something we do to make people sit up and listen when we play.

"We don't really go looking for hassles, but like to put some effect in the stage act. Like someone taking all their clothes off all of a sudden, it's going to shock people. The same goes for using the bad language. It's just done to get people's attention – and keep it.

"We've been fined for it in the States and two places have refused to pay us. We did the same routine twice at one place when they told us not to. It's happened to the MC5 as well.

"Overall, most people don't seem to object. When we first started this act a year and a half ago, it was much worse, but nowadays people accept it better."

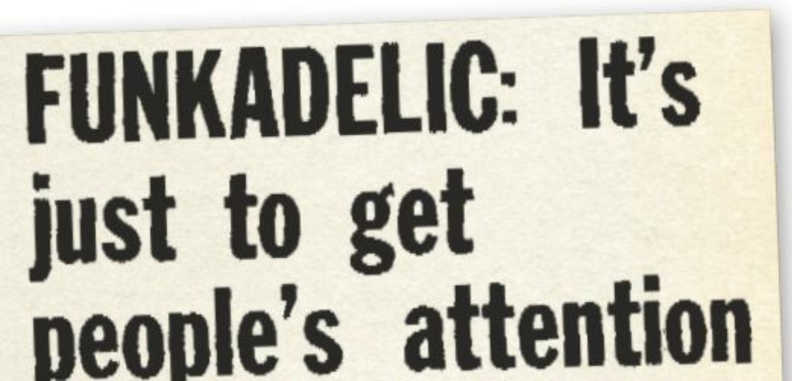
Funkadelic have been together for almost 14 years. The current 10 members were split into two groups – the Parliaments, who were a vocal section, and the Funkadelic, who did the backing. George was the leader of the Parliaments and took over as leader of the Funkadelic in 1968 when the group's music turned more towards the Sly & The Family Stone style.

"We had a hard time getting the new style over during the first year," said George. "It's only really been in the past year that things have come on. Originally we were with a small company in Detroit, and we had to do just about everything ourselves.

"Our music is very difficult to describe. Basically it's loud, loud blues-type music, but we do a lot of other things. The lyrics go into a lot of different things and there's rock mixed in as well."

> **"I don't expect UK audiences will have seen anything just like us before"**

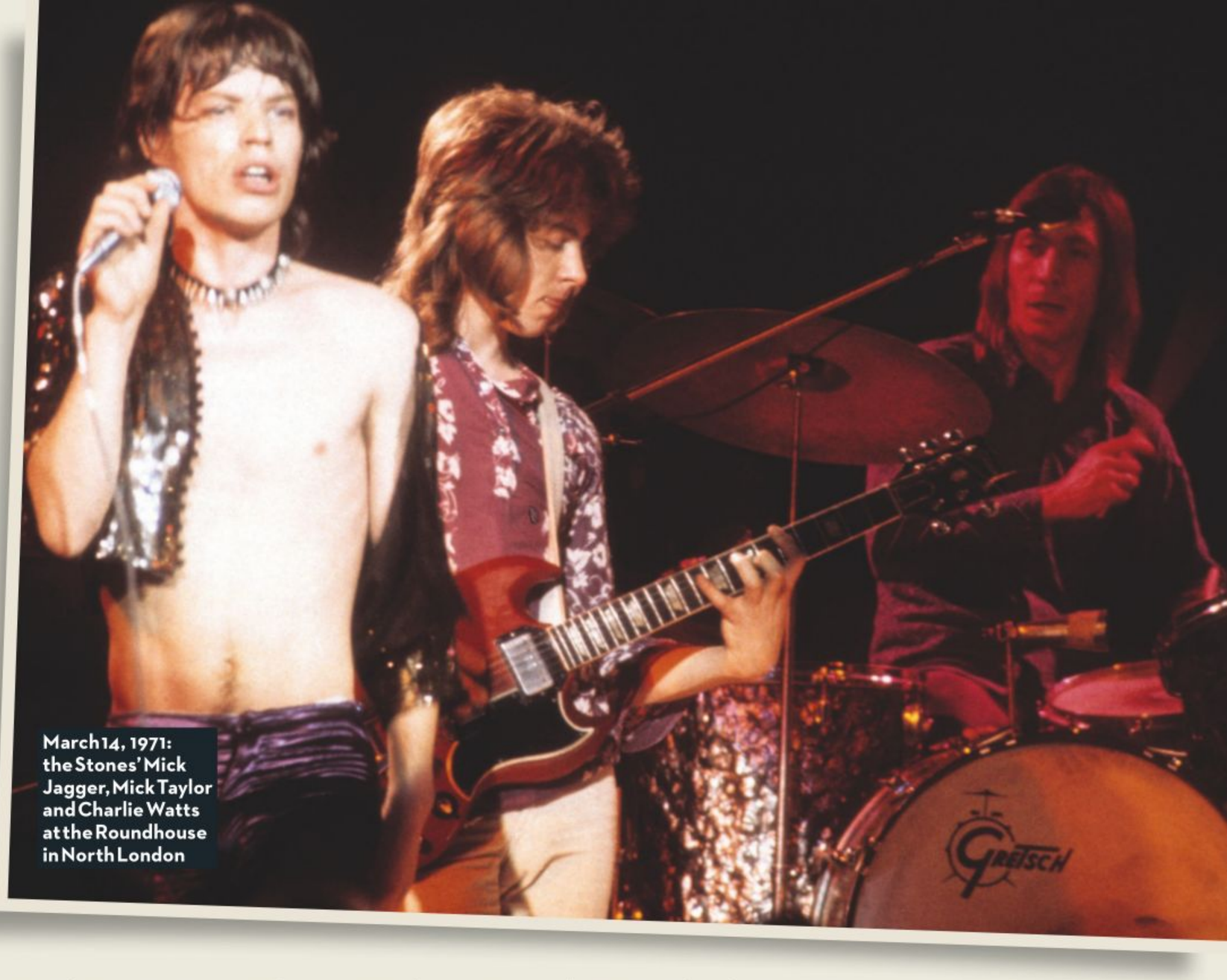
None of the group has ever been to England before. "I think we're going to have one really good time when we come. We don't know a lot about English audiences, but I don't expect they will have seen anything just like us before, not visually anyway." *Chris Charlesworth*


FUNKADELIC: It's just to get people's attention

WorldMags.net

"The band is not retiring..."

MM APRIL 17 Mick Jagger explains Rolling Stones Records, and the road ahead for the band. "A touring group, a happy group..."



March 14, 1971: the Stones' Mick Jagger, Mick Taylor and Charlie Watts at the Roundhouse in North London

AS PREDICTED SOME weeks ago, the Rolling Stones announced officially this week that they have signed a recording deal with the newly formed Kinney Records Group. Their contract with Decca expired several months ago.

The Stones' future records will be released worldwide on a newly created label called Rolling Stones Records. Various other companies are involved in distribution and Marshall Chess, son of the founder of the rhythm and blues Chess label, will co-ordinate their activities.

First release on the new label will be a single – a double A-side with three tracks, "Brown Sugar", "Bitch" and "Let It Rock". This will be followed by a new album by the Stones entitled *Sticky Fingers* – which will have an original cover design by American pop artist Andy Warhol. The label's logo will be a red tongue... sticking out (what else?).

The single was recorded live at Leeds University during the group's recent British tour. Tracks on the album are "Brown Sugar", "Sway", "Wild Horses", "Can't You Hear Me Knocking", "You Gotta Move", "Bitch", "I Got The Blues", "Sister Morphine", "Dead Flowers" and "Moonlight Mile".

Strings, arranged by Paul Buckmaster, are featured on two of the album tracks and the musicians who appeared with the Stones on their recent tour – Jim Price, Bobby Keys and Nicky Hopkins – are also featured. The *MM* was invited to put various questions to Mick Jagger this week and here we print the answers.

How many other record companies were bidding? Over the last year, 21.

How long is the contract for? No set period – it is a product deal.

What does it involve – albums, singles, per year? Six albums over the next four years plus perhaps some individual solo albums.

When will the next single be released? April 16 – the titles are "Bitch" and "Brown Sugar" and "Let It Rock".

When will the next album be released? April 23 – the title is *Sticky Fingers* and it has 10 titles. It's produced by Jimmy Miller.

When are you going to France and how long will you be there? Where else is there? But I don't expect to stay there for more than three months, before going to New York, Los Angeles, Japan, Bangkok, Ceylon, Persia and England.

"We are guaranteeing to produce six LPs"



Why are you going? It's all too involved and too libellous.

Will you record in France? Yes – and we will be using the Mighty Mobile, our recording truck.

Will your next album involve the extra musicians who played with you on your tour? Yes. There are four out of the 10 numbers with brass, Jim Price and Bobby Keys – on one track Jim Price plays piano, "Moonlight Mile", and on one track, "Sway", Nicky Hopkins plays piano. Billy Preston plays organ on "Can't You Hear Me Knocking" and "I Got The Blues". There are strings, arranged by Paul Buckmaster, on two tracks.

Where will you be living in France? Paris, and the South of France.

Why are you going to France as opposed to anywhere else? I don't really know – everyone agreed.

Do you think you tour was a success? Yes, I guess so. Most people who came seemed to have a good time, it was full up... we had quite a nice time.

Why? It was a success because I think most of the audience were very appreciative and gave us a good time in return for us playing – which was nice.

How long will it be before you appear live again in the United Kingdom? About a year or so, I suppose.

Regarding the TV recordings at the Marquee – are they likely to be shown in Britain? They will probably be shown in Britain.

What was all the trouble about at the Marquee on Friday? Harold Pendleton tried to stop me in the middle of playing because of his ego trip.

Are you contemplating any more movies? No – but I would if they were right.

Jagger told the *MM* after the interview: "By signing this contract we are guaranteeing to produce six new albums over the next four years – this includes *Sticky Fingers*. Additionally, there may be some solo albums projecting the Stones individually over this period. The band is not retiring just because we are going away. We are not going to stay in the South of France – we are going to be touring, on the road, America – and I hope to visit Japan, Bangkok, Ceylon, Persia and hope to be back touring Britain sometime next year.

We will remain a functioning group, a touring group, a happy group." »



GETTY

Rolling Stones –on Rolling Stones Records

WorldMags.net



Andrew Oldham with the two awards he won in the first ever *NME* album sleeve design competition, February 11, 1969

"Once you've done something there's no point in doing it again"

MM APRIL 17 What became of former Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham? Bankruptcy, he says, "was good for me mentally. It represented the point-blank meeting with reality. The next logical step is films..."

"IF YOU DON'T have an office you have to live out of these things," said Andrew Oldham, putting the attaché case on the floor and smiling ever so faintly as he took out three white-labelled acetates.

He put the top one on the turntable. It was somebody called Duncan Browne, singing in a pleasant voice that was a mixture of McCartney and old Nirvana singles. Duncan who? "He used to be on Immediate," Oldham said matter-of-factly in the pause after the record ended. He cut short any further conversation by playing the other two.

Believe it or not, they were by The Sunday Funnies, a four-piece white soul outfit from Detroit who record for Tamla Motown's Rare Earth label. "Drums, bass, keyboards and a vocalist to be precise," Oldham rapped out, like he was dictating a memo. "A group I've been producing."

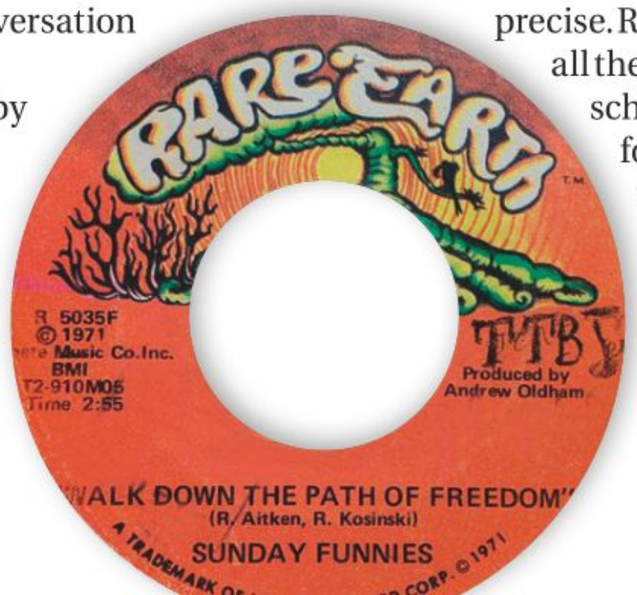
And there you have it. What Andrew Loog Oldham was, and what Andrew Oldham is now. The record label owner who has wound up as producer for four white kids from Detroit.

Sorry, the former record label boss and ex-manager of the Rolling Stones. To be precise. Remember all the showbiz schlock that four or five years ago was always hitting you from the feature pages of the *Daily Mirror* or *Express* or whatever? The story of the fresh young public schoolboy who came up to London to seek his fame and fortune in The Biz; how he became part of the publicity machine for The Beatles but they never got round to laying any of the Midas touch on him.

"Allen Klein, contrary to popular opinion, has never, in fact, screwed me"

And then how he met five scruffy kids playing R&B in Richmond, rode them and himself to worldwide success on a camp image and blatantly sexual music, and thought, like everybody else, that he had it made for life when he set up Immediate Records, the first independent record company in Britain.

You remember that alright, but the story begins to get less memorable and more bitter round about the winter of 1967. Andrew Oldham didn't turn up for the trial of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on drugs charges.



PHOTOSHOT

WorldMags.net



Shortly afterwards he ceased to be their manager. He was still a millionaire, but gradually even his bank balance began to desert him.

Increasing rumours that Immediate was running into debts solidified in 1969 and in April last year the company announced its bankruptcy. Oldham, for once, found himself having to pay out, and when the crap that had been kicked around settled a little, and Warner Brothers took over the residency of 69 New Oxford Street, he upped and split to Connecticut, there to concentrate on producing, which he had had a great passion for ever since he met Phil Spector. Goodbye Baby and Amen, said a lot of people. The business is not very kind to losers. "Let It Bleed" sang the Stones.

Oldham, however, is too uppity and cocky by nature to sit licking his wounds and brooding forever. In February he returned to the country which he says in business terms is no longer a major pop force in the world. He has been here tidying up the loose ends of the bankruptcy and filming the Englishness of the countryside, like the cricket pitches whose green splashes he had almost forgotten about in all those years. Because he is not coming back again for at least a year.

His children are at school here, and he has been to see them. The Rolling Stones played the Marquee the other week, as a casual tribute to a venue of their early days. Oldham was there too, eyes behind the eternal shades following every action of Mick and the boys as if they were sequences in an oft-familiar movie. Occasionally they took in too Allen Klein, who assumed full management of the Stones after him; he was there as well. The shaping forces of eight years of pop history were in that room that night.

The Saturday before, last Andrew Oldham got a plane back to Connecticut, but before he left he went to say goodbye to a friend at a very famous record company, where this interview was done. (The friend, a record executive, does not want his name published.) It was a Friday evening and the offices were deserted in those limbo hours between the departure of all the staff and the arrival of the cleaners.

In typical style, Oldham commandeered an office in which he could talk privately. The friend's whisky and vodka took a belting in the process, Duncan Browne and The Sunday Funnies were there too, in all but physical presence.

If Oldham has changed, it is only that his present circumstances do not allow him to be so grandiloquently outrageous as he has been in the past. It's to do with the theory of relativity, nothing fundamental. His ego must have a giant steel helmet around it, because he doesn't give a toss about the snipers. He is, on the contrary, a person who naturally takes the offensive position. British music may be fine, he says, but do him a favour about the business

"The glorification of England is over. This country is not that influential"

end, will you? The home-grown market here means nothing now in proportion to the rest of the world. The people here have overestimated the high importance of English music to the total world market.

"Nowadays," he points out icily, "nobody gives a f––– if a record has been one, two, three or four in England. The glorification of England is over. This country is not that influential. Everybody takes this market too seriously, when it only supplies about nine to 13 per cent of the records sold. The romance is over. It's completely finished.

"I come back to England and see all these independent record companies and they're nothing, you know. Nothing. Record companies now are two a penny. Everyone has got one. It's all concerned with image. Like Warner Brothers. They spend all that bread on their offices just so everybody will think they're hip. Who cares?

"It's the business here. There's nothing wrong with the music. I'll tell you my three favourite singles last year. They were 'Lola', 'All Right Now' and 'Throw Down A Line'. Why doesn't someone get Ray Davies into something good? I'll tell you the reason. He's connected with people only interested in working nine to five, and there are so many people in the business who have no connection with what's happening at all. It may sound like sour grapes, but I wouldn't want to be the producer of hundreds of records; it's not worth it."

OLDHAM SAYS IT has taken a year to clear up the debris of Immediate and cope with the "Grand Guignol" versions of Allen Klein turning up in their cowboy boots and saying they're owed 23 quid.

"If it had been coats or rugs we were dealing in, the creditors would've received more," he says, "but it was all down to a lack of knowledge of the record industry. Those sorts of things they understand. Tapes; they don't." There was, apparently, £85 left in the kitty after all the hassles.

He maintained that the trouble with Immediate, which only lasted five years, was that it never did what he wanted. His conception was not for it to be singles-orientated. "They all had this idea: get up the charts, make a quick buck, then get out; but that wasn't my idea. If I'd known that was what would happen at the beginning I'd have either folded it or left it there and then. The whole idea of Immediate to me was: can we buck the system, and can we succeed in terms of albums?

"That guy Duncan Browne, Immediate was in no way equipped to handle. It couldn't work to help people like him, to help people make albums. I wasn't interested in it in the last years at all.

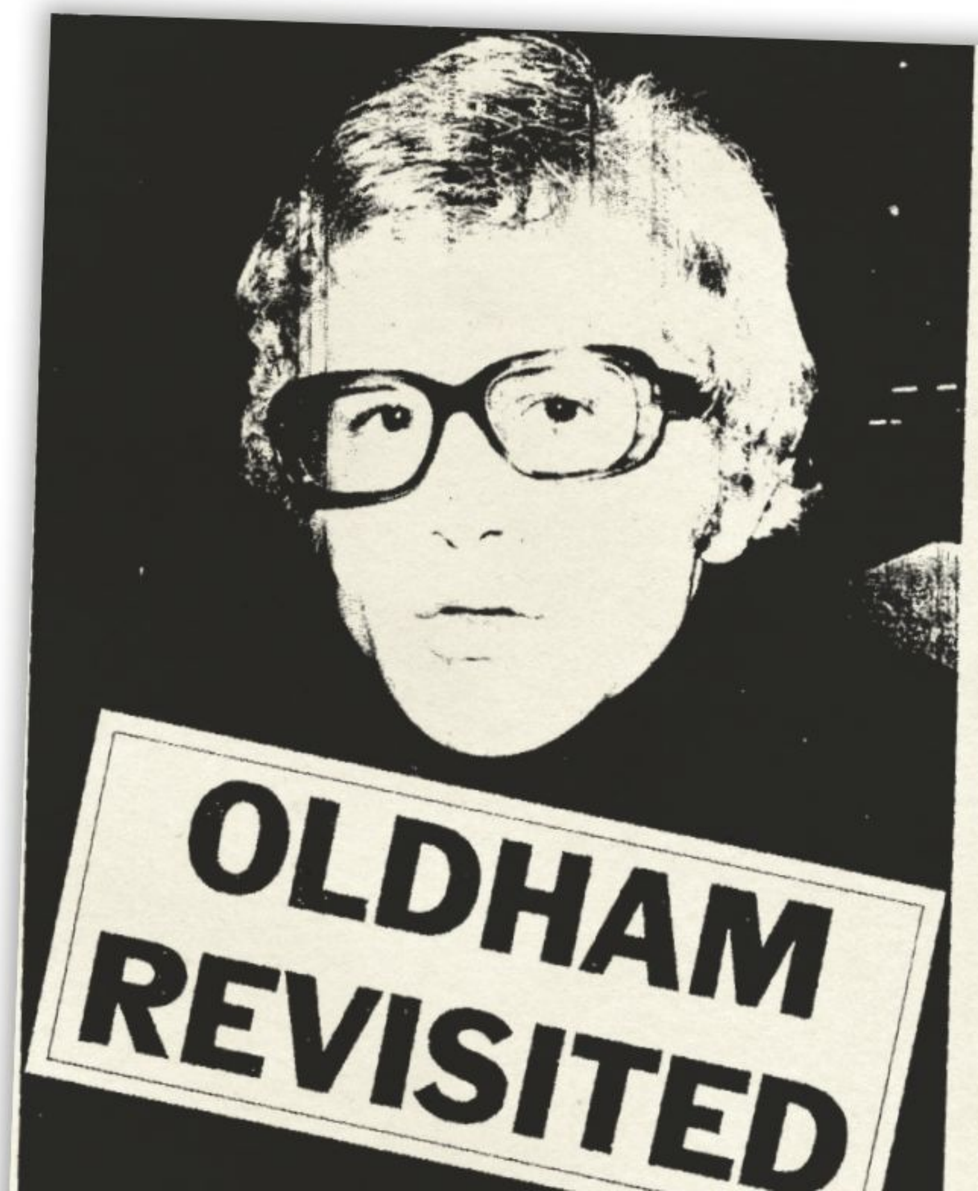
"But I think you can learn from an experience like that. I look around and see all the solemn faces and most of them should go through liquidation. I learnt; it was good for me mentally. It represented the point-blank meeting with reality. You know, with Immediate, I thought we'd created the ideal situation. I wouldn't have been talking to you, for instance; somebody else would've been doing that. One just stayed in one's abode and gave a sweet f––– all.

"But I'll never go through any of that again. Once you've done something there's no point in doing it again. I don't want to become a manager or a publicist now. The obvious next step is films. I'm working on an idea at this moment but I'm not going to tell you what it is. Someone might knock the idea."

Oldham is a coldly articulate person. Around him hangs, like a pall, a sense of ennui. But questions about the Stones and himself still raise a flicker of the eyes behind the tinted lenses. "Allen Klein, contrary to popular opinion, has never, in fact, screwed me, nor the Stones," he remarks quietly. "Certainly that was the situation in 1967. What happened from '67 on I'm not interested in. Klein, I think, has great talent, and I only wish he'd learned to enjoy life far more. He's the kind of guy this business needs."

He has not, he says, seen the Stones personally for some time until the night of the Marquee. He had spoken a few words to Jagger. If any relationship existed between him and the individual Stones, it was with Charlie Watts, "whom you can not see for two or three years and it's as if you haven't been apart at all. Charlie Watts you have to admire because he knew what he wanted before he entered the business. His philosophy is 'I only need so much'. He has settled for that and not digressed for the bullshit. Charlie could be as big a personality as Jagger. Charlie should've been in something like *Borsalino*, he has the face. He could do it."

And Jagger? "Until the Marquee, I hadn't seen Mick since before the August of Altamont. Yes, Mick is complete. He could make it in anything he wanted, anything he could put his mind to he could win. In fact the whole combination works so well together." *Michael Watts*



WorldMags.net

September 18, 1971: on stage before headliners The Who, the Faces knock 'em for six at the Goodbye Summer festival in aid of Bangladesh, Oval cricket ground, South London

Worldofpags.net

"It's getting a bit out of hand"

THE FACES, no one's idea of a sure thing, are doing the business – particularly in America. At home, things are more reserved, but as *Long Player* is released, celebration still predominates. "We have gone on sober," says Ian McLagan, "but there's not much chance of it."

— NME APRIL 17 —

LIKE ANYONE ELSE for whom music is a vital part of life, the journalist needs artists and acts to get excited about. It's not enough to sit on the sidelines wielding a coolly analytical pen. You have to be involved… admit to bias and chauvinism if it exists… and have people who you feel deserve any pushes along the way that you might be able to afford them.

In that respect, and among the new and challenging bands, the Faces fill a lengthy void. Not just for me, but apparently for a good many others in the music industry, the Faces are the most creditable and believable group hope. Perhaps the only new act around at present capable, as far as groups are concerned, of carrying on the somewhat sagging British rock heritage.

Their *Long Player* album is the best British group LP so far this year; a joyous celebration of the finest, most exciting aspects of British rock… sizzling with energy, laced with homegrown humour and good nature, and endowed with plain good musicianship. By the end of 1971, the Faces must be the most in demand of all the British bands. At the moment, home success is lagging behind the pace set in America – where *Long Player* is climbing the bestseller list – but it's a familiar story and the album, if given a fair hearing, should soon bring old Blighty into line. »

CHRIS WALTER

WorldMags.net

The Faces story is a kind of riches to rags to riches saga which should invoke a good few red faces in the business. When Steve Marriott split to form Humble Pie with Peter Frampton, there were few people ready to give the remnants of the Small Faces more than a dog's chance of even lifting themselves off the ground. Even when, after 10 months in the wilderness, the Faces re-emerged, no longer Small and with Jeff Beck Group cronies Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood in tow, they were still being written off by many… myself included, I must admit.

Ronnie Lane, the Faces' bassist and a founder member of the group with the "Small" prefix, isn't one to get his kicks by seeing the much-fancied Humble Pie struggle while the Faces gallop on, but nevertheless would be something less than human if he didn't derive a most enjoyable, satisfactory glow from proving the doubters wrong. He remembers only too vividly the abject depression of the months after Marriott's departure – when the great starry flashbulb in the sky went phut – and oblivion and debt stared Lane, McLagan and Jones stonily in the eye.

"We had a terrible time trying to flog ourselves," recalled Ronnie when we met last week, on the Faces' seventh day home from their third and most successful US tour. Their problems were daunting… managerless, deep in debt and noosed under contract to the sinking stone that was Andrew Oldham's Immediate Records.

"We were just playing it along," Lane takes up the story. "All we had was the three of us. It was all so stagnant, and staring at the other two only helped remind us of that fact. Then again, we had been together for five years and we were still getting on very well and it seemed silly to break up such a valuable relationship. We fluctuated about what to do. One day we were all going our own way, and the next we were staying together."

All the time, the group's limited resources were being eaten away. Lane was forced to lodge at a friend's house and says it was only the Performing Rights Society, which ensures songwriters receive their royalties, that saw him through. "It saved my bacon," says Lane, "it really did."

It was when Ronnie Wood – jobless when Beck broke up his band – came along that, musically at any rate, the Faces began to pick up the pieces. They played together at Wood's home, where Rod Stewart – himself between engagements after Beck – would drop by on Sundays for a pint and a butcher's at how the lads were getting on. "After a while," smiles Ronnie, "we got the impression he was just waiting around to be asked to join. We hadn't really thought he would be interested."

Up to and past this stage in their development, the group was involved in a lengthy period of trying to find a manager and record company that would take them on… an endless process of traipsing round business offices, the group presenting their own case in the absence of a manager.

Were they, I asked Lane, aware that the business as a whole had them down as a group of no-hopers? "Oh sure," he shrugged, "but that was just bloody annoying and it was embarrassing trying to flog ourselves… but I knew it wasn't the end."

Everywhere they went, they were given a blank, says Lane, not noticeably bitter – but then he doesn't now need to be. Apple and Track were just a couple of the places they were rejected. "I think almost all of them were approached at one time or another, and then Billy Gaff came along and said he would do this and that for us, but we took it all with a pinch of salt because so many others had made promises and done nothing. But Billy [now the Faces' manager] proved as good as his word."

The company that did have the foresight to recognise the revamped Faces as a good investment was the Warner-Reprise organisation, praised by Lane for their efficiency and pleasantness on both sides of the Atlantic. In one way, Warners' faith in the band is evident in the costly and eye-catching design of the *Long Player* sleeve.

They had only just found Gaff at the time and, not yet knowing the "strength of him", Lane and a couple of the band, fuelled up with a few brandies beforehand, had steamed up to meet the Warner execs and been greeted with a surprise affirmative. The group had anticipated success in America, what with Stewart and Wood's names being known there through their alliance with Beck, and the fact that, unlike Britain, they had no public prejudices to kill. During the rehearsal period, the question to Rod and Ronnie "How do you think this will go down in America?" became a standing group joke.

Lane sees the main difference between old and new bands as the Faces being first a live band where the Small Faces were first a studio band. Of the old Faces, he says, "We never really heard what we were playing for a couple of years and when the screaming stopped we were so loud … There was no subtlety in it at all."

Yet, possibly surprisingly, he feels today's Faces are not so much a new group as a logical and natural progression out of the old, tracing the roots of the current band back beyond even the Small Faces first "Whatcha Gonna Do About It" hit single. The influences they were under then remain the same today… old and vintage Tamla Motown, singers like David Ruffin. In their own environment, Stewart and Wood were also listening to and feeling the influence of the same music.

Lane himself, a professional and a perfectionist, blows hot and cold over *Long Player*. It was such a long time in the making, almost six months, that it is hard for him to stand back and view it objectively. He is, he smiles, still only just getting into the very first Small Faces album.

Most of the six months were spent searching for the right engineer and studio – only two weeks of that period were in fact productive – and this accounts for the fact that the "Maybe I'm Amazed" and "Feel So Good" tracks were cut live at the Fillmore East, "Bad'n'Ruin" and "Tell Everyone" were recorded at Mick Jagger's studio room in Hampshire, the quirky "On The Beach" on an old battered Revox machine in Lane's Richmond flat and the rest at Morgan Studios.

They chanced upon the right engineer, Martin Birch, and the right studio, Jagger's place, right at the end and hope to work the combination again. It was a sneak hearing of the new Stones album, recorded on the same equipment, that sent the Faces down to Hampshire.

Britain isn't so much a problem to them, as just something they haven't conquered yet. Lane admits to having no idea whatsoever as to how the British public regards the Faces – he wonders if they can fill the Albert Hall on their charity gig there in May – but such is their growing status in the States that they don't need to push themselves over here. The total number of British gigs can't be counted on

> "We got the impression Rod was just waiting to be asked to join"





GETTY

two hands now, but four could still contain them, although they do have a pretty full date list here from May.

They are quite content to let things take their own course. "We didn't hype it in the States," asserts Lane. "We haven't hyped it over here. We have gone out of our way not to. The best way to do it is just to creep in the back door…" *Nick Logan*

— NME JUNE 12 —

"**SO WE WERE** playing this gig in Croydon…" "Fairfield Halls?" "No, the pub across the road." Ian McLagan – MacHooligan the Face – talking 10 to the dozen, spares a second to laugh. He's come racing up from Kingston, an hour late because he's got the decorators in at home, and since he moved in last November has almost had to rebuild the house brick by brick.

So into the management offices he storms – you can hear him exchanging greetings and laughs with the staff as he works his way down the corridor – and, with the usual early sprinkling of anecdotes, mirth and merriment, the interview begins to shape up to the Faces pattern. Living up to the expected norm behaviour of a Face obviously ain't gonna tax the MacHooligan none at all. It's what comes naturally.

Preliminary exchanges dwell for a minute on this very reputation… a reputation McLagan feels might need a little damping down.

"It's getting a bit out of hand," confides the organist, declining beer for a tea. "You get in somewhere in the States and someone you've met there before phones you up: 'Heard you were in town, great. Which room you in? Let's wreck a room.' But we end up with the bill.

"Just recently, and you can't knock what they've done for us, Warners [the Faces' record company] have been bringing out the drinks. There have been nights when we've gone on sober, but there's not much chance of it happening. Promoters turn up with bottles, and when you've brought a bottle and someone else has a bottle, you can't help but drink… It's nice, like, that we get that treatment, because people used to hate us for a long time in the States because we were so obviously drinking. I suppose what it does is it makes me worry a lot less about the music."

The Faces are now, officially, on a month's holiday – most of the others have split for foreign parts – after a concerted campaign through spring to break the band in England. By all rights, their excellent *Long Player* album should have been soaring up the charts – so far it has only figured in progressive and underground listings and, of course, strongly in the US – but the fact it hasn't, although disappointing, hasn't dented the band's spirits. With America firmly on their side, they can – as Ronnie Lane and Rod Stewart have pointed out in the past – regard Britain not so much as a pressing necessity but as a long-term objective. Indeed, McLagan feels they can draw consolation for the relative lack of success for *Long Player* from the undoubted success of their live gigs here during the spring.

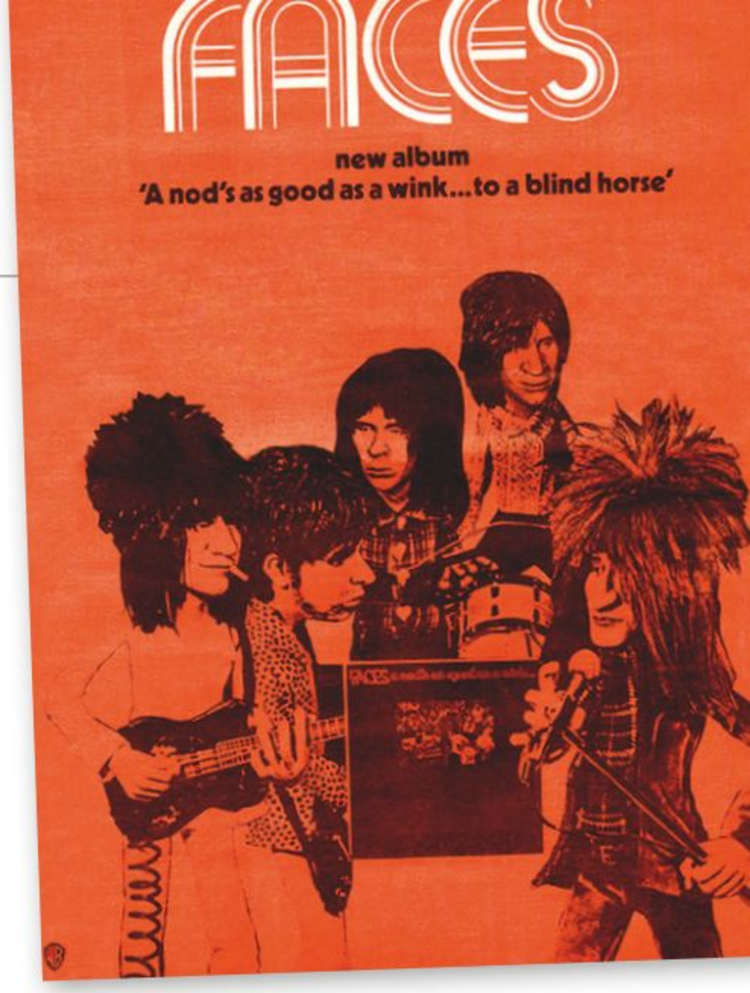


The Faces backstage at *Top Of The Pops*: (l–r) Ronnie Lane, Ian McLagan, Rod Stewart, Ronnie Wood and Kenney Jones

"In a way," says the organist, "we can be well pleased that we don't sell albums in this country in bulk, because it appears we don't need to sell records here to get nice audiences and a nice area of communication."

On July 9 until August 9, the Faces are back in the States, their fourth tour. Back gigging in England later in the year, they'll be presenting a largely new act.

"Apart from a couple of new numbers," says McLagan, "we have been playing the same act since the second tour of the States; a period of nine months or so. It has never really been fresh in England, because when it was fresh, we weren't playing many gigs here. I suppose it was at its best, it reached its peak, around that second tour, but it is only this period just gone that we have really worked in Britain.



"It is a drag in a way, because we are all a bit bored now with the music, but the next time we play in England we will have a fresh approach. I'm really sick of certain numbers. 'Maybe I'm Amazed' – I've played it so many different ways to try and keep it fresh, but now I am really sick of it. At the start it was really a beautiful number to me. There are only two now I get any pleasure from. One's 'I'm Losing You' and the other's the Ike & Tina Turner thing ['I Want To Be Loved']. I think we'll finally finish with 'Feel So Good', though we might stick with 'Had Us A Real Good Time'."

The band has, says McLagan, five to six new numbers they are working on, and will probably begin introducing some of the material from *Long Player* not yet adapted to the stage, like "Tell Everyone," "Bad'n'Ruin" and "Sweet Lady Mary". "…Stuff we've never really had the chance to rehearse properly because it means Ron Wood has to sit down and play steel guitar and Rod has to play 12-string for one number… Well, rather him than me."

The Faces' set is currently one of the most interesting to be heard anywhere, with its subtle mixture of various influences and styles and other writers' work. On the subject of influences, one of the most interesting facets of the *NME* Musicians' Poll revolved around the Faces nominations. Ian McLagan picked Booker T among his three most admired keyboard players; Ronnie Lane picked Duck Dunn among bassists; Ronnie Wood went for Steve Cropper among guitarists; and Kenny Jones for Al Jackson among drummers. A list of musicians that collectively reads Booker T & The MGs.

Faces music, as well as Small Faces music come to that, is well steeped in soul. Had Booker T had a vocalist, he too might well have figured in Rod Stewart's vocalists' placings; as it was, Rod did put David Ruffin, the ex-Temptations lead, among his choices… and therein lies another root of the Faces' heritage. Apart from the obvious – ie, the choice of material – it doesn't take a lot of suss to detect the soul in the Faces' work as it dodges between its Motown and Memphis influences.

"Motown," says McLagan, his hand round the now accepted beer can, "I still think they are so f––––––good. The drag is that people think they are just churning out records. They literally are – but it is of such high quality. Yet people say it's just pop. It's the same with Stax. Someone I met recently said they didn't like Stax. I took them home and played them me Stax albums, about 10 of them, and said, 'Now can't you see it? Can't you appreciate what they've got?'"

Mac's current rave in the Motown stable is Gladys Knight & The Pips, who the Faces made a point of catching in cabaret last time in the States. "It's such a shame," says the organist, "because if she came over here she would not be doing the underground clubs, not that circuit at all… but she has so much soul. To me, she's the best, the dirtiest female voice."

Faces sets are liberally sprinkled with other writers' work, Stones' tracks "It's All Over Now" and "Stray Cat Blues", Tempts' "I'm Losing You", Broonzy's "Feel So Good", Elton John's "Country Comforts", McCartney's "Maybe I'm Amazed" and so on. Faces albums, as do Rod Stewart's solo jobs, follow the same varied pattern.

McLagan explains their early policy of mixing new stuff with known numbers by the need to make their name when they first went on to the States. "What better than numbers they already knew?" And although there is no need today to continue that – the group's own material is as outstanding as any outside material they use – their only criteria for new material is its quality.

Quite right too. Why should "Only A Hobo" be recorded by Dylan alone and then to a certain extent be forgotten? Why should "It's All Over Now" rust in the Decca vaults? Or a song as good as "I'm Losing You" not get through to progressives because of their own snobbery? Today, with almost every new band trapped in its blind preoccupation with presenting its own material regardless of quality, too many songs are doomed to a short lifespan. A government grant to set the Faces up as the country's re-recorders of song classics wouldn't be a bad idea. *Nick Logan* •

WorldMags.net

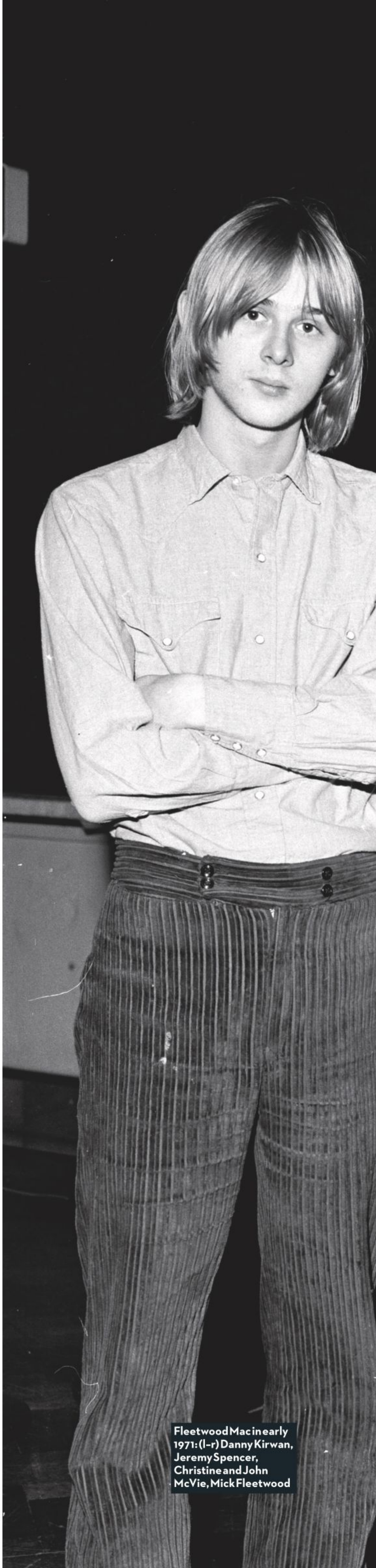
"The Jeremy we knew had gone"

When FLEETWOOD MAC tour America's West Coast, volatile guitarist JEREMY SPENCER goes missing and the band enter a noir drama: confusion, a religious cult, malign forces. The band are rescued by Peter Green, but are still shaken: "It's as if we've been beaten about the head with a giant club..."

— NME APRIL 24 —

EARTHQUAKES WERE TEARING up Los Angeles as Fleetwood Mac, a fortnight into their sixth American tour, prepared to fly in from San Francisco for four nights at the Whisky A Go Go. Jeremy Spencer didn't want to go, partly because of the quakes, partly in an irrational fear of what drummer Mick Fleetwood describes as a pallor of evilness, an intangible fog of foreboding that clouds the conurbation of LA.

Fleetwood, hotel room-mates with Spencer on tours, attempted to rationalise the guitarist's anxieties. "Of course it is an evil place," agreed the drummer – recalling his placatory advice as we spoke in his kitchen at the band's Hampshire home – "but we are there on a job, I told him, and it is possible to go in, do the gigs and come out again without touching on the evil elements." »



PHOTOSHOT

Fleetwood Mac in early 1971: (l–r) Danny Kirwan, Jeremy Spencer, Christine and John McVie, Mick Fleetwood

WorldMags.net

'It was like something out of a bad B-film'

—MICK FLEETWOOD

WorldMags.net

By the time the band arrived in LA, Spencer had apparently got the better of his worries. His behaviour outwardly completely normal, he left the group's hotel, as he often did after checking in, to buy some books in a shop he knew from previous visits. The rest of the band went out to eat. Returning some time later to the hotel, they were surprised to find that Jeremy hadn't yet got back; their apprehensions building as the evening grew on, it was when it became obvious that they were not going to make that night's Whisky gig that manager Clifford Davis contacted the Los Angeles Police Department.

Sitting in their hotel rooms worrying and wondering, the band's minds went back to an encounter they had experienced on the streets while on their way to eat. Selling the word of God in the aggressive manner that persists among more extremist sects in LA, groups of religious fanatics had approached them in a certain area of the city. They had been hard put to get away from this forceful street preaching, and knowing Jeremy, feared that on his own his strength of will might not have been as strong as theirs.

The reactions of the LA police to Davis' call for assistance served to back up fears – in time proved well founded – that Spencer might have become involved with one of these sects. But it was not until four missing days had elapsed that the guitarist was found. It helps at this point to have some understanding of the complex mental makeup of Jeremy Spencer. There are many sides and paradoxes to the diminutive guitarist whose bottleneck renditions of Elmore James and on-target impersonations of rock'n'roll stars have been a highlight of Fleetwood Mac's stage presentation ever since their emergence as the most successful of the British post-blues-boom bands.

Spencer had long been deeply and seriously involved in religion, but at the same time, as a person, he could plumb the depths of vulgarity in a confounding paradox. "He could be so vulgar, it would make you wince," says Christine McVie. Off stage and on, he could be many different characters – and extremely funny – but to strangers be the most retiring member of the band, almost hermit-like off stage, mumbling and inaudible on. Yet when, in the stage act, he did his famed impersonations, particularly the one of Elvis Presley, a drastic change of personality came over him. He wouldn't do it every night, though – no matter how much the band tried to twist his arm, or how strongly it obviously went down with the public – but only if he himself felt in the right mood, and felt the right mood from an audience.

In the post-Peter Green period, and after Christine McVie (Perfect) had joined, the band bought him a maroon lamé suit as a hopeful persuader, but Jeremy stuck rigidly to his rule. He did it only once in Britain before the group left for the States, and only on the first and last nights of the time he was there for the US tour.

Clifford Davis supplies this account of the occasion in Britain. With Jeremy off stage, the rest of the band had burst into a straight rendition of "Viva Las Vegas" with Mick Fleetwood breaking off midway through to announce, in best MC fashion, "Here for your enjoyment tonight… all the way from Las Vegas… ELVIS PRESLEY…"

A maroon lamé leg wiggled from the side of the curtain, the rest of Jeremy Spencer, hair slicked back in a rocker's pompadour, bouncing out into the spotlight to complete the lyrics of "Viva Las Vegas". In this particular show, Spencer was well into his act when a youth in the first few rows rose from his seat, supposedly en route to the toilets. In a flash Jeremy had snapped the fingers on his outstretched arms and killed stone dead the music behind him, gesticulating a hand towards the embarrassed youth in the auditorium and delivering in a slow drawl the killing, "Nobody… BUT NOBODY… leaves here… when Elvis is on stage." On stage he had that kind of power; off stage he had none.

Religious sects, ranging from the moderates through to a fanaticism which can touch on black magic and satanism at its furthest extremes, proliferate in Los Angeles. The more fanatical, the more their appeal is based around fear. The word of the Bible is law, and the flames of hell will devour all who refuse their strict path to God.

In cases of missing young people, these sects are immediately suspected by the LA Police Department. There have been cases, according to Mick Fleetwood as told to the band by the police, where young kids, after a haranguing on the street, have virtually been kidnapped by the more fanatical sects, thrown into locked and darkened rooms and kept without food and water for four/five days, until the "convert" has renounced his former life and embraced his new ideals.

Fleetwood and Clifford Davis in no way suggest that such extreme ploys were used to snare Spencer, but it should be remembered that it was against this background that the search for the guitarist went on. Of course it couldn't happen to you or I – hopefully it couldn't – but there are plenty of potential recruits hanging around the boulevards of Los Angeles. Their prey is the young, long-haired, the hippy, the youth possibly washed out after a spell on drugs, possibly just low and looking for a cause, maybe already interested enough in religion to be hooked in the initial approaches… the gullible, the young, the lost causes. Jeremy was certainly into religion and, according to Mick Fleetwood, gullible.

One of the ploys of the sect Spencer was eventually found with, an organisation called the Children Of God, is to harangue passing pedestrians on LA streets. If you don't stop and listen – perhaps you are a Christian but don't have the time – they are prone to scream after you down the street, threatening hellfire of the "You will burn in the fires of hell" variety. It can, according to Mick Fleetwood, be a pretty harrowing experience for the most balanced mind.

For four days the group, Clifford Davis and road managers Dennis Keene and Phil McDonnell, with the aid of the police and various well-wishers, most of them moderate Christians familiar with the methods and whereabouts of the sects, kept up the search for Spencer. Mick Fleetwood tells of one trip, fruitless as it transpired, to a sect which had been forced some 60 miles out of LA by the police for precisely such activities as detailed earlier.

> "He was with about 500 of these people… they're like vegetables"

With Fleetwood was a girl from the Whisky A Go Go, a Christian who had offered her services in the search. In effect she was a kind of interpreter, because certain sects will answer questions by quoting texts from the Bible. Dusk was falling as their car approached through an area already given a bizarre and frightening countenance by the earthquakes.

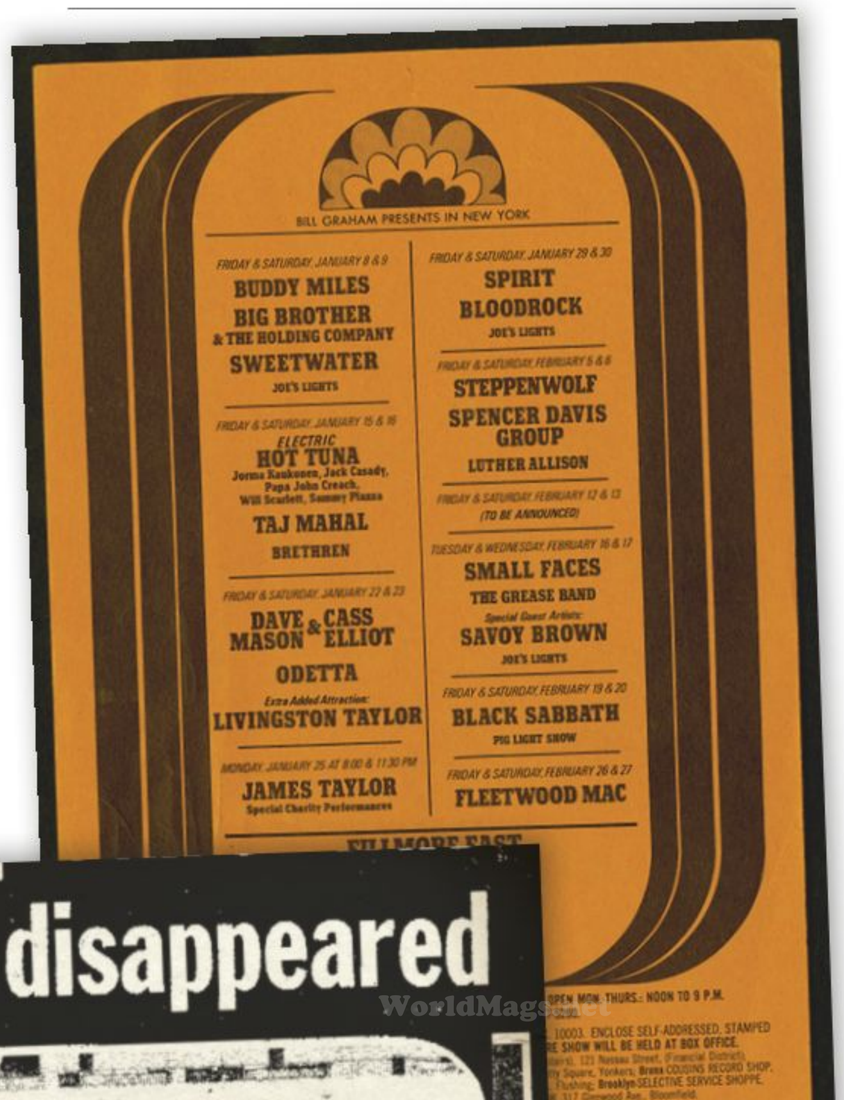
"As we approached… I just can't explain the atmosphere… the awful feeling the place gave out." Fleetwood recalls. "It was an experience I will never forget. Thankfully the house was near to and viewable from the boulevard. If it had been up a driveway and off a highway I don't think I would have dared go any further…"

Somehow the sect leaders had gotten word on their efficient grapevine of the visiting party's arrival.

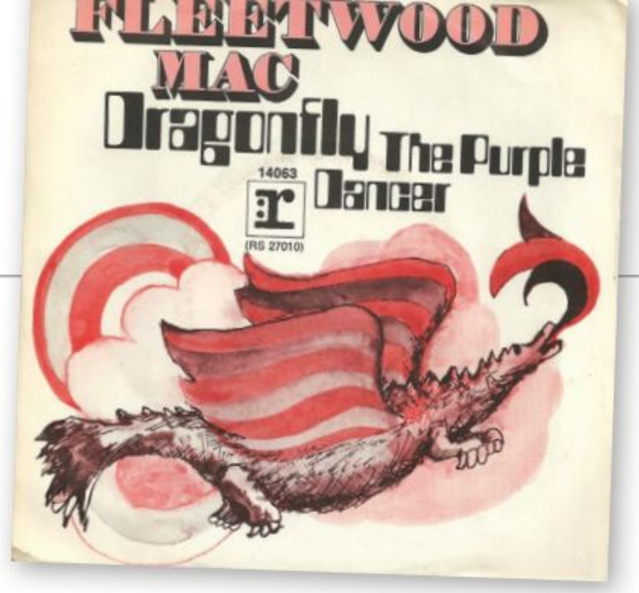
"They always seem to get to know," says Mick, "and we were told by the police that if there are any kids there that shouldn't be, they stick them in a bus and drive them up the hills until the threat has passed."

Barred at the door from entering and given no assistance whatsoever, this thankfully wasn't the sect that had Jeremy. Mick Fleetwood remembers most of all the expressions and pallid complexions of the people that had met them at the door… "So white, their eyes staring through you…"

Many more search parties of this kind were organised before, at the end of the fourth day, a tip-off led the group to the Children Of God's building in LA. Clifford Davis and roadies Keene and McDonnell comprised the party that followed up the tip-off, arriving at 11.30pm on the fourth day.







At first there was a point-blank denial that Spencer was there, and a refusal to let the party in. The white lie that Jeremy's wife Fiona was seriously ill back in England got the trio inside the building. It was after protracted arguing with sect leaders that Jeremy suddenly stepped out of a room and came to meet them. His appearance was startling… his hair shorn and dressed in "dirty" clothes. His name had also been changed to the Biblical Jonathan.

Davis spent three hours with the guitarist, hearing him tell how he had decided he no longer wanted to work; that the world was coming to an end and that he had to put his soul in order first. How he had been approached by chanting members of the sect on the street and gone with them to explore their beliefs.

He showed no concern at all for the rest of the band, says Davis, and said he thought they might have persuaded him against the action he had taken if he had made contact with them at all. "But I must admit," concedes the manager, "that he appeared most sensible during our long talk."

To questions of what would happen to his wife and two young children, however, Spencer would only answer, "Jesus loves… Jesus will take care of them", and all the time that Davis was talking to the guitarist, two fellow disciples of the sect were seated on either side of him, all the while rubbing his arms and repeating a chant like "Jesus loves you".

Davis says his condition and behaviour towards the rest of the sect could best be described as that of a "starstruck child". "It was," says Fleetwood, "as if he had lost his identity. The Jeremy we knew had gone."

Keene, the roadie, went further: "He'd been brainwashed and it nearly killed me to see him. He just mumbled, 'Jesus loves you.' He was with about 500 of these people and they're just like vegetables."

The band itself never got to see Spencer. There was talk of a meeting with him the following evening, if it could be arranged, but the advice against it of Clifford Davis prevailed. "I feared for their safety," he told me.

Ironically, the tour, in terms of financial gain and audience response, was the most successful Fleetwood Mac have done in the States. Their *Kiln House* album had done better in America than here, and before his disappearance, Jeremy had been playing to his peak.

"He had been really getting everybody else off the ground," remembered Christine when we moved upstairs to the McVies' section of the house. "He was playing like we'd never heard him play before. At the Fillmore West in San Francisco [what was to be his final night with the band] he did his Elvis bit and had the whole audience in the palm of his hand…"

"He had so much power over the audience," broke in John McVie. "That's what I can't understand. If he wanted to spread his beliefs, surely he could have used that power and done it through the group instead…"

Christine: "Yes, but it was 'Elvis' that had the power. Jeremy had no power at all." None of them, they stress, mind the course that Jeremy has taken; their objection is to the manner in which he took it.

"What he has done is his privilege," says Christine on behalf of the band. "But he could have had the courtesy to let us know, instead of just walking out on us and leaving us to worry like we did for those four days…"

"Not knowing," adds Mick Fleetwood, "whether he was physically or mentally still in one piece. That was all we wanted, all we needed to know."

Once reconciled to Jeremy's unalterable state of mind, the group was faced with six weeks of a major tour yet to run, with contracts and gigs to complete that they couldn't conceivably meet in their depleted form. Peter Green, the erstwhile Fleetwood Mac leader who himself left the band for reasons in which his religious beliefs played a major role, was their saviour. Clifford Davis put through an SOS call to the guitarist in England, who, true to his pronouncements and intentions when he quit the Mac, had been about to take up a job on a farm.

Going back on stage, after so many months' absence, was the furthest thing from Green's mind; yet it was the ties of a still strong friendship that sent him flying out to join up with the band two days later.

Christine points out that if Green had not answered their distress call their whole careers would have been in jeopardy. "We would have lost a lot of money, lost this house, everything. It would have been the end, because this house represents everything we've got."And turning to address herself to her husband: "Everything you've worked for the last eight years, let's face it, it's all tied up in this house."

> "If he wanted to come back, I think I would be prepared to say yes"

Meanwhile, as Green was flying out, Jeremy was being transferred to the Children Of God's Texas branch where he was later to be joined by his wife Fiona, reportedly in full sympathy with her husband's ideals, and young son Dicken. Fiona's mother, staying at the Mac house in Hampshire, cared for the younger child. Later, it is known that the Spencers – Fiona doing domestic chores for the sect – were moving round branches of the Children Of God in other major US cities.

Faced with little alternative – there was no time to break off and re-plan their act with Peter Green – Fleetwood Mac were forced into accepting a set comprising three numbers, Green's "Black Magic Woman" one of them, followed by an hour or more's jamming. It was a move taken with great reluctance, but which involved very little choice.

Shattered then by the mental anguish of the days in Los Angeles, they were now being asked to walk onto a stage and face their audiences with the barest semblance of an act. "We'd arrive for a gig," remembers John McVie, "and suddenly find ourselves on stage staring at an audience without a clue of what we were going to play. We were just scared stiff; it was a feeling I just couldn't properly describe."

Green, more than anything else, probably helped hold them together. "He treated it as a bit of a joke," says McVie. "He never spoke much on stage but occasionally would amble up to the mic and say something like 'Yankee bastards' and laugh. I mean, he didn't have to come back again but we did. But they'd all applaud at that, and amazingly the whole act, particularly the jamming, seemed to go down well."

Despite the fact that after a time the jamming itself became monotonous and predictable to the band, they were winning encores and building where they had fully expected to be killing a reputation. "We only had a handful of bad gigs," says John "which is good in an eight-week tour. In terms of going down well and making more money, we were successful and it was our best tour. But the way we felt inside while we were doing it…"

"Peter," says Christine "was so good. You could almost see the goose pimples on people's arms as they were listening to him play. He just used to raise the roof. He is THE guitarist; it is such a shame that he is renouncing himself."

Drained of energy by the end of the tour, the last date, according to John McVie, had to be the last. They couldn't have gone on any further. And once it was all over, they just fled for England as fast as they could go, mentally and physically beaten, morale at its lowest ebb. "Over the past year," sighed Christine, "it seems as if we have just been continually battered and beaten about the head with a giant club." Mick Fleetwood, succinctly, uses and makes you feel the strength of the phrase "running for home".

I drove down to the Fleetwood Mac house, a large secluded mansion on a hill just past the Devil's Punch Bowl on the A9, just a week after their return. Understandably they hadn't been near their instruments since they got back, and were just then coming round to picking up the pieces. They'd made no hard and fast decisions on what to do if Jeremy Spencer does return and if, though they think it highly improbable, he wants to rejoin. They discuss it among themselves as we drink coffee.

"It is hard until we talk to him," says Christine. "I would say no because I don't think I can work with him again after what he's done."

"But," John weighs in with his opinion, "if he said he wanted to come back, I think I would be prepared to say yes…"

Mick, as he sees me to my car, feels that apart from any other considerations they all want to hear it "from the man himself". And that, despite what has happened, he would like to re-establish with Spencer the strong bond of friendship that previously existed.

The first candidate for Jeremy's old job was due the afternoon of the day I called, a guitarist/singer/writer called Bob Welch who has since been chosen as replacement. Also due that day was Spencer himself. Because he lived there, and all his possessions remain in his quarter of the house, it is odds on that he will return there at some point.

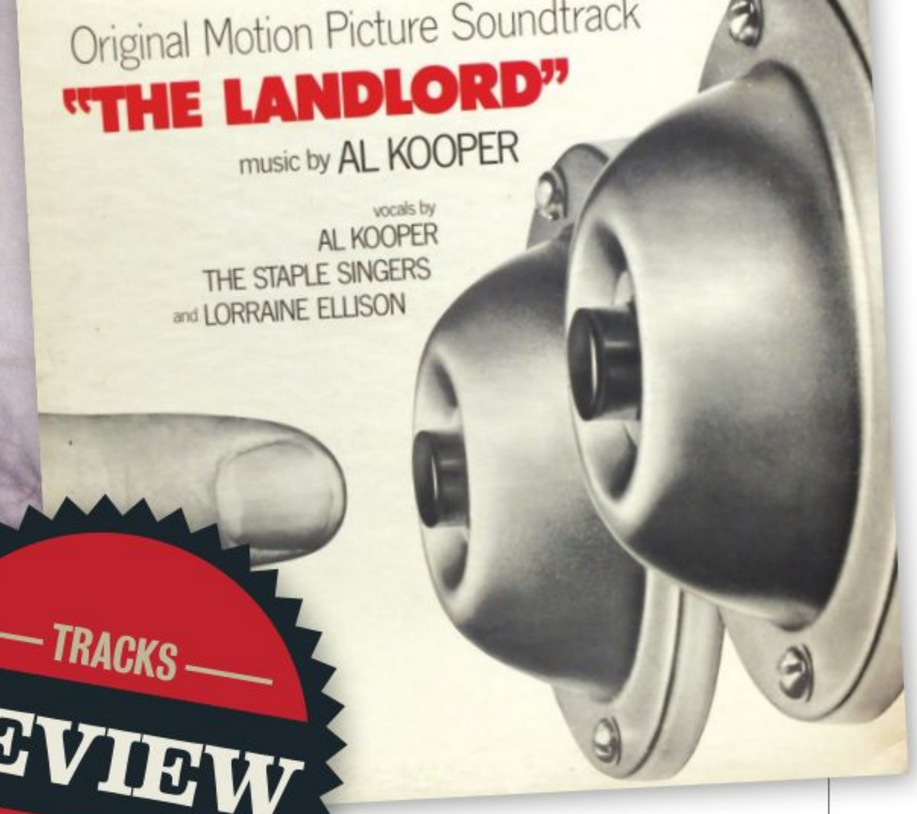
But the band had no knowledge of his intentions, simply word that he would be back soon – the date has since been put back to later this month. He could be coming for his possessions, to talk to the band or, as is thought highly possible, with the leader of the Children of God to start an offshoot of the sect in Britain. *Nick Logan* •

WorldMags.net



"Oh — take it off. Say no more!"

MM APRIL 3 Marc Bolan takes a tilt at some new (and old) numbers...



TRACKS REVIEW 1971

Wilson Pickett's version was much more powerful. Sounds like an old Ike & Tina thing – Charlie and Inez Foxx. Oh – hate that organ. Terrible production. Sounds like a demo studio. Obviously not Eric on guitar. It must be Colin Cattermole or Elmore Drains. No, that was terrible. I can't imagine why anyone wants to make records like that.

John Lee Hooker
Messin' With The Hook FROM THE LP *HOOKER'N'HEAT*, LIBERTY

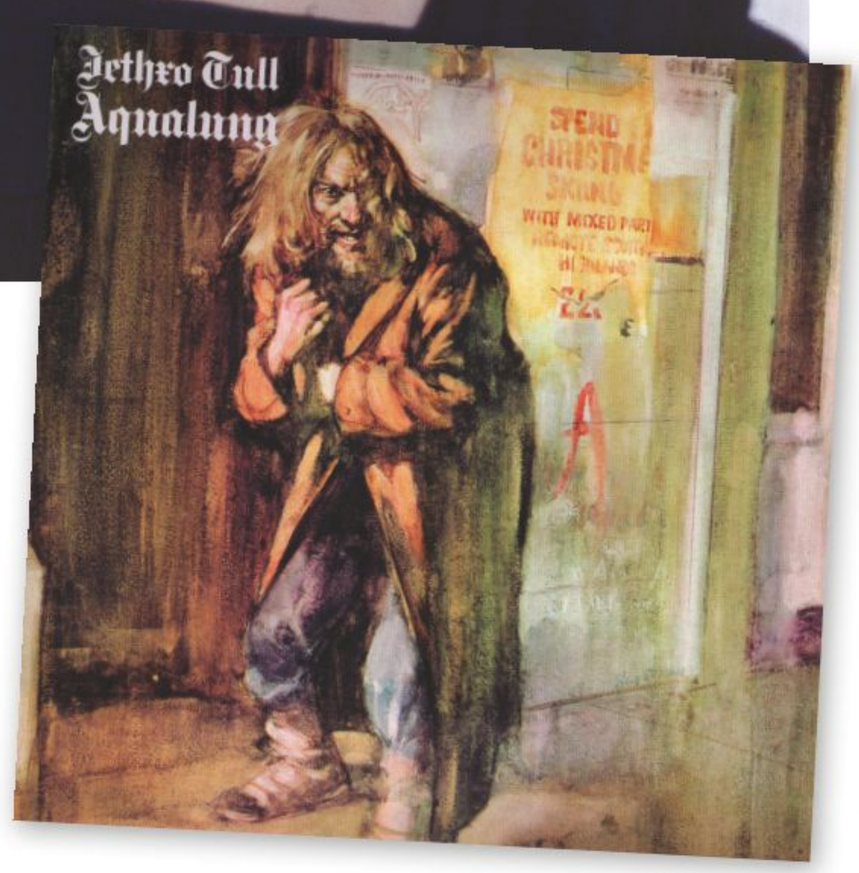
Lovely guitar style. I like this very much. Is it Muddy Waters? Very similar voice. John Lee Hooker? I can tell by the guitar style. He's dynamite. Incredible guitar – it sounds like a motorbike. It's the sort of thing I'll do when I'm 40! He's playing really well. American bluesmen don't always seem to be aware of the techniques available in the studios. Buddy Guy "live" is the greatest guitarist in the world, but his records always sound thin and weak. Chuck Berry's records for Mercury were just the same. They don't seem to have any control over the sound. Bob Hite has produced this and really got a good sound.

Al Kooper
Brand New Day FROM THE LP *THE LANDLORD*, UNITED ARTISTS

Sounds like Jon Sebastian meets The Band. Sounds like "Mighty Quinn". Who is it? Well, he's been working with Dylan, so that's probably why. I'm quite partial to his guitar playing. But this is a muzak – really. It's bad white soul – give me James Brown, or Van Morrison, who does good white soul. It's sad. But you know he has made a lot of bread from the movie, so ride on, Al. I thought his work on *New Morning* was important.

Paul Brett Sage
Reason For Your Askin' DAWN

I don't know who it is – Peter The Poet? Or Paul The Poet (*shakes head*). Sounds like an old Nirvana track. Who is it? Loser name.



The Olympics
Western Movies FROM THE LP *ROCK & ROLL STARS VOLUME 2*, JOY

It's funny – I've always remembered this particular record. It's The Olympics. It came out on a blue label HMV in 1959 and the producer was mumble, mumble. I think it's very good but similar to The Coasters' records of the time like "Young Blood". It's the sound of the time. The Olympics came out about two years after The Coasters. I love these records.

GETTY

Louis Jordan & His Tympany Five
School Days FROM THE LP *LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL*, CORAL

I like the sax at the beginning and I liked the first verse, but I didn't like the nursery rhymes, which were so predictable. The drumming is tremendous, almost like Ringo. And the trumpet at the end was good. Yeah – enjoyed it. The words were like Chuck Berry words until it got into the nursery rhymes. Late '40s, I should think, just before the rock'n'roll thing happened. A lot of the '49 stuff by The Drifters on the Atlantic history of soul albums sound like this. It really swings. Beautiful.

Jethro Tull
Aqualung FROM THE LP *AQUALUNG*, CHRYSALIS

Very good. Jethro Tull, obviously; and a very important LP for the group because a lot of people have lost faith in them. This will restore interest. I saw a parallel in the lyrics there with Arthur Lee with the reference to "snot". Arthur Lee used that in *Forever Changes*. I thought the guitar solo was beautiful. I'm impressed. I don't have a bad word for this. It will take people a couple of plays to get into, but it should be huge in America.

Elvin Bishop Group
Don't Fight It (Feel It) FROM THE LP *FEEL IT!*, FILLMORE

I don't like it at all. I thought



WorldMags.net



TRACKS

REVIEW

1971

"He's doing a good imitation..."

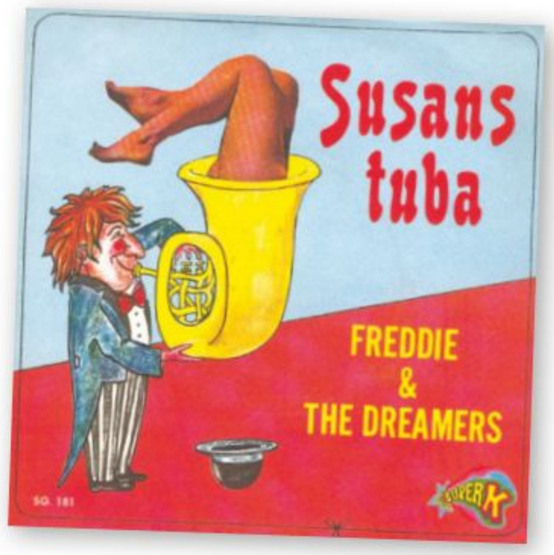
MM MAY 22 Roger McGuinn reviews some appropriate sounds, from a selection of sources.

Man
Daughter Of The Fireplace
LIBERTY

"I think I'm better than Elvis." Who said that? It was Crispian St Peter, wasn't it? Man, did you ever see Crispian St Peter's stage act? Hmm, nice guitar here. Good old Chuck Berry. Very nice, actually. Probably American. You find so many good guitarists wasting their time in bad groups.

Freddie & The Dreamers
Susan's Tuba PHILIPS

Beautiful production – really. I like it. It's... unreal! It sounds like Oliver, the guy who did "Good Morning Starshine" on acid. I'm not too in agreement with the trumpet, but it's a funky pop record. I'd say it would be a hit in America.



Tom Springfield
Make Me An Instrument Of Your Peace PHILIPS

Oh – take it off. Say no more! I agree very strongly with the sentiments, but I'd rather hear "Power To The People" or "My Sweet Lord".

Cliff Richard
Silvery Rain COLUMBIA

I'd hazard a guess and say it was Kay Starr. Oh, I hate it, and butterflies DON'T move on invisible strings. Is it Cliff? Oh, give me "Move It" and "High Class Baby". He's kept abreast of the times, I'll say that. They've cleaned him, but I prefer him dirty. I don't see this as a hit unless it gets massive TV promotion.



The Band
This Wheel's On Fire FROM A LIVE BOOTLEG ALBUM

Sounds like The Band live. That was obviously a live recording, unless it was in the studio with people and recorded through a tin can. It sounds like The Band and Robbie [Robertson] did a long guitar break. I was looking around the room and no one seemed really knocked out with it, no one's foot was really tapping. I've heard this is Dylan's favourite version of the song, but having done the song ourselves it's hard for me to judge.

Dee Dee Warwick
Suspicious Minds
ATLANTIC

It's nice. Is this an English record? A little birdie just told me it was Dee Dee Warwick. I'll give it 78 just to dance to it. Do you know what I mean? Dick Clark has a radio show in the States where he plays records to kids and they say what they think of it and how many out of 100 they give. Yeah, they give their name and age first. Well, I'll give it a 78, and the beat was good.

Cowboy
It's Time FROM THE LP *REACH FOR THE SKY*, ATCO

Neil Young. Steve Stills, it's not Neil Young, no. Boy, does that sound like him. It's a good copy of Neil Young; sounds like a cross between Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young – it's calculated. Even the guitar is... Scott Boyer, is that the way you pronounce it?
Well, he's doing a good imitation and sounds like Neil Young. And that just shows you there are good imitators of everything – Cowboy do Neil Young, Bee Gees did The Beatles, Byrds did Bob Dylan.



Mick Abrahams
Big Queen FROM THE LP *MICK ABRAHAMS*, CHRYSALIS

I found it rather long and tiresome, except for the soft jangly bit. It had a consistent beat but I don't know what the words were. Melodically it didn't get off – I'll give it 69.

Marc Benno
Good Year A & M

That's a fun record. Nice back-up voices and guitar, sounds like Marc Benno. Uncanny, isn't it? Really nice one, I like that. Good year coming my way, that's the picture I get.



Ashton, Gardner, Dyke & Co
Can You Get It CAPITOL

Ashton, Dyke and something. Was it live or in the studio with lots of happy people and a dog? Four-four beat with a big bass drum, and can you get it. Yeah, I can get it. Can you? It's fun, happy music, the sort of thing you play at a party and dance to.

Laura Nyro
When I Was A Freeport And You Were The Main Drag CBS

There's a CBS record. That's a weird ending – I like the ending. It goes in about eight different places but just breaks up rather than holding your attention. Singing is good, but the arrangement and studio doesn't hang together. It lacks continuity.

Mylon
Old Gospel Ship ATLANTIC

I really like that, it's in the Joe Cocker bag, Creedence Clearwater and Leon Russell style. Consistently solid, good guitar EQ, and the vocals are good. It sounds like American Mylon.

GETTY

WorldMags.net

An interview with JOHN PEEL: DJ, label owner and patron of artists from Captain Beefheart to Marc Bolan. "When I first heard T. Rex had made it, I was driving," says Peel. "I stopped and had a little cry."

"It would be easy for us to play safe"

— MELODY MAKER APRIL 24 —

SOMEHOW I ALWAYS associate John Peel with the word nice. A long as I can remember he has been calling everything nice. Hamsters are nice. Malayan seven-string guitars are nice. The Pig is nice. So is walking in the park. Nice. Really nice.

VD isn't nice, but then he didn't say it was. "I had clap once and it wasn't nice," he told us. All over 247 metres he said it. Mary Whitehouse didn't think that was nice either, because she tried to get him banned, didn't she?

On the other hand, most of us admired his honesty. Just as, though we may have thought that hamsters smelled and walking around parks was sissy, we knew he meant that, too. It was all bound up in jumbly fashion with believing in Captain Beefheart and Beethoven, Buffalo Springfield and Roger McGough. The clap own-up fits somewhere in there, maybe in among the total conviction that Liverpool football team is the greatest in the world and Ustad Vilayat Khan is a wow.

Essentially, he is a paradox only in our own minds, a gentle, straightforward man whose gentle straightforwardness we have difficulty in believing because with him they seem such absolute qualities. It becomes a compulsion to dig for the base metal. The trip wires and the snares are forever being laid, but he manages to blunder through them with only a few scratches.

Yet the irony of it all is that we who grew up with *The Perfumed Garden* and *Night Ride* and *Top Gear*, and who believe him to be one of the very few good things that have come out of the underground, have really turned him into a museum piece and nobody is interested enough to blow the dust off. Once, he was almost one of The Magic Band, the Captain's lieutenant; but no one believes in magic any more. »

GETTY



"Most of the people don't have the opportunity to drop in, let alone bloody drop out": John Peel in 1971

WorldMags.net

He is the twin victim of the current pop depression and the idiom's appetite for new faces and charisma. Maybe if the Corporation let him talk more about guinea pigs and ouds and JR Tolkien and social diseases again, he would cease to be the institution that we all take for granted. Honesty has never been in large supply in the pop business, after all.

We are sitting in the narrator's room at the BBC's Paris Studios in Lower Regent Street, London. A small, functional-looking room with hard leather seats and a wooden table placed squarely under a large clock. On either side of the clock are green and red lights, which flash on and off at intervals for no apparent reason that John Peel can imagine. Peel is dressed in an olive sweater and a pair of scruffy jeans, which have a badge stuck in the flies. I am at a loss to know what the badge stands for because I don't care to look too closely in the direction.

"I can't think why you want to interview me," he says. "I would've thought everybody was bored to death by now with the thoughts of John Peel. Anyway," – the touch of self-deprecation – "I'm sure nobody listens to *Top Gear* or the Sunday shows now."

So what shall we talk about? "Sex at *Top Of The Pops*, by Frank Story," he says promptly, looking up from an article about a dolly girl and her secret diary. "I'm amazed at all that business, you know, because no one has ever offered me a single penny to do anything. Not a penny."

The tone is ironic and the look is that of wry amusement. As if anybody would offer John Peel, The Underground DJ, money like that. It would be like trying to slip a buck to Elliot Ness. "Actually," he starts up again, "I've only done *Top Of The Pops* once and then I forgot Amen Corner's name and was never asked back. God, when anybody ever remembers that I always get so embarrassed.

"Panic-stricken, that's what I was. The thing is, I quite enjoy television, although if I was given a choice between doing a weekly programme on television and doing what I'm doing now, I'd choose the radio. I've got to go on at the end of April on one of Mike Raven's programmes about The Ten Commandments and discuss Thou Shalt Not Kill. It's this thing, you know, about DJs being regarded as major social figures, so that we're asked our opinions on everything. I suppose you've got to have somebody to talk about it, but it seems a bit funny to have DJs."

Ah yes, DJ-ing. Some people were saying that his programmes reflected the public's disillusioned attitude towards music on the BBC. He jumped right in without a pause. "I think part of the problem," he said, "is that something I was always campaigning for has happened and it's had the inevitable result. There was a time when *Top Gear* was the only programme catering for this end of the music spectrum and now there are quite a few – *Sounds Of The Seventies*, and Pete Drummond's programme, and now I'm having a competition with myself a bit with the Sunday concerts. And so it's no longer unique.

"I find that I'm now in the same position with the programme as I was in 1967, which is basically that of saying, well, there's a lot of popular stuff, but at the same time as you're listening to that why don't you listen to this, which has its own merit. The kind of people we have on *Top Gear* now are not the sort we've chosen because they're obscure, but they're people who we think are very good and who aren't getting the exposure they merit."

Sometimes, I said, I didn't feel he was selective or critical enough. "Well," he laughed, "that's hard. The thing is, it would be very easy for us to play safe and put on groups that we knew people were going to listen to, and play the tracks from the LPs that we know will leap into the charts. It'd be a much more popular programme and have a much wider audience, and would win the polls and everything, because I think this year we're going to experience a slight fall from grace when it comes to the *Melody Maker* polls."



That bothered him? "It does. The obvious thing, of course, is to say NO, but it does a little bit because it's nice. It's stupid to pretend. I get quite chuffed about it, honestly."

The basic idea behind his programmes, he said, was to find a group with some merit that was not widely known or heard. The problem was that what sounded good in a club did not necessarily come across on the radio.

"But once we're committed to broadcasting it, we're committed. You tend to get carried away by atmospheres in the studio which don't come across on the radio. The classic example of that were Mott The Hoople, who came down and did very much the same thing they'd do in a club, which was 'clap your hands, come on, everybody', which is nice in a club and went alright in the studio, but when it went out on the radio it sounded silly, really. It's trying to put out a three-dimensional thing over a two-dimensional transmitter. You're just bound to lose part of it.

"So we do have things that don't work. But if you've got Deep Purple and Black Sabbath and Ten Years After and Emerson, Lake & Palmer, then the programme would be enormously popular. But those bands have lost the spark somewhere down the line and are basically going through a routine. It's really like Bob and Alf Pearson. They don't need to be doing *Top Gear* or *The Sunday Show*, whereas other people do and you have to take that into consideration."

Wouldn't he say, though, that another part of the problem was that pop music was going through a low period, probably because there are few "stars" around any more?

"Oh definitely, yeah. Because it was always stars round about my age, and it's very difficult for 15-year-old kids to relate to people who are twice as old. The whole pop scene is obviously a cyclical thing, where you get these great spurts of action, then it dies down again, then, whooomph, off it goes. I think it must be fairly close – the next phase that's going to suddenly sweep the world by storm. It must be just around the corner.

"But at the moment we're going through a very sterile period. People are basically more hung up on images than they are on music. They'd much rather go and see somebody famous than hear somebody good. You see, you get a situation where a Beatles or a Stones or an Elvis Presley are both good and glamorous, but there isn't anybody who's both at the moment, or both on that scale.

"Part of the reason Dandelion hasn't sold enormously well is because the records which do sell are records which sound sufficiently like something else so as not to tax people's imaginations too much. In other words, a Black Sabbath will sell because it sounds like something else. You get a process where each band that is successful is a watered-down version of something else.

"Your Hendrixes and your Creams – and I think Led Zeppelin too, in the sense that they are originators – spawn whole hordes of lesser groups and imitators, and sometimes, as a result of imitation, the imitators can be more successful than them."

I WAS GLAD HE had mentioned Dandelion. Dandelion records, I said, had always struck me as being high on worthiness and integrity but low on artistic quality. For the first time in the interview he looked upset, and yes, slightly angry. Reaction, of course, hadn't been gratifying, but as far as the actual recording and music went he was very pleased. Look at Island! They had started off from scratch – and look at them now!

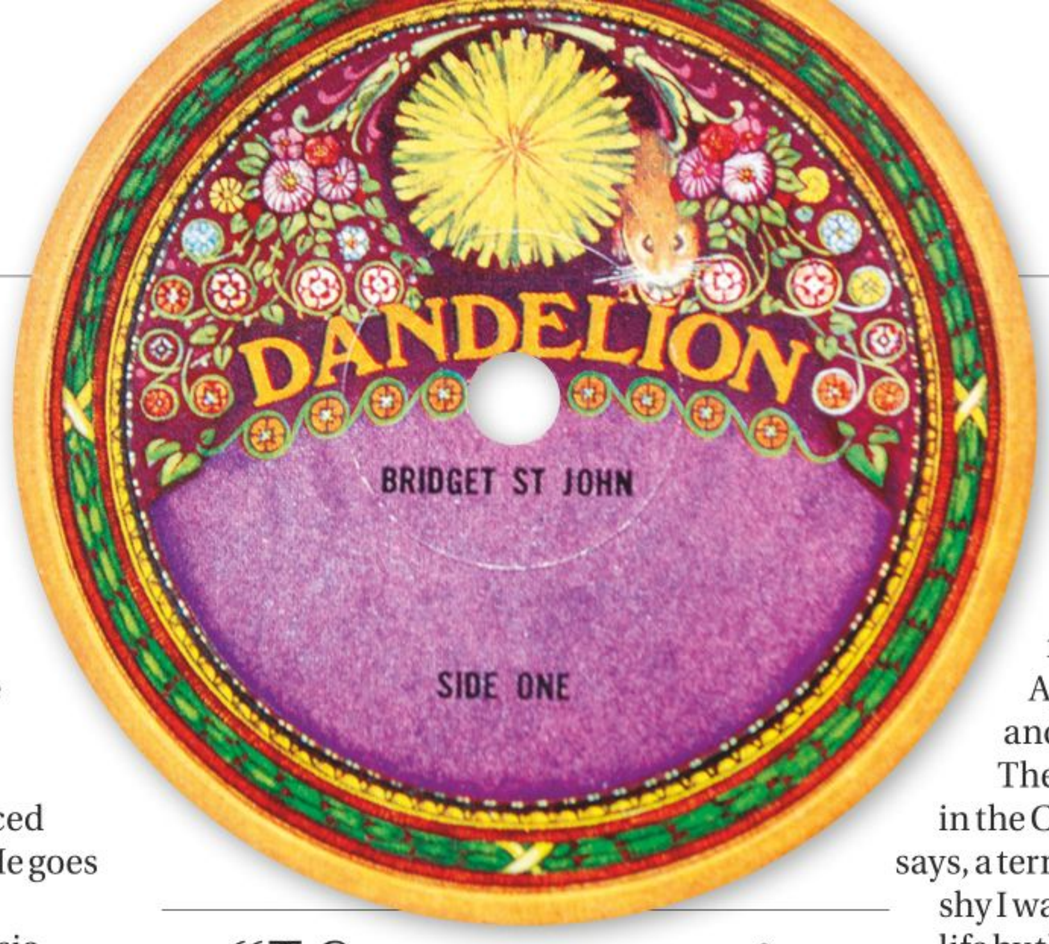
"They made mistakes along the way and so have we, and we began with people no one had heard of, unlike companies like Vertigo or Harvest, who started off with known quantities such as Pink Floyd. We have this little plot in the dark corner of the garden and along come the critics and… over the wall. I'm not saying the records are great and should leap to No 1, but they all have an identity. There are no Dandelion records you can play and say they are someone else.

"Of course I think we have artistic quality! It's just that some of the records may not be artistically developed. We're just trying to get the thing going. Some of the records I think have been knocked out, like the Gene Vincent, which happened incidentally to be the bestseller. I'll agree with that. But the new album by Bridget St John – I think it's a new *Sgt Pepper*. When I first heard it I thought it was a masterpiece.

"If Warner Brothers will only stay with me, I think we can do something. They do seem interested, but sometimes a bit perplexed. The difference between making it and not is that if we had a hit it would provide us with capital to go on for a long time, and I think with Medicine Head and Bridget St John, interestingly.

"Look, T. Rex was a classic example. When I started digging them, people said, 'Come on, what's this? Larry The Lamb!' I thought then that Marc was a hit writer and would have a No 1, and now I'm right. You know, when I first heard they'd made it, I was driving up the M1 and I stopped and had a little cry.

WorldMags.net



"Dandelion, you see, is a very personal thing. I'm not a commercially orientated person, and all we can get people to do is listen to the records."

Over-commercialisation: that's one of his pet hates. The other is the intellectualisation of the music. It occurred in jazz, didn't it, he says, and we all know what happened to that.

People like Tony Palmer and Geoffrey Cannon, he remarks, have never influenced him to go out and experience anything. He goes further: they are very destructive.

"Because the whole strength of pop music – and it is pop music, whatever name you want to give it, progressive or rock or whatever – the one distinguishing feature of successful Progressive music with a capital P, is that under no circumstances should it progress an inch, because if it does people don't want to know. As long as it isn't progressive, then they'll buy it. If it is – ie, something like Kevin Ayers – they won't touch it with a barge pole, and I think that's sad.

"Jazz was essentially a people's music, as rock is, and it was taken up by the intellectuals and built up to the point where they said, 'Well, you can't appreciate this because you haven't got a college degree, have you?' And the fact is, you've got people reviewing rock records in *The Observer*, and stuff like that. Nowadays your Hampstead liberal is listening to rock records instead of Dave Brubeck.

"I'm sure that a lot of people who now buy Captain Beefheart records don't like them, but they're a fashionable thing to have. Or Wild Man Fischer. One of the reasons we played Wild Man Fischer was because I didn't know if it was good or bad; I didn't even really know if I liked it or not, and if something has got me that confused then I want to play it on radio, because it's good to have something that messes your mind about. And I think the thing with Beefheart is that people don't know if it's good or bad, but it's fashionable."

As a DJ, he tried to avoid absolute statements. His own evaluation of music, therefore, is not connected in any way with technical skills, because he admits he really knows nothing about the techniques of music – "honestly". He judges a record only by his personal, emotional reaction. In other words, if it makes him feel good. And he cites Duane Eddy to prove his point.

"He was an incredibly duff guitarist, right? If you'd've said, 'Hey Duane, play us "White Cliffs Of Dover"', he couldn't have done it. But the thing was that when he got on stage or on his records and started playing away on that bass string, you got that feeling up your back: 'Oooohh, that feels good'" – he threw his back back in simulated ecstasy. "Really, that kind of sensation.

"That's why it's good to work with John Walters [his producer], because he's a musician. He will tell me, if I hear something that I like, if it's crap musically, although he'll still let me play it. The whole thing of rock is that it's emotional and it's direct – that's its strength. That's why I think the music of Ten Years After and Deep Purple is not emotional. They go through all the motions but somehow it doesn't add up.

"This sounds like some incredible b–––––––, but I quite often at home put on things like Beethoven's *Eighth*, which has always knocked me out, and dance around the room to it.

"I really think all the great music is emotional, whatever people try to do to it. If it was just completely clinical and emotionless it wouldn't last. I think so little of the stuff that's happening now will."

He is not complaining, mind. He is, he remarks convincingly, "ecstatic". What he does he has wanted to since he was eight. In fact, he has remarkably few hang-ups. Like most figureheads of the underground, he come from the middle classes. Upper-middle class, actually.

His father, a wealthy Liverpool cotton broker, died last year of lung cancer. He was never, he says, a terribly happy man, and they never really knew each other until he was dying.

"When me and my two brothers and my dad used to go for walks in Delamere forest in Cheshire he'd drop the facade and he was a lovely man, but until he was dying he could never drop it all the time. That's really sad; I regret that enormously.

When he was dying, I used to go and sit on his bed and we'd look at photographs of himself when he was a kid. But the whole time I knew him I don't think I ever touched him at all."

His mother resembles Peel much more in that quality of openness.

Apparently, she smokes a pipe and cigars, and is a great Captain Beefheart fan.

The Ravenscrofts – his real name – lived out in the Cheshire countryside, and he was, he says, a terribly introverted kid. "To show you how shy I was, I'd only been out with one girl in my life by the time I'd reached my 21st birthday, and I'd only been out with her once."

His parents were divorced when he was 17, and as a reaction to the restricting upper-middle-class world of his youth he upped and split to the States, where he was a computer operator in Texas for a time before becoming a DJ in California. His early twenties seem to have been a period of readjustment as he took to the booze.

"And smoking, too. I was always stoned. I lived in the San Bernardino Valley by an orange grove, with lots of other kids, and we'd get out of our heads. The trouble was that I had this radio programme at 6am on KAMEN.

"We'd all be out of our heads by two in the morning, but while they'd be going to sleep, I'd have to get up and go to work. I'd be asleep over the controls and have to wake up to put on the next record.

"It was horrifying, because you have to talk with this smile in your voice. Believe me, you think Rosko is gross, but he wouldn't last five minutes over there. My style on *Perfumed Garden* was a reaction to all that."

When he returned to England he joined Radio London and was in at the birth of the British underground. He admits now to being naive enough to believe that the ethics and ideals that were being spawned in '67 would be substantiated. Consequently, his bitterness at the state of the underground today is great.

"The trouble is," he remarked, "that the whole of your underground is essentially very much of a middle-class situation, because most of the people don't have the opportunity to drop in, let alone bloody drop out.

"With the sort of government we've got now, the chances, of course, of ever being able to drop in are correspondingly fewer. One reviewer of Richard Neville's book *Play Power*, which I enjoyed very much, said something to the effect that it was a chilling description of the sowing of the seeds of fascism, which I think it is, because you can see already that the underground as such has become incredibly intolerant.

"All the whining for acceptance has been replaced by condemnation of people who don't want to live that way, people who are quite happy doing something else providing they're left alone. If people want to live in a semi-detached house in Surbiton and spend the whole time watching television and polishing the car, then I think they should be allowed to, frankly.

"Everybody in the world is a poseur – I am, and so are all the people who'll be reading this article – but it's the degree. If you're trying very hard to eliminate it and to say and do things that you know are fraudulent, that's about the best you can hope to get, really.

"And a nice thing about doing what I do now is that really for the first time in my life – and it's my fault, because I've always been a loner very much, and incredibly neurotic and hung-up – I find I've got a lot of real friends."

What was it, then, which had won him this unique position in radio? "I dunno. I dunno. I think it's just the fact that it's somebody on the radio trying to be themselves, rather than projecting some kind of angle. I like to think I might have helped to make it possible for people like Bob Harris, who's an amazing man, to be on the radio. If he wins the *Melody Maker* poll this year I shall be knocked out.

"And it's connected with the fact that most of the kids in the country are basically hung-up and confused. One of the things I thank public school [in Shrewsbury] for is that it screwed me up so completely that I was 10 years late in beginning to develop at all, and so the changes I was going through at 26, 27 and 29 were the same that most people were going through in their late-teenage period. I think a lot of people would identify with those situations." *Michael Watts* •

> "If pop music progresses, people don't want to know"

WorldMags.net

1971

APRIL – JUNE



“There are no plans”

The ROLLING STONES enter tax exile in France, and meet the press to promote – after a fashion – *Sticky Fingers*. The swish engagement offers insightful glances at business-minded Mick Jagger and also at Keith Richards, who remembers a 1963 meeting with *NME*. “You made us have our picture taken,” he cackles. “Ugh!” Introducing also Bobby Keys and Jim Price: the horns.

GETTY

“What a boisterous couple they make”: Keith Richards steers Anita Pallenberg through the crowds to a screening of *Gimme Shelter* at the Cannes Film Festival, May 20, 1971

www.rlags.net



— MELODY MAKER APRIL 24 —

CANNES IS A strange place. It sits on the Côte D'Azur beckoning the rich to part with their dollars, pounds and francs in glorious sunshine. If France conjures up a picture of bearded revolutionaries, visit Cannes, where anyone in blue jeans is an "'ippi", where gigantic sailing yachts litter the harbour with pennants from all over the globe and where a hotel without chandeliers is like a pub with no beer.

It is years out of date, where paunchy balding men with fat cigars, blue blazers, white shirts and baggy grey trousers covering sandals can reflect on how life used to be. Duchesses with lorgnettes mingle with the trendy debutantes to whom a season wouldn't be a season without a fortnight in Cannes.

An odd choice, perhaps, for the Rolling Stones to make their home. If tax-dodging was their motive, they obviously aren't the only ones with the same idea. But I detect a change in yer scruffy Stones. At any rate there's a change in their colourful lead singer. The old Mick who perpetually stuck two fingers at society is now well on the way to becoming part of that society. The hair is shorter, neater and well groomed, his jacket is superbly tailored velvet and a handmade shirt replaces the vest. The angry young man is not so angry as he used to be. He may still gyrate wildly onstage, but offstage a suave and confident young man stands before us.

He stood before the music press last weekend with the rest of the group in their new surroundings. The Stones don't come to you; you go to them. And if that means flying to Nice and back via Geneva, it makes no difference. They've just signed a recording contract which will make them very rich indeed – and if that isn't something to shout about, what is?

So it was that I found myself aboard flight Air France 950 on Friday bound for the sunny Riviera, which turned out to be cold and cloudy. Mick and his men had taken over a restaurant for the evening for the kind of press conference befitting a property like the Rolling Stones…

We've been there two hours and it's approaching midnight when a hustle at the door turns our heads. "Jagger's here," someone says urgently and we look round. Mick strides in with his beautiful lady on one arm. He makes for the food table and 20 photographers gather round. He smiles and poses and the flashbulbs pop. A persistent cameraman annoys Mick. Mick covers him in wine.

Photographers persist and Mick composes himself. This is what the party is for, anyway. Publicist Les Perrin and other Stones drag him to one side and talk. Then Perrin tells us Mick will be over to our table soon, just as soon as he's got a drink.

But it's much, much later when he does, and in the meantime the rest arrive. Mick Taylor in denims and Bill Wyman in stripes. Charlie arrives with an entourage which appears to include Stephen Stills and Ahmet Ertegun, boss of Atlantic Records, and the heaviest guy there.

Flashbulbs pop in all directions now, and rather than talk to Mick senior, I decide on a chat with Mick junior, who is hiding from the cameras with his lady in a corner.

"I've rented my house here for six months," he says. "Bill and I are at Grasse, Charlie is over in the Camargue and Keith is way over the other side of Nice. What's happening in London?"

On to the new album. "I haven't written any of the songs on it," says Mick. "But we all contribute in the studio. We take the lead guitar, Keith and me, depending on the number. It's about 50-50. I am writing some stuff of my own, though, but whether the group will play it remains to be seen. We're going to build a recording studio down here as soon as we can so we can rehearse whenever we want. It's a good place to live. The weather's lousy today but the past fortnight has been great."

> "It's a pity the people that tape the group can pick a bad night"

I keep looking around to see if Jagger has started talking at the English-speaking table. He's there, and I pick up the conversation midway through some chat about the Rolling Stones' new label. "We can record what we want on it, really," he said. "If we like a group we can put them on our label, and we may make solo albums, but there are no definite plans. I don't know what mine would be like, probably songs like 'Wild Horses', with Keith playing acoustic guitar or something."

Mick runs through the tracks on the new album, with a few comments on each one. "Bitch" was written for dog lovers, he says. "There's no real change of direction musically

REX FEATURES

April 6, 1971: the Stones with Atlantic Records' Ahmet Ertegun at the launch party for Rolling Stones Records, held at the Canto Club House in Cannes

STONES IN EXILE...

CANNES is a strange Chris

had tapes of us which hadn been released and which the were entitled to put out. B

for the group, but we all think it's the best album we have done," he smiles.

I ask him about *Stone Age*, the album rush-released by Decca following their departure from the label. "I was so mad when it came out," he says. "That was why I spent all that money on the ads in the papers. When we left Decca we knew they had tapes of us which hadn't been released and which they were entitled to put out. But we had a verbal agreement that if they did, they would contact us first. We turn our back and they put one out without telling us at all. The tracks aren't up to the standard of the group's current music and it's wrong for the fans. Maybe they could have put it out on a budget label. They can do it again and again, just taking tracks from various albums and repackaging them."

Keith Richard arrives in a white silk jacket and looking more like a gypsy than ever. Earrings hang from his ears, his spiky hair stands on end and his eyes look strangely dark. He lunges forward to greet Mick, who obviously wants to bring our little chat to an end. There's one more question I want to ask: what about all the bootlegs? "I don't mind them, really. You can't stop them doing it. They're everywhere. It's a pity that they are too expensive and the people that tape the group can pick a bad night."

That's it. Mick's lady is tired of having no arm to cling on to and he wants to talk with Keith. The photographers persist until they get the whole group together, and then there's an enormous shot of the group with all the Kinney people, and with the Atlantic boss, and with all the Stones people, and with the girlfriends.

It's rather like a wedding reception where the two sides – Stones and recording company – all want the various combinations of the active personnel pictured together. Well, Kinney do even if the Stones don't.

Around two the party starts to break up. Mick says he's going to the casino and breezes out.
Chris Charlesworth

— NME APRIL 24 —

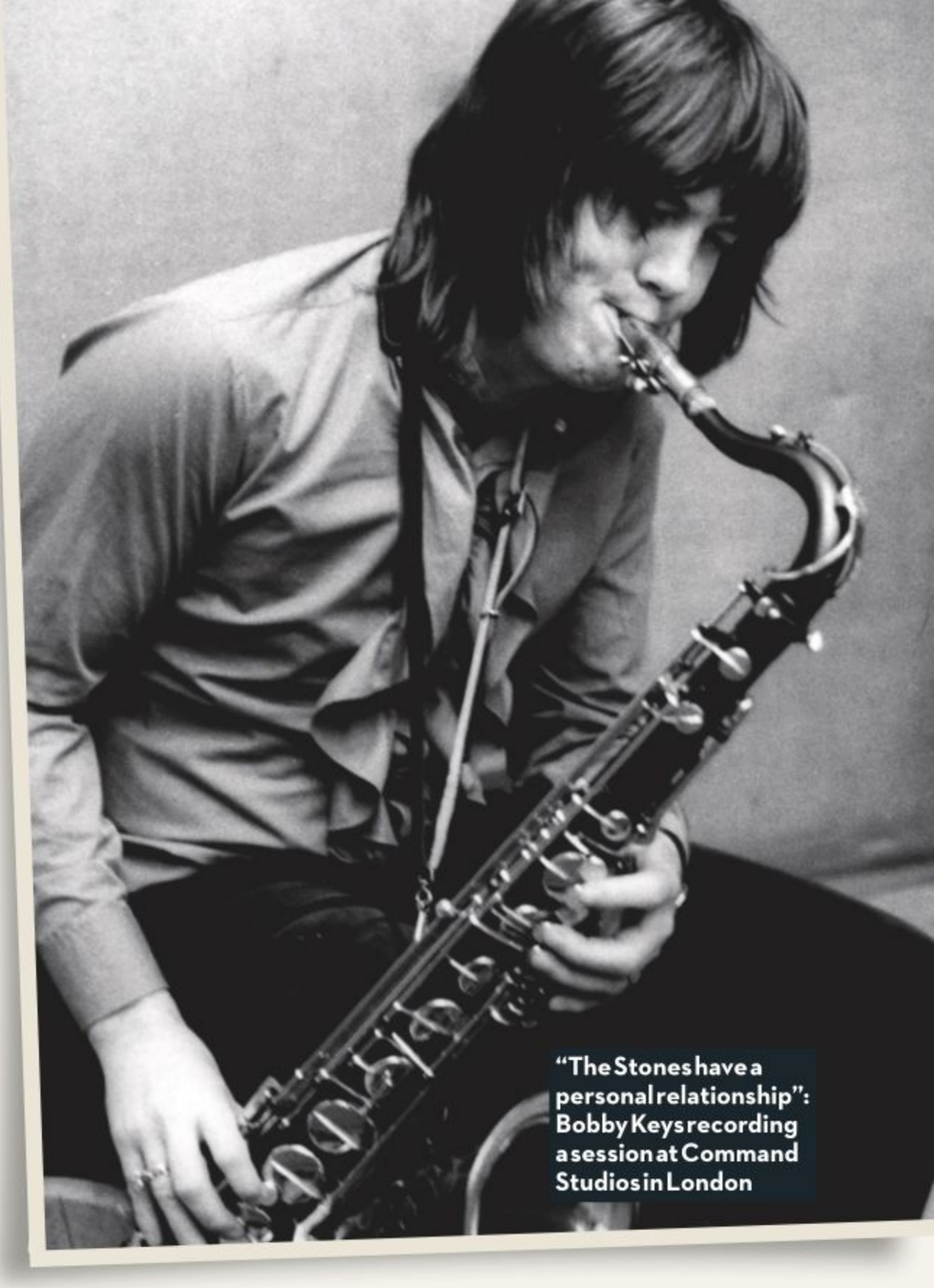
THE ROLLING STONES had their first Riviera party last Friday night. They have started their year-out-of-Britain for tax purposes. Surrounded by millionaires' yachts in the fashion-enclosed opulence of the exclusive Canto Club House.

NME was one of the some 25 periodicals invited to take part in this world gathering, organised by the wealthy American Kinney Group, which bought Atlantic , Warner-Reprise and Elektra, and won the fight to sign the Stones against some 20 other companies.

To celebrate this victory and to give the first LP of the new Rolling Stones Records label a £10,000 launch, Kinney chief Ahmet Ertegun devised what you could call the costliest press reception of the year. Actually it was a party and not a reception, although the individual Stones chatted to the press through the evening and into the dawn. Executives of Kinney in Europe were instructed to bring some journalists with them to Cannes last Friday. British head Ian Ralfini, aided by press office Des Brown and executive Clive Selwood, got to work and a party of 13, including Stones personal PR Les Perrin and recording assistant Trevor Churchill, took off from London airport in the morning. »

"They're a damn good band"

MM MAY 8 A chat with horn players Jim Price and Bobby Keys – veterans of Delaney & Bonnie, Leon Russell and now... the Rolling Stones.



"The Stones have a personal relationship": Bobby Keys recording a session at Command Studios in London

TWO STOREYS ABOVE the King's Road in London's Chelsea in a bachelor pad with stained radiator, greying white walls and G Plan furniture sits Jim Price, trumpet-playing session man supreme and friend of the stars. A typical member of the Los Angeles community in exile in his new-found adopted country where he can find peace and quiet on all levels.

Price first came into the limelight when he was playing with Delaney & Bonnie as one of the Friends, after slogging away in a Texas showband that made it in a small way and ended up playing full-time in Las Vegas. But a small-time showband in Las Vegas wasn't what he wanted to be married to for the rest of his life, so he split to Los Angeles and was quickly adopted by Delaney Bramlett.

The Friends didn't last too long. Price says they had a lot of disagreements and decided to split, throwing up some of the cream of today's floating sidemen. "The band split because it was time," he said in his slow Texas drawl. "We just didn't agree with things."

It was during his stint with Delaney & Bonnie that he first ran into the Stones, whom he joined for their British tour this year along with Bobby Keys. "The Stones were in LA at about the same time as Altamont, and they came to see the band and asked us to play on "Live With Me" from their last album."

From Delaney & Bonnie he joined the Joe Cocker, Leon Russell Mad Dogs And Englishmen tour, which he describes as "really incredible, man. Joe was really great."

A period of little work followed before the Stones got in touch with him to play on their British tour, and it was this that made up his mind for him to come and live in England. Jim Price has been working on his solo album from dawn to dusk using the Stones' Mighty Mobile studio parked at Mick Jagger's house in Newbury. He's using Ringo and Jim Keltner on drums, Nicky Hopkins, Klaus Voorman and guitar-playing vocalist friend John Uribe. *Mark Plummer*

"IT'S BOBBY KEYS, the greatest saxophone player in the world," said Mick Jagger. And Bobby smiled modestly towards me. "A great bunch of guys, the Stones. But there are plenty of others better than me. I can't even read music," drawled Bobby in his Texas accent. "I just love playing rock'n'roll."

Looking at Bobby's young face, it's hard to believe he actually started out with Buddy Holly. And he has other impressive references, too: Delaney & Bonnie, Leon Russell and Joe Cocker. At the weekend Bobby was staying with Keith Richards near Cannes, and while everyone fussed around the Stones at their press conference, a chat with Bobby seemed like a good idea.

How did the Stones-Keys partnership come about, I asked. "When I met them I was working with Delaney & Bonnie in California and they came over to rehearse near us. One night they came to listen to us playing and the next day I got a call asking me if I'd like to put a horn solo on a track on the *Let It Bleed* album, "Live With Me".

"I didn't hear anything from them until I came over to England this summer to work on the George Harrison album. I got another call and went to Olympic Studios to work on their album, and ever since then I've been really involved. They're a damn good band."

"I didn't hear anything until I came over to work on George Harrison's album"

Bobby's home town is in Texas and it was there he met up with Buddy Holly. "I was just seven years old when I heard my first rock'n'roll. I went down to see Holly and he was really doing something different. I started hanging around with him and learning to play the horn and eventually I got a gig with Buddy Knox. I joined him for some recording and went to work with Bobby Vee after that.

"Of all the bands I've worked with I think I prefer the Stones. They have a personal relationship which makes them a really together group." *Chris Charlesworth*

GETTY

WorldMags.net

Air bookings to and from Nice at this time of year are so heavy, half the party had to travel first (the press!) and the other tourist on the outward trip and return via Geneva the next day, giving the hospitable Ian Ralfini an excellent excuse to push the boat out for us in Switzerland en route.

Anyway, travelling 1,400 air miles to and from a press reception was novel. Everything went exceedingly smoothly, some going sailing after a superb lunch at the Carlton, where we stayed, others going shopping. Later, about ten, we assembled for the party. An hour went by without any Stone appearing. Guests who had flown in that day from America, Italy, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway as well as Paris and London, wondered if the Stones would come!

Placid Jo Bergman, the unique American girl who manages the Stones' personal problems so deftly, flitted up in a soft white, flowing creation which contrasted startlingly with her ample halo of black fluffed-out hair and assured us they would arrive. "They live separately within a radius of 25 miles of Cannes," she explained serenely, "so they take a bit of rounding up." Jo found their houses for them when in Cannes at Midem (trade show) time and now she lives in the city herself. "Where the Stones go, there go I!" she explained poetically. Only Mick is in a hotel – In St Tropez – and therefore lives farthest from Cannes.

Yet Mick entered first, followed later by the other four Stones and some music guests, including Steve Stills, of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Mick was escorting the lady he is said to be marrying (but denies it), 21-year-old Nicaraguan personality Bianca Perez Morena de Macias (with a name like that how could she become just plain Mrs Jagger?). She's a pleasant, friendly girl and it was startling to notice how much alike they both are – almost as if they were brother and sister.

The Kinney chief Ahmet Ertegun was with Mick and they were joined by French tycoon Eddie Barclay, who once squired Bianca around himself. They all chatted amicably while photographers had a field day (though one got too greedy and had some wine tossed his way when he wouldn't stop taking pictures).

But Mick, looking very healthy and extremely smart in a beautifully tailored, velvety fawn jacket, brown trousers and shoes, kept his cool and was most amiable all night long. He came over to the British press table and chatted at such a fast pace on so many subjects it was difficult to get it all. But he did do me the favour of going through the LP tracks with me (see right).

He also told us that he might use some of his time in France writing a book from a Rolling Stones diary he has kept. Regarding solo LPs (part of the deal, which calls for six Stones LPs in four years plus solo LPs by members of the group), Mick said he would probably do one on his own, then smiling that cheeky smile of his, added, "I have no idea what, though." He said he felt Keith would have no trouble and Mick Taylor would also be able to do a solo LP quite easily.

(Later, the young Mick, in pale-blue informal outfit, looking so well on South of France air, said, "Solo LP? First I've heard of it. But everybody hears everything about me before I do. But I'll have a crack at it if they want me to.")

Mick wanted to use the title *Sticky Fingers* before, but Decca wouldn't have it. He said he liked the sleeve, which was "one of several ideas Andy Warhol put up, most of which we couldn't use". (The sleeve depicts a pair of Levi's jeans with a real zipper, which when unzipped reveals Y-fronts).

He became very vehement on the subject of the (Decca archive release) *Stone Age* LP, now selling well. The sound was bad and the cover terrible, he asserted heatedly. He calmed down to say how in about three months he'll head out for America and the Far East with the Stones for a tour, and when the year is up at the end of March 1972, they'll be back to tour Britain again. Until then they cannot set foot on their native land.

They'll be shipping their super Mighty Mobile recording studio to France for use on new tracks and making records of other people who plan to visit them. But Mick stressed, "It's for hire in England when we're not using it. Frank Zappa used it OK. Get me a free ad, will you?" He also promised a new single at mid-summer and new LP in the autumn and a single at Christmas. Asked if the Stones had a new manager, Mick said, "No, I don't think you need a manager after a certain stage – unless someone good comes up. No one has yet."

The Stones office in Mayfair is being evacuated and Marshall Chess, Trevor Churchill and others connected with the Stones will move to the Kinney offices in New Oxford Street. But Mick stressed that the deal with Kinney is a product one (that is, they produce the records and give them to Kinney for distribution), so the Stones will make their own LPs, probably with Jimmy Miller producing. Finally, did the Stones need anything in their new habitat? "Yes, to learn French," smiled Mick, but I hear he manages. And he has Bianca to help him along.

Bill Wyman arrived with quite a retinue, including his son, Stephen, who is now about nine and at boarding school near Ipswich. He was on Easter holiday with his dad. Bill, as pleasant as always, said he was looking forward to recording in France in the Mighty Mobile, not only with the Stones but producing some friends coming to see him, including John Walker. Bill summed up *Sticky Fingers* as "going back to the public with the blues that made us. *Satanic Majesties* was too far out and scared off a lot of our fans. Now we are going back to the blues and hope the public buy *Sticky Fingers* in their millions." In that case, I observed, why were they so uptight about *Stone Age*, which represents Stones blues? "The sound… it's terrible. And other things which I can't go into," he said sternly.

Charlie Watts was his usual laughing-boy self. He owns a rambling old farm property which he's converting to more liveable standards. At the party he refused to get involved with answering questions. I had a go, but to no avail.

Last to arrive was Keith Richards, with Anita Pallenberg, who was in *Performance* with Mick. What a boisterous couple they make. Keith was in buoyant mood despite his rather unhealthy look. We got to recalling the early days and I was about to tell him the first place we'd met, when he beat me to it: "At the Festival Gardens by the boating pond." He was right! Back in May, 1963, the *NME* had an autograph stand at the gala opening and presented new groups to play by the pond. The Stones were one of them and Keith remembered. "Ha ha," he laughed loudly as he thought about it. "And you got us to stand on a staircase and have our picture taken. Ugh!" I remarked that even in those days they didn't like publicity much. "True," he agreed.

With Keith were Bobby and Judy Keys (only one E, says Bob). Bobby blows the mean sax on Stones records and tours. He lives in Ascot and visits the boys in France when they want him to blow some sax for them. He told me his Californian home is rented to Graham Nash and Rita Coolidge at present. Bobby's wife Judy is a songwriter and I hear she has been collaborating with no less than a Beatle, but I promised to say no more.

At this point, Keith burst in again with, "Hey, man, want to know an amazing thing? Bobby Keys and I were born on the same day, the same year, the same time, only he was in Dallas and I was in Dartford at the time. It was December 18… you can check it in our 'Lifelines in *NME*'." Yes, Keith has a good memory. We printed the Stones' 'Lifelines' way back in November 1964! (Passing thought – wonder if they'd fill in the forms again?) *Andy Gray* •

> *"Satanic Majesties* was too far out and scared off a lot of our fans"

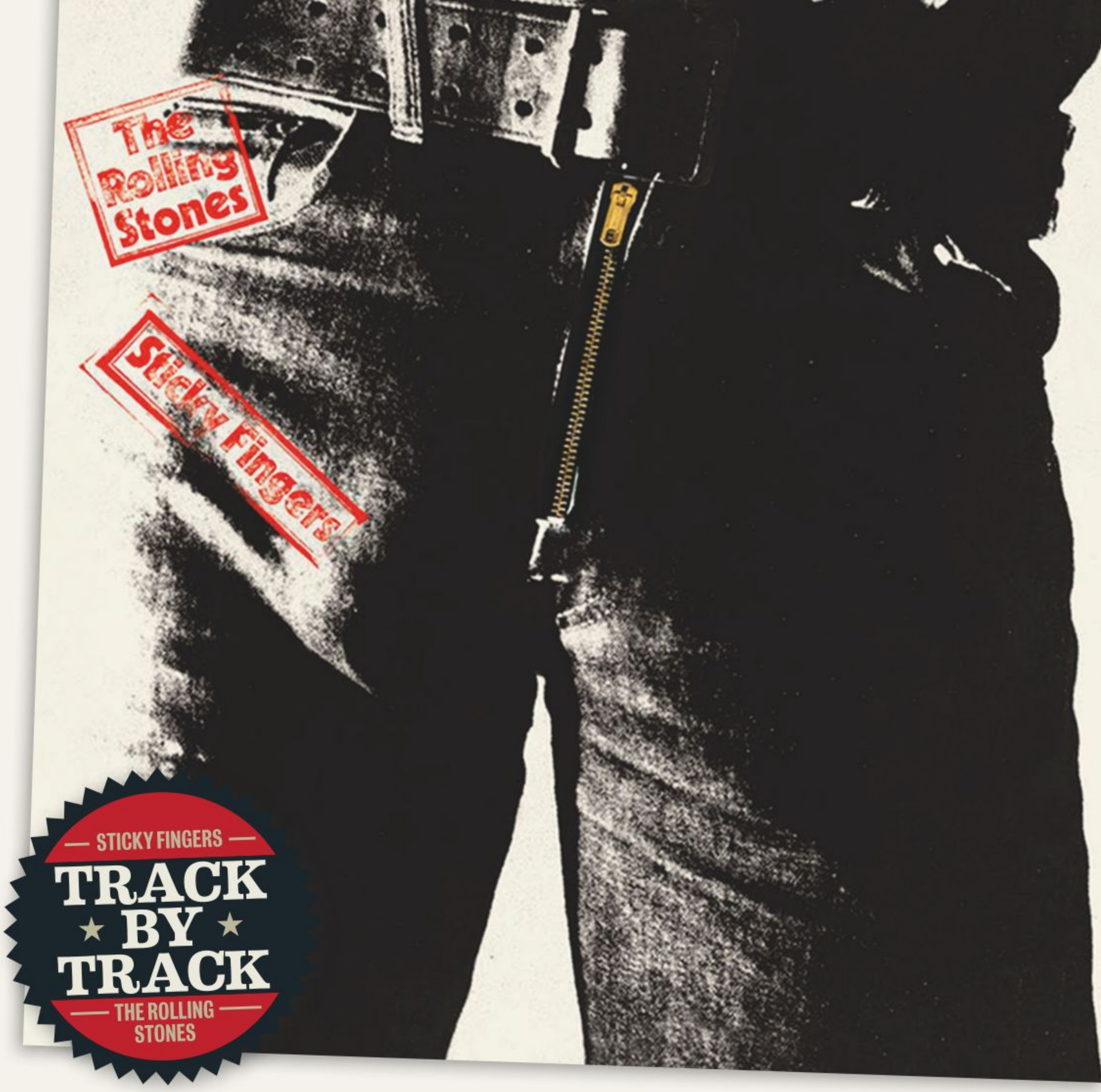


May 12, 1971: Mick Jagger and Bianca Perez Morena de Macias tie the knot in St Tropez

PHOTOSHOT

"Tight. Great to listen to"

NME APRIL 24 Mick Jagger and Bill Wyman go through their new LP, *Sticky Fingers*. "I dig the jam session at the end," says Mick.



STICKY FINGERS
TRACK BY TRACK
THE ROLLING STONES

THIS JIMMY MILLER-produced album is remarkably varied, perhaps because it was made during a period of over a year at three different places – Muscle Shoals, London's Olympic and the Stones' Mighty Mobile studios. The musicianship is exceptional and Mick's vocals as wild at times, as controlled at other times, as ever. He often altered the words written in the kit we received. But as he and Keith wrote all the tracks, why not? Here are track-by-track reports, including what Mick Jagger and Bill Wyman had to say, about an album gets back a bit to roots that made the Stones.

Brown Sugar

MICK: This is the single. A fast one. I like fast ones.
BILL: Made over a long period. At Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in December, '69, first of all, then finished a long time after in London at Olympic studios. Good sound.
***NME*:** A good, solid rock mover. Keith Richards' acoustic guitar bites into the music, and Mick shouts out the vocal about Brown Sugar, who tastes so good, just like a young girl should. A lusty lyric about slave days in New Orleans. Bobby Keys sax and Ian Stewart's piano help to make this one of the best tracks.

Sway

MICK: Lotta sound. Wrote it quickly and recorded it two days later.
BILL: So-so. We did it at Olympic. Nicky Hopkins on piano.
***NME*:** Mostly instrumental, with a long, full-throated guitar break by Mick Taylor. Mick and Keith join in the loudly shouted vocal before the instruments take over to work up a storm.

Wild Horses

MICK: My favourite ballad. Yes, definitely my favourite.
BILL: Started at Muscle Shoals and finished at Olympic. I liked it. Great.
***NME*:** Quieter, with simple, soft backing from the guitars. Vocal is taken quite straight and the words are easy to hear, about the threat of losing a love. Title comes from the saying "Wild horses couldn't drag me away", and this is the repeated vocal line. Mick leads, then Keith joins to do some very good vocal harmony with Mick.

Can't You Hear Me Knocking?

MICK: I dig the jam session at the end.
BILL: My favourite. I dig it. The intro was ad lib, purely spontaneous. I like the jazz bit too. Nice, Bobby Keys does a good [sax] bit.
***NME*:** Back to the shout vocal and the hysterical feeling. Longest track, which goes into some interesting vocals. Mick Taylor and Keith Richards go to town on guitars, while Billy Preston on organ and Bobby Keys on sax add to the excitement, especially towards the end when Billy keeps going over and over the phrase. Terrific.

You Gotta Move

MICK: Muscle Shoals again. Strong.
BILL: We did this in America in December, 1969. Didn't quite work out, but we finished it OK at Olympic.
***NME*:** A simple but so effective old-style blues song, taken at a slow beat, Jagger lowers his voice a bit to sound like a black singer (or is it Jagger?). In contrast, someone sings like a girl (Keith?). The guitars sing a bit on this one, too. Very likeable. And a boom-boom on the bass drum from Charlie at the end.

"We did this one in the mobile van at Mick's place. The first title was 'The Japanese Thing'"

Bitch

MICK: Keith's soul ballad. Tight. Great to listen to.
BILL: We recorded this in the mobile van on Mick's lawn at his house near Reading. Yeah, I like recording in the van a lot.
***NME*:** Slow, low-key music, with Billy Preston making a dramatic entrance on organ and Mick singing in a high-pitched, sad voice about missing a girl he loves very much during a lonely, long night.

Sister Morphine

MICK: Very old. Difficult to promote [with such a title].
BILL: I remember doing a back track of this for Marianne Faithfull but nothing happened to it. I did a different one for the album at Olympic.
***NME*:** Wistful, quiet guitar opening, before a little-boy voice starts to ask Sister Morphine from a hospital bed when she's coming round again, to turn nightmares into dreams. A powerful lyric about the feelings of one in pain and craving relief. Marianne Faithfull gets a composing credit with Mick and Keith.

Dead Flowers

MICK: A country song, that's all you can say.
BILL: Nice country & western. Good on stage with its roll-along tune. We did it at the Olympic.
***NME*:** A real hoedown, country sound. Good lilt from Ian Stewart's piano, and the twanging guitars of Richard and Taylor. Mick and Keith seem to enjoy the duetting on this song.

Moonlight Mile

MICK: Sweet and soft. I like the [Paul] Buckmaster strings on this.
BILL: We did this one in the mobile van at Mick's place. The first title was "The Japanese Thing".
***NME*:** Mood music. Oriental-tinted and delicate from guitar and strings. Mick seems to be double-tracking the sensitive vocal, while the music builds up in volume and intensity, then gradually becomes softer and more sad and far away. The Buckmaster strings and Jim Price's piano help the guitars of Mick Jagger (Keith isn't on this track) and Mick Taylor, and the fine bass of Bill Wyman and drums of Charlie Watts.

WorldMags.net

1971

APRIL – JUNE

"The present Byrds is better than the old Byrds by 97.6 per cent": Roger McGuinn on stage in London in 1971

WorldMags.net

“I’d call it science-fiction music”

In their time, THE BYRDS have used their songs to try and contact UFOs. Now they’re writing about horses, making their peace with each other, and with Bob Dylan, almost. “He doesn’t appreciate what we did for him,” says Roger McGuinn.

— MELODY MAKER MAY 8 —

MAYBE IT’S WRONG to prejudge, but I always thought Roger McGuinn, high-flying Byrd, would be the coolest human I’d ever wish to meet. Well, as the song goes, that ain’t necessarily so. A cup of fine tea for this man in blue suit, cowboy boots and flying wings – and he sips, and smiles.

No, this wasn’t an interview, more like a conversation in which one guy did most of the talking – slow, drawling rather, in a voice that never raised itself above that “I’ll whisper you a secret” level. It sort of slips out from beneath the now-full beard. His lazy eyes have a habit of meeting yours, and staying there. An optical arrest, and it’s good being prisoner.

“The present Byrds is better than the old Byrds by 97.6 per cent – arbitrarily speaking, of course. Everyone’s a professional now, whereas in the original Byrds… But I’m not going to elaborate on that…” The voice limps to a finish, but kicks over again.

“Yes, I’ll agree with you, there was a sense of roughness; you know, rough edges, conflict and strife. And sometimes strife is a catalyst to creativity. But that’s nothing to worry about. There are enough disputes now, nice little ones, to help us create.

“As far as writing is concerned, well, I’ve not been doing all that much. ‘Chestnut Mare’ was the last one I wrote, and I’m proud of that one – and I’ve never said anything like that about a song before. I like the lyrics, the storyline and melody. It’s interesting and exciting. You wanna know what it’s about? Right, I’ll tell you.

“It’s an adaptation of Peer Gynt’s chase of the reindeer, or whatever it was, you know, like through the Netherlands. Well, we changed that into a chestnut mare instead of a deer, ’cause you tend to find chestnut mares in America. The narrative became American, sort of old-time cowboy.”

There’s a smile under that beard, and I think it’s a broad, friendly smile. Then that smile hangs itself round a ham sandwich, and takes in more tea. »

GETTY

WorldMags.net



The Byrds' most stable incarnation: (l–r) Gene Parsons, Clarence White, Skip Battin and Roger McGuinn

"You know on the next album there's only going to be one country song. And that's going to be super country, with steel guitar and all that. It's called 'My Destiny', then there's going to be a bluegrass number, and then ballads and things. Sure, that means we are getting away from country, but that's just a matter of being tied. I never wanted to be labelled. I never wanted The Byrds to be called country rock, or then folk-rock, or then raga-rock. Anyway, it's time to move on. The album is going to be a real variety pack – there's even old '50s rock. I could never try and label myself. I'm not even going to say I'm unlabel-able, 'cause that's labelling me."

The talk drifted, and then took off into space music. "I'd rather call it science-fiction music. I got into that to such an extent that I was trying to get in touch with UFOs and saucers. I wanted them to come by and pick me up. Sort of space hitching if you like. I expected them to land in my back garden and take me for a ride. I thought when they heard me singing they might come and get me. That was maybe sorta silly.

"But I had that feeling that our songs would be in their wavelengths. Then an astronomer friend of mine told me that AM wavelengths diffuse too rapidly to head out into space. Well, I told him I was only aiming for beneath the ionosphere, hoping I could catch them there. Yes, I think I've grown out of that now – but I still like the UFO idea, although that whole thing seems to have died. People look back on it now like it was a fad."

There's very little unnecessary movement from McGuinn – each movement performing a necessary action. At photo sessions he models, and keeps that form till every camera has finished firing, With his massive time-piece, he insists on telling you what time it is in New York. But at another moment, he insists that time means nothing. We trip on into the mystic side of life. To many, "Mr Tambourine Man" was maybe a drug trip. But to McGuinn it meant something completely different. Mr Tambourine Man, was, to McGuinn, God.

"At the beginning it's me speaking to God. Saying, 'Hey Mr Tambourine Man, play a song for me, I've got nothing else on, I've got nothing else to do', that sort of thing. Then '*on that jingle jangle morning*', well I want to be following him. It's a spiritual testimonial. '*Take me for a trip on your magic, swirling ship*' – well, that's relating to a spiritual experience.

"I got this overwhelming sensation of electricity with it. Like '*my hands can't feel to grip*'. It was such an experience that I couldn't do anything, except submit. And I sort of made a vow of allegiance: 'I'll follow you anywhere.' I don't know what Dylan meant by it. But frankly speaking, if I hadn't meant what I meant with it, it wouldn't have been a hit.

"I dig the success of Harrison with 'My Sweet Lord', a sort of sugar-coated spiritual thing, rather than Bill Graham's used-car approach. The word God is unimportant to me, the word is. Call it the world, call it the life force. All you've got to remember is that there's a life force making things happen – and you can take it from there."

The previous day, over lunch, Roger twisted his fork, and took a snail from its home, and ate it. Then he expressed concern over Dylan. We talked about that again.

"Yes, I am concerned about him. I'm concerned as a friend. I've got to think of this, you see. Does a performer have an obligation to the public? If so, he has shook that obligation. I find it disappointing to see someone who was so brilliant, come down to such a mediocre show. After *Self Portrait*, I though that was sufficient to pull him together; I thought the next was going to be great. Yes, like you, I regarded him as a brother, I wanted to protect him from criticism. But somehow that feeling has gone, I can't protect any more."

A question. Do you think you owe anything to Dylan?

"No, I don't think we owe anything. He owes me something. Somehow he doesn't appreciate what we did for him. He may appreciate, but he hasn't shown it. 'Tambourine Man' was a big asset for him, and when we continued recording his stuff, it gave him a real boost.

"He's told me that. He's told me he wants to make me a millionaire. He's said to me, 'Look, I'm a millionaire, and I want you to get to the same place, and you're not going to do it singing with The Byrds.' He told me that I'd do it writing songs. Writing 12 songs and throwing 11 away, every day. He was right, but I haven't found time to do that. I don't want to make a million anyway."

Another question. Did you sack Dave Crosby?

"Yes, but he's my friend now, and I'm not sorry I did it. At the time he said he didn't blame me. At the time he was psychologically out of it. He was a tyrant. I wasn't being a tyrant myself, but couldn't allow him to be one either. The stodgy policies he held had to go. We all agreed he had to be sacked. He's quite well-to-do now, so it doesn't matter. It wasn't done for the artistic side, but for psychological reasons that had to be straightened out to maintain the group." *Roy Hollingworth*

— NME MAY 8 —

AMERICANS TEND TO be outspoken, often putting their foot in it for things they say, and sometimes visiting American artists can lay it on the line more than somewhat. But when I talked with The Byrds' drummer, Gene Parsons, at his London hotel just prior to the group's tour, his comments about the forthcoming album were almost staggering.

Not for him the usual "Oh, it's great, man, it'll blow your mind" sort of comment. Far from it! Criticism was the order of the day. On other matters, however, he was just the opposite generally and proved an attentive and helpful person, smiling a lot with his eyes and thinking about each question.

GETTY

WorldMags.net

I hear that your next album has a lot of big production deals on it… that it's almost another *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. Can you tell me something about it? There are a lot of the same musicians who were on *Bridge Over Troubled Water* and a lot of it isn't particularly to my taste. There are a few tunes that are funky and crude, but basically it has been well orchestrated. I'm a little sad about that, because it's not the way we are.

Why haven't you got more control over it? Because of the time element and we're working so much on the road.

Is it really becoming the producer's idea of how it should be? (*Long thoughtful pause*) Yeah. I shouldn't say that because it's not good for promotion, but that's right. I'm looking forward to doing the next one.

What sort of numbers have you got on this one? It's hard to describe all the songs; there's bluegrass, country, rock'n'roll and some real pretty Byrds-type songs on it.

Have you got a title yet? (*Calling over to Roger McGuinn*) Roger! Have we got a definite title yet? (Roger: "It's *Byrdmaniax* – with an 'X' at the end.")

There seems to be a resurgence of interest in the group in the past couple of years, would you agree? The group is working much more steadily now, too steadily for the past two years. The group itself has had a resurgence of enthusiasm and now we're enjoying working much more.

What happened in the time just before the new interest? We were picking up from the old members, and it takes a little time, you have to pay some dues. The group has proved itself now and we are going to continue to do it.

In this country, at least when people mention The Byrds, thoughts of "Mr Tambourine Man" and "Eight Miles High" arise. Does it annoy you that people think of your old numbers still? No, it doesn't annoy me at all. In America we're not so much known for those numbers; they like to hear the live version of "Eight Miles High" where we jam a lot for 20 minutes. When we do "Mr Tambourine Man" now, we do it acoustically with harmony. It gives me great pleasure to be recognised for the things we've done in the last two years and we're getting quite a bit of that now.

Do you think the band is musically better now than it has ever been before and are you satisfied with the way things are? I'd have to say it was better now, but looking at it objectively, I think that the band is musically better than it ever has been. I'll never be completely satisfied with anything; the time you are, you might as well go and sit in a rocking chair. Our music is different from anyone else's. I've checked that out. Skip has been playing bluegrass since he was 10, Clarence has been playing rock since the '50s, there are a lot of background influences in our music.

***Easy Rider* obviously did the group a lot of good, but do you think that to many adults it may have represented everyone connected with rock music as long-haired layabouts who smoked dope all the time?** People who thought that way would think that way anyway. If they missed the context of it, then they're not very deep thinkers. I talked to a few older people from the South who saw it and it surprised me how much they got into it. It made a few Southerners mad that their South was being put down and they stopped and thought about it. *Richard Green*

— MELODY MAKER MAY 8 —

THE COUNTRY CONSONANTS of Clarence White's guitar have fooled a lot of people – me included – into thinking that the man must have come from the Southern states of America. Nothing could be further from the truth. Clarence, a soft-spoken man, was born in Lewiston, in the state of Maine, way up in New England.

"People seem to think I'm from the South," he says, blinking through a post-flight haze. "That's from playing bluegrass music for 12 years. Actually I play that way because when I was a kid me and my brothers learned a lot of old-time Canadian jigs and fiddle music from my father, who's Canadian. He got us into music, and I started on guitar when I was six years old. When I was 10, I started travelling with my brothers – we called ourselves the Three Little Country Boys, until in 1963 we became The Kentucky Colonels.

"Our interest in Canadian music helped us develop into a bluegrass band, because the Canadian thing is a lot like Southern mountain music. The Kentucky Colonels were pretty famous, on the bluegrass circuit. There's a couple of clubs for that kind of music in all the major cities throughout America, and we played all of them, plus college gigs and folk festivals.

"The band broke up in '66, and that's when I started to do what I'd been wanting to do since '64 – I wanted to electrify folk music. I'd suggested it in '64, but none of the other guys thought it was a good idea. Vanguard and Elektra had been bidding for me to do a guitar album for them, and I'd started getting material. The first demo I got was of 'Mr Tambourine Man', sung by Dylan and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. I've still got it – I guess it must be worth a lot now, right?" Right, Clarence.

"Anyway, I thought that's folk music, let's do it, but I guess some people are always a little ahead of their time. Then when I heard The Byrds' version, a year later…! So in '66 I bought a Telecaster and started playing country music, getting more power and using bigger and bigger amps… just like rock'n'roll. It was like learning a completely different instrument, and I began to do a lot of studio work on the coast. Some of the first sessions I did were with The Byrds, because I used to know Chris Hillman – he was a bluegrass musician, and we'd played together a lot at jams and parties.

"He got me to do their sessions, and I've been on all their albums from *Notorious Byrd Brothers* onwards. I could really respect what they were doing, because the time was right for it. Then Chris asked me to join the band. I was into studio work, making about $60,000 a year, but it didn't take me long to realise that ever since the age of six I'd been used to entertaining people by playing music, and what makes me most happy is the response from an audience. So I just couldn't do sessions any more, and I was real glad to join The Byrds. Honoured, too."

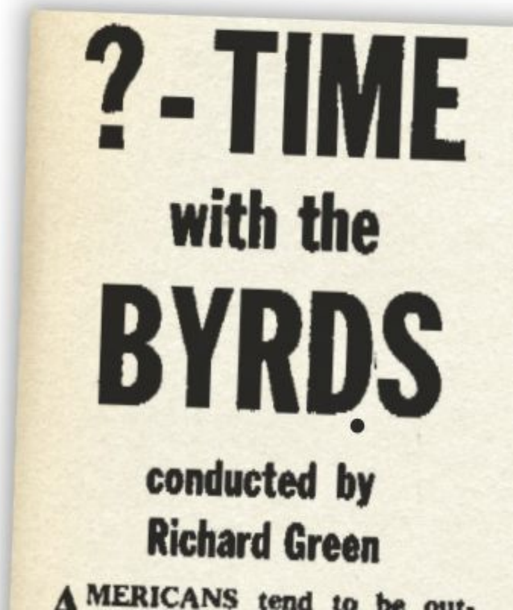
Clarence says that his main influence at this time and afterwards was James Burton, king of the rock'n'roll session guitarists. "He's incredible. He started playing before they had light strings, so he'd use banjo strings as the top three, and he could really bend 'em. He was the first to do that country thing, and he's a great blues guitarist – I've never met anyone else who knew that."

When you see Clarence, you'll notice that he bends notes with the aid of a device activated by his shoulder strap. This came about because he wanted to obtain at least part of the effect of a pedal steel guitar, but he figured that people weren't ready to watch a seated man playing a piece of wood with pedals on it. He had to invent something that wouldn't be too visible, and that would allow him to move around on stage. So he and Byrds drummer Gene Parsons ("He's just a genius machinist – his dad had a machine shop") worked out an idea with the shoulder strap and a rod on the back of the guitar. "It took about five minutes to sketch, and $18 in parts, Gene built it by hand, and after four days we'd got all the bugs out of it. It worked real well."

> "Bob Dylan's told me he wants to make me a millionaire"

Clarence plays a Telecaster because he gets the best sound out of it, but he also has a couple of Les Pauls: a 1952 model that he's going to modify with the string-bender, and one from 1949 "that I don't even take out of the closet – it's still got its original case, even". He uses a fuzz-tone, but only sparingly, "so that it sounds as if the amp is really kicking. We beef up our amps, and spend as much on improving them as they originally cost. We have fantastic equipment, not because we play loud, but to get a good sound quality. People deserve that."

Clarence is also thinking about his own solo album, which will be a mixture of bluegrass and "real nice tunes". He wants to use some songs by Jackson Browne, formerly known as one of The Orange County Three. "I stopped singing after The Kentucky Colonels, and I never wanted to do it again until I heard his material. I think his stuff will influence me into writing – he's so good, and he'll be very successful." *Richard Williams* •


? - TIME
with the
BYRDS
conducted by
Richard Green
AMERICANS tend to be out-

WorldMags.net

“Busy having fun”

Plucked from obscurity by Bob Dylan, THE BAND are now a major act. A mix of laconic and intellectual, the members talk cars, their roots and the etiquette when recording at Sammy Davis Jr’s house. “Our maintenance man told us how to control the machinery...”

WorldMags.net

The Band in London, 1971: (l–r) Garth Hudson, Robbie Robertson, Levon Helm, Richard Manuel and Rick Danko

GETTY

WorldMags.net

— MELODY MAKER MAY 29 —

AN INTERVIEW WITH Robbie Robertson:
***MM*: You're a Canadian. Why do your songs reflect so much of the feeling of the Southern states of America?**
ROBBIE: When we first got rolling, we spent the first five years together playing almost totally in the South.

That was with Ronnie Hawkins? With Ronnie, and without Ronnie. We started out with him. The only songs that we do in relation to the South at all are sung by Levon, and I write these songs for the people who sing them. Richard and Rick don't sing about the South – it works for Levon because he's from Arkansas. We're not doing something that we don't know nothing about: I'm trying to write songs that he could sing, that he can get off on the lyrics of, and that's how it worked, like "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down", y'know. And "The WS Walcott Medicine Show" – that's an actual story that Levon told me; he told me the story and I wrote the song.

Some of those tunes sound so old, like traditional songs. Are there any devices that you use – folk melodies or scales – to get that effect? No… the only thing to do is to write songs that if you listen to them in a couple of years they're not going to go down. I mean, a lot of people's records that I really liked a couple of years ago; I listen to them now and I can't understand how come I liked them so much. I'm really trying to get around the time element; so that it's got a better possibility of lasting… Just timelessness is what I'm trying for most of the time, when it's possible.

Is there anything that's influencing you at this moment? Right now? Yeah, but it just comes up here and there – little things you hear, and there are certain people… We were just talking about Lee Dorsey; we're big fans of Lee Dorsey and it does affect us – no doubt about it. I don't know – it's a lot easier to talk about people a few years ago, because we've gotten to the point now where we don't have much time to listen like we used to, or you have to dig too deep to hear something that you really want to hear. So you just hear what everybody else hears – what comes up on radio. There are so many kinds of radio in the United States – so many places where you can hear music – that you just don't have to go as far. So you just take what you like…

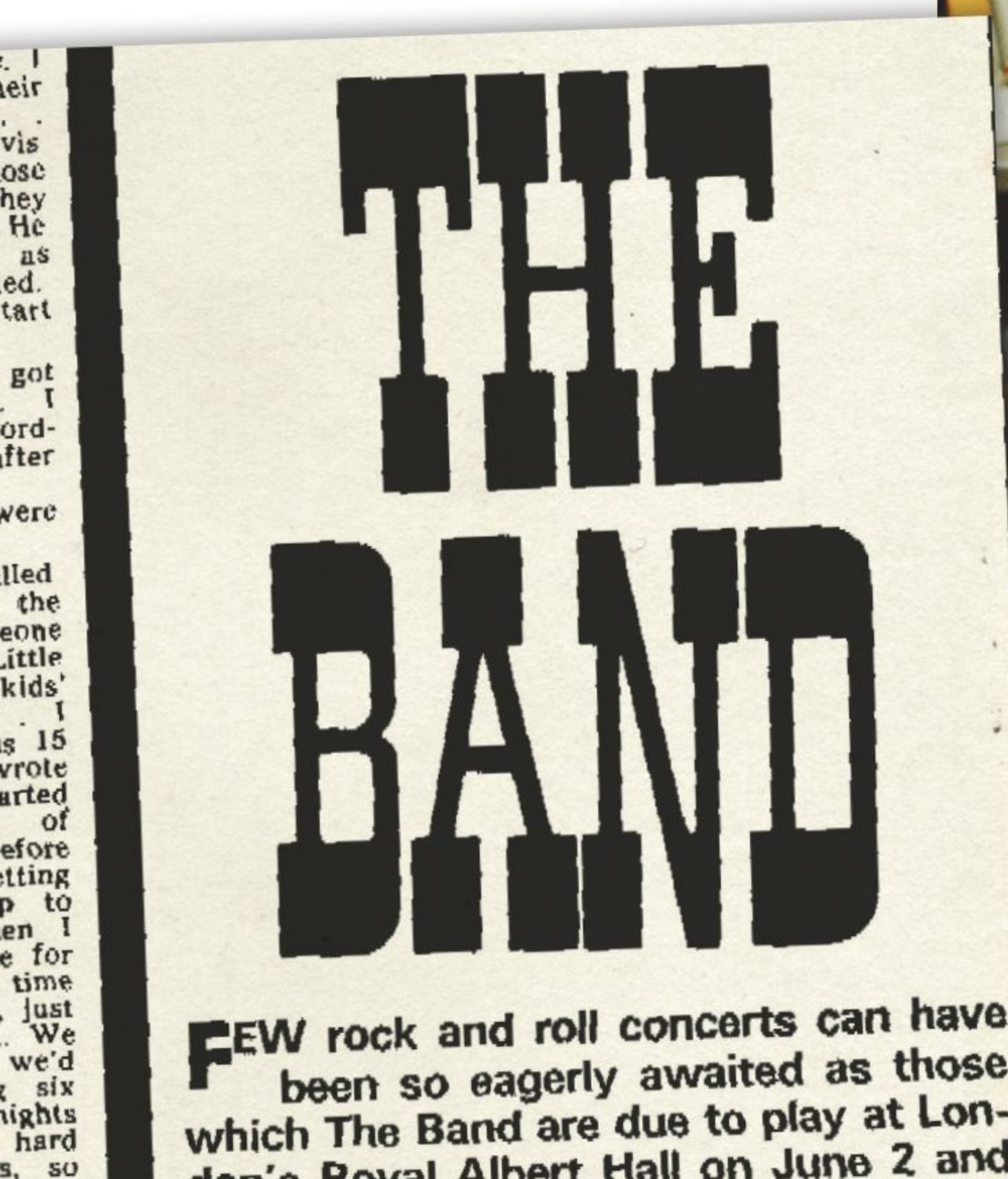
Are you very open to that kind of listening? Oh yeah, we like a lot of kinds of music; we like a lot of music that comes from here, too. It's a funny thing, because I remember a few years ago, when we were first really getting rolling and the music was coming from England, it sounded like at that time that they weren't really going to come over the hill, that they weren't really going to get it together. And the next thing there were all these terrific musicians – they just loved it so much that they put their heart into it and it was bound to work.

What were you listening to when you were young, when you started as a professional musician? Well, pretty obvious people, although it was a little easier to get to hear unusual things than perhaps it was in England. There's quite a thing between Canada and Britain, actually – whenever I come over here I always flash on it, y'know, architecture… things that I remember from when I was a kid. It was people coming along like Jimmy Reed and Charlie Rich… just what everybody heard, but there was nothing that you ever heard before it; it was such a smashing thing so you couldn't help but… I could name a list of a lot of people, but it doesn't seem really important. There are a few people – Billy Lee Riley, I don't know if you ever heard of him, and a guy named Warren Smith and another guy named Sanford Clark, he did "The Fool". You know when we came over here the first time, with Bob, a bunch of people came by the hotel – a bunch of rough-looking characters – and I don't know what you



Robbie Robertson in London, 1971: "Garth could play rings round all of us. His job was to play organ and piano… and to teach us music"

GETTY



THE BAND

FEW rock and roll concerts can have been so eagerly awaited as those which The Band are due to play at Lon-

called them but they were into pure rock'n'roll. They didn't like Bob's music at all – they liked Ronnie Hawkins' music, and they were giving me this whole story about firing up this Bob Dylan shit and getting back to the real meat of things. They were very sincere actually. What d'you call them, d'you have a name for them?

Rockers. Rockers? I told Ronnie Hawkins about them – I mean, they had people in the group named after his songs, even.

Wild Little Willie? Yeah, that was one of the guys. Are they around?

Sure. Getting back, though, do you still think of yourself as a Canadian rather than as an American? Oh, absolutely. That's the way it is.

Do you think the music reflects that? Canadian? Well, there is no Canadian music hardly. The only Canadian thing that we share in the music… we did a song called "Rag Mama Rag" and there's a combination of some kind of music from Canada where they use… We used a tuba and an accordion on that, and we were reflecting a little bit of that. We do it instrument-wise rather than song-wise. There is no music that you can say, "Oh, that's Canadian" – know what I mean? Its North American music – different countries, but you hear the exact same music, from blues to cowboy. So rather than talking about Calgary or Montreal, we talked about places that we'd played in.

Clarence White of The Byrds talks about hearing Canadian jigs when he was a kid. Yes, but that's not a very significant part… it's a small piece of music. That, with other things, adds up to something. We couldn't break it down like that.

When did you make the break from Canada to America? I was 16 years old at the time, and it was when I joined Ronnie Hawkins and Levon. I went to Arkansas and we started playing the circuit down there.

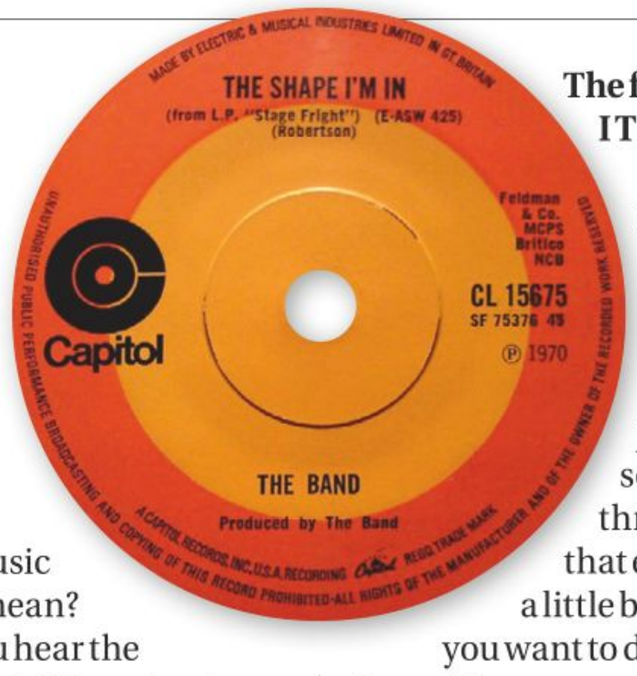
How did you get the job with Ronnie? Did he call you from Canada? Yeah, I knew him because he'd been up playing in Toronto. They were the best thing that'd come around – them and Carl Perkins – and my ambition was to impress them somehow. So I tried very hard and practised a lot and finally they asked me if I'd care to join them. That's about all there was to it. It was such a flash going down there from Canada. The big difference was that there's not a lot of black people in Canada like there is in the South. There were a lot of differences, and it was the first big flash that I'd had in my life; that's why all those things keep coming up, because I couldn't believe it.

Was it pretty rough, playing in that area? Yeah… but I guess we've forgotten most of the real heavy things for some reason or another, and we don't talk about it much any more. We played joints… just joints… and it was good. I mean one thing that really flashed me was that down there people listened to music differently. You weren't just playing for a bunch of young people… when you played, everybody would come, up to 50 years old, and they were able to appreciate the music just as much as anyone else, because they had no sophisticated background. It was an enormous thing. They'd been hearing that music all their lives; it was no surprise to them at all, but it was really new to me. I was used to people their age scowling on it… People were calling Elvis Presley the Devil in those days, but down there they didn't call him the Devil. He was just a good singer as far as they were concerned.

When did you start writing? That's how I got with Ronnie Hawkins. I wrote two songs, he recorded them, and it was after that I joined him.

Which songs were they? One was called "Hey-Ba-Ba-Lu" and the other was called "Someone Like You", I think. Little young kids' songs… I guess I was 15 when I wrote them. I'd started a couple of years before that, getting warmed up to it, and then I didn't write for a long time very much, just a little bit. We were busy; we'd be playing six or seven nights a week, hard long hours, so you just didn't think about literature at all, y'know? You were busy trying to make up for the hard parts of it by having some fun.

> "There is no music that you can say, 'Oh, that's Canadian'"



When did you start trying to write seriously? That was after we played over here with Bob.

In '66. Yeah, it was the first time ever, since we'd been together, that I had any time to sit down and gather it up in my mind and think about it at all. And that's when I first probably ever really tried to do something.

The first thing of yours that I ever heard was "The Stones I Throw". Yeah, that was before that, before we met Bob.

But it was still the same basic sound. Did you ever hear a song we did called "Leave Me Alone"? Well, that was a good one. But those records were just some people trying to sign us up… we didn't know what was going on; we didn't have any control over it. They just whipped us into the studio and we had to cut a few songs in an afternoon. We just kind of fumbled our way through the thing and got out of there. We didn't know that end of it at all, how you've got to be able to talk back a little bit, you've got to say a few things if you want to do what you want to do. We were just doing what someone was telling us to do, and those songs were just whipped up for the occasion. I was not serious about it. But the instrumentation was the same.

Using piano and organ together was something different in those days. Oh yeah, when we first did that we'd never seen it.

Where did you get the idea from? Or did you not have any idea? Yeah, we did have an idea, actually. We were into gospel music… not particularly spiritual gospel music, black gospel music, but white gospel music. It was easier to play, and it came more natural to us. We were trying to get a bigger sound going on – we had, like, piano, guitar, bass and drums for a long time, and we tried horns and all kinds of things but there were too many people, so we realised that the only instrument that could make that fullness, and take the place of horns or anything like that, was an organ. We met Garth at that time, who was a hundred times superior musician to any of us… I mean, he was, to us, just phenomenal. He could play rings around all of us put together, and he joined the group and his job was to play organ and horn… and to teach us music… and the organ was incorporated and we thought "great". We loved it and we never thought anything about it after that; it kind of fit natural and it's been that way ever since. It wasn't till later that some groups started popping up with the same instrumentation. And I know why they had that instrumentation – because it's fab, it feels more secure.

— MELODY MAKER MAY 29 —

AN INTERVIEW WITH Rick Danko:
***MM*: Why weren't you in the Woodstock movie? You played at the festival.**
RICK: I just didn't feel that their sound was too together, and I didn't believe that it would be the sort of film I'd want to look at myself in 20 years from now, because I'm sure all that comes back, at one time or another.

What sort of a set did you play there? To me it was terrible. It was not our PA system – we were using other people's facilities, which means that we didn't have any control over it, and if you can't control it then I don't consider the people are getting their money's worth.

Is it possible to play to that many people and give value? The Isle Of Wight impressed me in 1969. The people were very orderly… I thought it was like being in a giant high school gymnasium. But no, it's hard… we limit our PA system, like you do in a recording studio, which cleans it up for the people… it sounds more like a record. It makes it easier to listen to, but if you don't have your own system… We didn't bring ours with us »

WorldMags.net



June 3, 1971: (l–r) Rick Danko, Robbie Robertson and Levon Helm perform at the Royal Albert Hall

this time. But I think Charlie Watkins is doing something. He came over and saw ours and was impressed, and said he'd do something equally… so it should be OK.

When was the last time you played to an audience? Last November.

Why's that? We played a lot publicly, in night clubs and with Bob, and if you go out and play a whole lot it just sounds like you're playing a whole lot, y'know? And I don't believe that you can do that and make records too. We play very little and make one record a year, and that's… difficult! And this way, if we play as little as we can, we might play for a longer period of time. I'm sure it's not going to get as hectic, and we can also enjoy it when we go out and play. If you overplay it's like anything else; you feel like you're going to work if you aren't careful.

Do you spend a lot of time and trouble over recording? This album took from February until last week. How long is that… three months? We wouldn't go in every day – we just kept the studio free all that time. We used the studio we've built in Bearsville – it's in the middle of the woods. It's within 10 minutes' drive of everyone's homes, and it's a lot easier. It's our first studio that we don't have to tear down after we're through. The last album we made at the Playhouse in Woodstock; we had the control room in the workshop, with a tent round it to keep the heat in… it was pretty chilly.

Did it have a particularly good sound? It was convenient, and we didn't have to use any union engineers (*laughs*). Then the record before that was made at Sammy Davis Jr's house in Hollywood. We didn't use an engineer at all on that – our maintenance man told us how to control the machinery and some tricks with echo and stuff.

What's on the new album? All new songs.

Are they all Robbie's? Uh-huh… he wrote all the lyrics. He writes songs for me and Richard and Levon, and he'll bring one over and if we like it we say "sure". So we smooth it out and get it going and then just pull everybody together and do it… it's nice that way. He's always been a writer, ever since I've known him. There's not many writers that exist, in my mind.

Not real writers… Right! Glad to hear you say that. He's my favourite lyricist, without a doubt.

What about playing bass in the band? Well, that's the only time I play bass, when we're recording or performing… I play other instruments. I never think of the bass… I think of it more as a tuba than as a bass. I don't think I play basslines – maybe I do, but it functions. I just try to play where there's no one else hitting it… there's always a thousand spaces, somehow, in our group. So it's not difficult.

It's not planned out of nothing, and I'm sure it's much the same with everybody. That's likely why we've been together for as long as we have. If we did talk about it, I'm sure we wouldn't be together.

— NME MAY 29 —

"**WHEN YER'VE HAD** two records and yer still can't pay yer bills…" The languid Southern drawl of Levon Helm spells it out with succinct honesty, "…you get to figure something ain't quite right."

The Band's drummer's revelations of the monetary thinking behind their last album, *Stage Fright*, come as a bit of a surprise. As much as possible, remember, *Stage Fright* was a live once-off job, cut in about 14 days at the Woodstock Playhouse, a tiny theatre in The Band's adopted and celebrated home town. "Doing it the other way," says Helm, "costs so much money."

GETTY

WorldMags.net



The "other way" was the way of The Band's second album, lavish production job for which the group rented the former Hollywood home of Sammy Davis Jr and cut the set beside the star's swimming pool at as leisurely a pace as they chose.

"We jes' took all the time we wanted on that one. Nobody was thinking how much the engineer was gonna cost, things like that. We got a bit knocked for *Stage Fright*; a few of the critics said we coulda done better. I'm sure we could, but that was as good as we could do it at the time.

"Yup… I guess we do pay our bills now. Everyone's got them a house, got them a car. It don't worry me that much, the money, but after you get a coupla records and you come across that gee-tarr that you've always wanted and then yer find that ya can't have it…"

His face lights up in a smile: "Sure I've got it now. It's a National Dobro made around, oh, the early nineteen hundreds, I guess. It's a beautiful job… metal sound box and all. You play it in a room with an electric guitar and it'll make as strong a sound… it don't need no amplification. That's the test."

In London for a one-day whistle stop before the start of their extensive European tour, they stand out like country boys in the big city, meeting the British press at their Inn On The Park hotel suite. Country boys, down-home boys, pinioned in corners by clusters of journalists but linked by an intangible thread of common spirit, eyes and fleeting smiles crossing the room as they set about their separate tasks… Garth Hudson, imposing, fascinating; Rick Danko, bland, inscrutable; Richard Manuel, black bearded, laughing a little too nervously; Robbie Robertson, The Band's intellectual voice, eager to please…

Levon Helm sits at a table beside the dominating father figure of The Band's and Dylan's manager Albert Grossman, looking out reflectively into the sunshine over Hyde Park, his bearded face lighting up at talk of the Canadian football The Band would doubtless be playing on this fine day were they back home in Woodstock.

The Band don't tour overmuch. "We usually play a coupla tours a year," offers Levon in his graceful drawl – he's the lone American in the band. "I guess we do maybe 10/15 gigs over four/five weekends in a year. You can't do it all the time… living on vitamin pills and strange foods… you can't stay healthy."

Otherwise The Band stick around Woodstock, although the legendary Big Pink was substituted for separate houses there some time ago. There's still the togetherness, mind… 10 gruelling years together picking up the road dust through the States hasn't blunted their bond of friendship.

"We get together, maybe two or three of us, and we just sit around and sing a lot of tunes that we remember," says Levon. "Just for our own amusement really, but it keeps our hand in. If you can take a tune… a country tune maybe… and play it with a suburban flavour.

"That's the kind of thing we do. Or take a Motown tune and play it on country instruments, see how a fiddle might work out. I guess it does get through into our music, it makes our harmonies tighter. If it's a nice day, though, we'll go across the park and play some football."

The Band record at Bearsville now, a studio that Albert Grossman has had built near Woodstock, and it's here that they mainly meet… with each other and with Bob Dylan when he's in the neighbourhood. They play their songs to each other. "He helps us, we help him," says Helm; and he adds of the studio with a broadening smile, "Instead of sitting around at home and turning on a two-track, we can go down to the studio and turn on a 16-track. And instead of having some asshole come in and bootleg the music, we can have CBS do it for us nice and legit."

Recorded at Bearsville, the fourth Band album is almost complete. The couple of tunes that could finish the job have been brought to Europe with them, and they've booked studio time in London for when their June 2 and 3 Albert Hall concerts bring them back to England. Helm enthuses praise for our studios: "Really professional, a really clean sound."

The Band's life before Bob Dylan picked them off the road makes a sharp contrast to the leisurely pace they can afford to set themselves today. Though Helm is reluctant when it comes to reminiscing about the early days, when Toronto-born Robbie Robertson journeyed South in search of the Southern music home of Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, Robert Johnson and Sonny Boy Williamson and met with Levon.

Levon was from Marvell, Arkansas, near the home of Sonny Boy Williamson, and it was from here that The Band got going, first as Levon & The Hawks, then more simply as The Hawks and latterly even more simply as The Band.

"You played six nights a week," offers Levon, "and if you were lucky you got a Sunday-night dance as well. I really don't think much about those days; I'm just glad to be in a position where we have people to listen to us."

Pushed a bit, Helm tells of how in the clubs and bars they could, and had, to turn their band to just about anything in order to eat. James Brown, Ray Charles, old country tunes, rock tunes, dance tunes… a song for the occasion, always just one jump ahead of "Land Of A Thousand Dances". In their own field, they held a high degree of competence: "We figured we could play Lee Dorsey better than anyone except Lee Dorsey."

In this kind of situation they quickly acquired the knack of keeping the customer and themselves, to a certain degree, satisfied. "If somebody is propped up against the bar half-drunk," says Levon, "y'only have to play one number that he recognises and the rest you can choose yourself."

Meeting Bob Dylan, he understates, was a chance to play two nights a week instead of six. But he adds, "It really did seem the big time."

Dylan, Robbie Robertson told me in a phone interview last year, taught The Band an awful lot: how to meet important people; how to travel in aeroplanes. But much more than that he couldn't explain on the phone.

Maybe Levon could: "Well… Dylan, I guess, was where I first realised there was a lot more to music than just chords and a tight rhythm section. I was pretty awed by it. I didn't learn how to meet important people and be slick in interviews. Main thing was learning there was more to a song, and to music. A lot of it rubbed off on The Band, and not having to play every night, we got time to think… time to write. After Dylan we started playing our own bars, our own gigs. But this time," he smiled, "the bars we were playing were Hollywood Bowl type bars."

Garth Hudson, after the interruption of a photo session, leans solidly against a wall, feet apart, an impressive figure, lavish whiskers, hair sweeping back from a broad forehead.

I touch on the subject of keyboard players and spark off a 50-minute monologue in which Hudson rambles fascinatingly through the developments and important figures of jazz. I reel back amazed and slightly staggered by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the man as he stands there, puffing his cigarette and talking through clenched teeth in a deliberated growl, a page of Steinbeck's American West vividly animated. The names, the movements, roll off his tongue…

Art Tatum, Herbie Hancock, Teddy Wilson, Bud Powell. BB King, Freddie King and Albert King as he turns to guitarists. Ben Webster… now there's a jazzman close to Hudson's heart.

The Band had a chance to play with Webster in Germany, where the veteran sax player now lives. Garth wanted it so much, but felt that the audience might not have shared his zeal and feared that the comparable applause for The Band might have hurt the old man's feelings.

Pretty soon the room is empty, bar four of us listening to Garth with fascination… and another half an hour's gone before he finally runs out of steam. *Nick Logan* •

> "We take a Motown tune and play it on country instruments"




elody Maker

ELP! NOW A ROCK BALLET

VOTE TODAY!

the Pop Poll – pon on page 8

DAVE SWARBRICK of Fairport Convention: an album hit

ock sets sh debut

The studio engineers

MM probes the silent men of music: page 29

Fashionable Fairport...

1971

JULY – SEPTEMBER

THE WHO, SLADE, JOHN LENNON, CURTIS MAYFIELD AND MORE

"We didn't come tooled up"

NME SEPT 4 The Weeley Festival in Essex descends into violent chaos. "A team of SAS paratroopers" intervenes.

WEELEY FESTIVAL WILL go down in the records as being the perfect example of too much being attempted by too few people with too little knowledge. Though the kids went in good faith with the spirit of Woodstock in their thoughts, the Hell's Angels adopted the attitude of Altamont, while a few people connected with the organisation seemed to be on personal ego trips.

By Saturday afternoon, just 12 hours after the festival proper began, organisational chaos had reached such a state that the whole event nearly crumbled into the dust before an estimated 150,000 spectators.

One of the prime reasons for the near-shambles was the unwelcome and totally unnecessary presence of the Hell's Angels. They should never have been allowed near the site, and with proper security arrangements they never would have been. Brandishing scaffolding poles and any other handy weapons, they set about enforcing their version of order amongst a peaceable majority and took over the press pen, the stage area and the backstage arena.

One girl was savagely beaten and her clothes ripped when she rejected their amorous advances, several visitors were manhandled, the stage was invaded by the self-appointed custodians of peace on more than one occasion, vehicles were commandeered for joyrides and their bikes were driven into the crowd, where several people were stomped on. One concession stand was upturned and £2,000 worth of damage done to ovens and other equipment.

The police – who behaved in a totally reasonable manner throughout the festival – made no apparent attempt to clear the Angels from the site. In the end it was left to producer Colin King to call in what he described as "a team of SAS paratroopers" to deal with them.

Following an earlier confrontation between Angels and security people, the Angels retired to the far end of the backstage area to drink beer. But by this time a team of about two dozen vigilantes had assembled, one of whom was heard to yell: "I'm not going to let any thug beat up my little girl." With that, the force overran the Angels' encampment and the scene that followed resembled a junior version of the massacre sequence from *Soldier Blue*, with the exception that in this case the numbers were evenly matched. Despite their awesome appearance, the Angels didn't put up a good fight.

After systematically felling the Angels, the vigilantes set about destroying the hand-made and expensive choppers »

REX

Hell's Angels and hired security guards conduct a polite debate vis-à-vis their respective roles at the Weeley Festival, near Clacton in Essex

– this seemed to upset the Angels more than the physical beating they'd taken.

One Angel, David Hawkes, an ex-policeman known as Bogey, who was subsequently fined £30, told Roy Carr, "We didn't come tooled up, but nevertheless they had a go at us. If we had have come tooled up, it still would have happened."

No one Angel would accept responsibility for earlier damage to concession stands and assaults. An Angel called Ron from the Wolverhampton Chapter told Richard Green, "We were asked to come here and do a job; some of us were paid £4 a day by the promoters. We had to use sticks and things to give people what they gave us."

It should be noted that at no time were the Angels other than totally responsible for the numerous outbreaks of trouble. Innocent people both out front and backstage were frequently shoved, pushed, threatened and harassed by Angels who gave no reason for their unreasonable behaviour.

It wasn't long before the running order of bands had retrogressed to being 10 hours behind schedule and a special professional stage crew headed by Magoo had to be drafted in from London to sort out the shambles and restore some semblance of organisation. Magoo told the *NME*: "Nobody on stage knows what's happening. The stage crews and the groups are overrunning each other and everybody's friends seem to be wandering around."

Before the festival, promoter Colin King told the *NME*, "I'm trying to make sure this is a tight show without the usual gaps – as one group is going off, another will be going on and another will be waiting. Acoustic groups will play in front of the curtains between the main acts."

This was not to be. There were no curtains and gaps between groups sometimes stretched to almost an hour. Curved Air and Paul Brett's Sage both went home without appearing after waiting some eight hours to appear and still not being given a definite time to take the stage; King Crimson waited six hours, much to their frustration; Mott The Hoople finally went on at five in the morning and Rory Gallagher (another extremely late starter) found that promised facilities like free meals and drinks and changing rooms were not available.

Crimson's Ian Wallace said, "It just wasn't worth it after all the hassle. We weren't happy with what we did… This was all down to the bloody organisers and the hanging around."

Overend Watts of Mott The Hoople said, "We didn't mind waiting two or three hours, but by the time we got on we were just about dead. The promoters had broken their contract, we were entitled to go home, but we did the show to keep faith with the kids who came down to see us."

Among the other factors contributing to the disorganisation and general feeling of discontent were grossly inadequate toilet facilities, which backstage were virtually non-existent, and outrageous prices being charged for food by certain unscrupulous caterers. The backstage restaurant tent became known as "Rip-Off Restaurant – Lousy Food At Luxury Prices"; a meal costing 60p at lunchtime rocketed to £1 in the evening when you got less of about the same menu.

BARRY PLUMMER



Doors frontman Jim Morrison: "We are erotic politicians"

Sexual. Brooding. Misunderstood.

NME JULY 17 RIP, Jim Morrison.

AMERICA DIDN'T HAVE a Jagger. It did have Jim Morrison: the first major American male sex symbol since James Dean. The American dream has always held a morbid fascination for its deceased cult heroes, and like Dean – and Valentino before him – the untimely passing of James Douglas Morrison has guaranteed his immortality.

Morrison, the leather-clad Lizard King, was the epitome of the Big, Bad Guy: sexual, brooding, misunderstood. Morrison's mystique was much maligned. His sanity, not to mention his motives, were constantly questioned. "Pretentious" was a word often levelled at him. "Acid Evangelist," his devotees yelled in defence of their symbolic superstar.

Like him or not, Jim Morrison was a superstar of the first order, and the rest of The Doors – Ray Manzarek, John Densmore and Robbie Krieger – his electric disciples.

In 1968, the *Saturday Evening Post* described them thus: "The Doors are the Norman Mailer of the Top 40. Missionaries of apocalyptic sex, their music insists that love is sex, and sex is death, and therein lies salvation." To which Morrison replied, "We are erotic politicians."

Morrison was both the singer and the song, and his songs revealed the recurring symbolism of snakes, Oedipus' relationship, sexual tragedy and death.

Attired in tight black leather pants, the man his friends called Jimbo was the kind of guy you wouldn't want your sister to date. No doubt, however, she would have squirmed with ecstatic delight at the mere suggestion.

The Doors forte was the Theatre of Rock. With dramatic menace in their music, Morrison would take up his familiar stance… right foot resting on the microphone base while both his hands caressed the head. With agonised expressions contorting his classic features, he sang and enacted each song in a deadpan monotone. Suddenly, he would throw back his head – a scream of pain would come from deep within his throat – Morrison would collapse as if machine-gunned or kicked in the groin. He was the dying "Unknown Soldier", the Oedipus slaughterer in "The End". The impact: completely hypnotic.

With agonised expressions, he sang and enacted each song

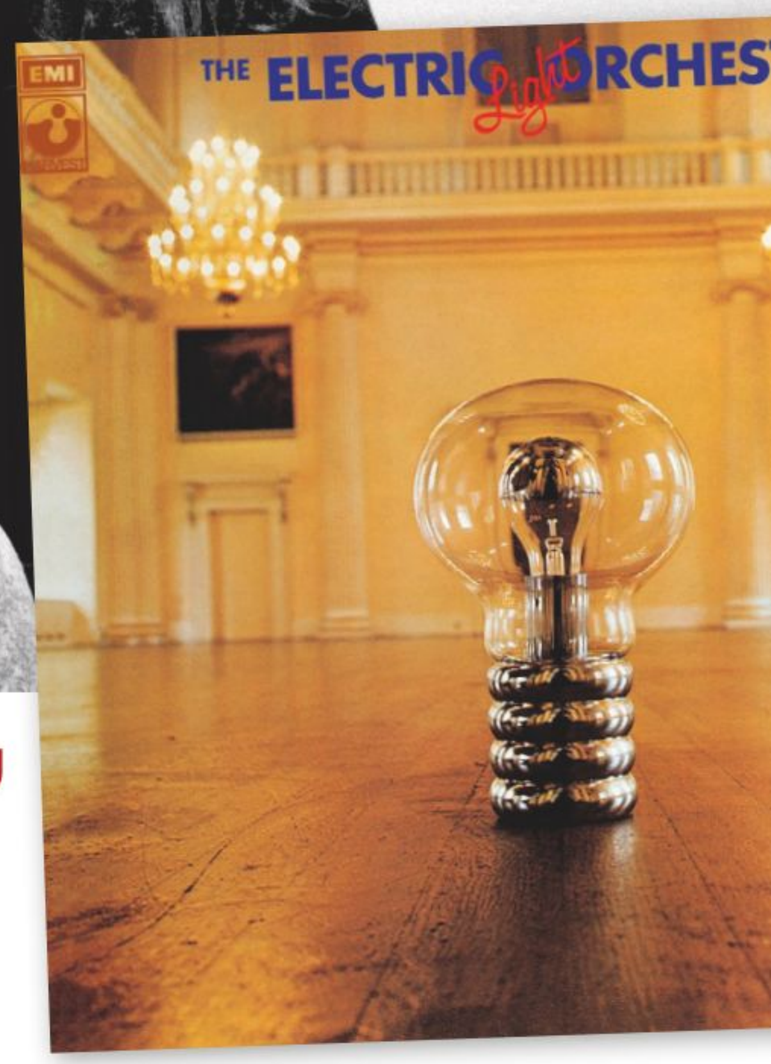
Constantly attacked for his overt sexuality, Morrison was arrested and charged with giving obscene performances on at least two separate occasions, though there are legends of more outrageous happenings. Morrison enjoyed his juice to the point of overindulgence, and though he died through natural causes, there is no doubt that it was his undenied continued misuse of alcohol and drugs which in the end aggravated his failing health, changed his appearance, and brought about his sudden death at the age of 27.

Morrison and The Doors had terminated their association at the beginning of this year and Morrison had made it clear that he had completely forsaken stage appearance in order to concentrate on creative writing. *Roy Carr*

Morrison, Dec. 1943—July 1971



October 13, 1971: now a trio, The Move – (l–r) Jeff Lynne, Bev Bevan and Roy Wood – wait backstage to perform "Chinatown" on *Top Of The Pops*; (inset) the debut LP by their other project, ELO



"We've been offered great money"

NME Aug 7 Introducing... the Electric Light Orchestra, a radical reconfiguration of The Move. "That was the idea of me joining," says ex-Idle Race man Jeff Lynne.

WHAT DO YOU do when, as a hit group, you get fed up with playing the very numbers that have helped elevate you to your current status? One way is to cop out altogether and go "heavy" – a few groups have tried this and failed. Or knock it all on the head and have people saying in a few months' time, "I wonder what happened to so-and-so?" You could do either, or you could swallow your pride and carry on earning the money you're used to.

The Move, however, have decided to adopt a slightly different version of the first possibility and base their act on symphonies not as The Move, but as the Electric Light Orchestra.

As long as a year or so ago, Roy Wood was going on about the ELO and making plans for the formation of a group within an orchestra.

Then we heard various rumours about what might be going to happen, and it wasn't until I spoke to Jeff Lynne this week that the truth of the matter came to light. Jeff joined The Move a year ago "so that I could get under the same organisation as Roy. That was the idea of me joining," to quote his own words.

So when Bev Bevan rather pessimistically told me a few weeks ago that he didn't really think The Move would tour again, was he right?

"It's very doubtful, in fact pretty certain that we won't go out again as The Move," Jeff confirmed. "I don't bother about not touring as The Move. It was a bit depressing really playing in the middle of nowhere with people waiting to hear your hit records. If you played a thing they didn't know, they wouldn't want to know."

Was there never a question of augmenting The Move with, say, a couple of saxes or something, and carrying on playing basically the same music but with a different sound?

"If we added a sax it would have still been playing 'Blackberry Way', but just with a sax," Jeff pointed out. "I'm pretty bored with bashing away playing 'Blackberry Way'. We got to the point where we felt that if we'd gone out on the road all the time we wouldn't have time to do the other thing [the ELO]. The ELO can go out about three nights a week. We've been offered some great money, and we need that for nine people."

"Yes, the ELO has taken precedence over The Move"

Going out on the road, surely, can lead to the same situation as The Move find themselves in. Just what market is the ELO aimed at? "Colleges and things like that," Jeff replied. "It's sort of underground but not really. It should appeal to everybody. It's not a big freak-out, more symphonic; it's based on the classics."

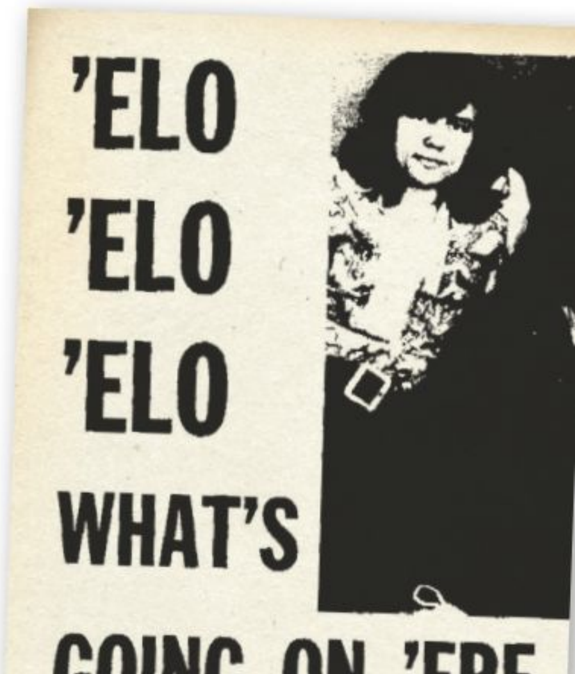
And just when can we literally hear the first from the ELO? "We're recording an album now, and if we get the right studio time it'll be ready for release in about a month," Jeff revealed. "Yeah, the ELO has taken precedence over The Move, but this Move album won't be the last one, because we've got another two albums for the next three years as The Move."

Did Jeff, Bev and Roy find it very different recording as The Move now that they're down to a trio? "Not at all, because we're just over-dubbing," he explained. "I think this album is the best one we did, but we had to do it pretty quickly because we had to start the ELO album and we'll do the next one as quickly as we can."

I'm sure a lot of Move fans will be unhappy about this attitude, as I am, and hope that when the Electric Light Orchestra eventually shows us what it's worth, all the to-do will have been worth it. Jeff said that he and Roy are both spending most of their time writing for the ELO, but when I tried to speak to Roy his publicist told me, "We're keeping him under wraps for the time being."

So there we have it – Bev would rather like to do some gigs with The Move, Jeff is dead set against that idea and Roy is – well, it would seem he's deeply into the ELO as well. And in a democratic society the majority always wins! *Richard Green*

GETTY



WorldMags.net

"The Perfect Guitarist"
for AVANT-ROCK GROUP
Original, creative, adaptable, melodic, fast, slow, elegant, witty scary, stable, tricky
QUALITY MUSICIANS ONLY
"ROXY" 223 0296

A Roxy Music gig in 1972, featuring Rik Kenton on bass, a replacement for founder member Graham Simpson

"We've got a lot of confidence"

MM AUG 7 Introducing... Roxy Music, a self-consciously "civilised" outfit.

A CURIOUS FEATURE OF modern rock music is the way it's taken potential artists away from other spheres. Men who might have become poets, painters or even classical musicians have instead found an outlet for their creativity in the new medium, which also offers the chance of wide exposure – not to mention bags of loot.

Five years ago, for instance, it would have been unthinkable for Bryan Ferry to have entered rock'n'roll. Fine Arts graduates from Newcastle University just didn't do that sort of thing. But now, in 1971, Bryan is leading a band called Roxy which has produced one of the most exciting demo tapes ever to come my way. Although it was recorded on a small home tape machine in what sounds like a Dutch barn, it carries enough innovatory excitement to suggest that Roxy may well be ahead of the field in the avant-rock stakes.

As some of already have realised, Roxy will have to change their name when they find a manager and a record company. Elektra already have a (rather duff) American band with the same name, so Bryan's looking for something fresh, but with the same connotations: Essoldo, Ritz, Plaza, something like that.

Bryan sang with a soul band called Gas Board at Newcastle five years ago, and since then he's been teaching, truck-driving and sculpting in London. Musically he was practically dormant until, a year ago, an old friend called Graham Simpson arrived in London. Graham dropped out of university to play bass with a band called Cock-A-Hoop, which was managed by Terry Ellis, and when he came south, he and Bryan began to work together.

Before last Christmas, they added Andy Mackay from Reading University on electric alto and oboe, and he brought with him a VCS3 synthesizer, which is operated by electronics wizard Brian Eno. Andy played in the National Youth Orchestra and is currently teaching, while Eno has given performances of his own electronic pieces.

The drummer, Dexter Lloyd, also has symphonic experience. An American, he played with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and of him Bryan says, "He was the only drummer we tried who could play anything creative on the slow numbers." He also plays vibes and teaches percussion. Finally there's the guitarist, Roger Bunn – whose background is very unlike the others. He's done the whole Wee Willie Harris/Star Club bit, and still does a lot of session work.

To date, Roxy have done no gigs at all, but have been concentrating on rehearsing as a unit for about four months. The next step is to find a large hall in which to rehearse, and then do some quiet gigs to shake it down.

"We've got a lot of confidence in what we're doing," says Bryan, "and we're determined to make it but in as civilised a way as possible. The average age of this band is about 27, and we're not interested in scuffling. If someone will invest some time and money in us, we'll be very good indeed."

The band's influences stretch from Ethel Merman to the Velvet Underground to jazz, and they want to bring all these elements into the music, creating a very diverse approach. The electronic thing is important to them, but they are also interested in the flash and style of rock – like wearing outrageous clothes and having some kind of act.

"We don't want to come on like the MJQ," says Bryan.

All it needs, then, is backing. Because from what I've heard, Roxy – or whatever they eventually decide to call themselves – have a whole gang of potential, and the first manager/agent/record company to realise it will have got themselves something really worthwhile. *Richard Williams*

"We don't want to come on like the Modern Jazz Quartet"

GETTY

New names that could break the sound barrier



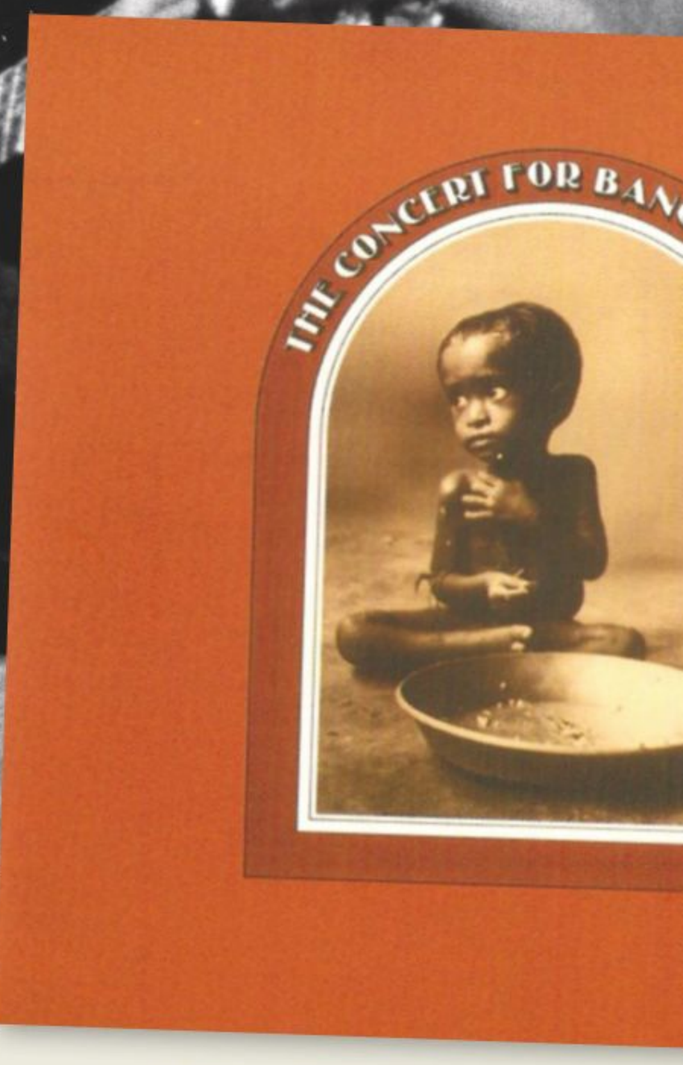
A CURIOUS feature of modern rock music is the way it's taken potential artists away from other spheres. Men who might have become poets, painters, or even classical musicians have, instead, found an outlet for their creativity in the new medium, which also offers the chance of wide exposure — not to mention bags of loot.

Five years ago, for instance, it would have been unthinkable for Bryan

WorldMags.net



July 31, 1971, Madison Square Garden, NYC: George Harrison and Bob Dylan in rehearsal for the Concert For Bangladesh



The greatest pop concert in two decades

NME Aug 7 George Harrison mobilises a huge concert to aid Bangladesh. "There was $250,000 at the box office. No one touched a penny."

BOB DYLAN, WITH scrubby beard, garbed in denim jacket, green T-shirt and fawn trousers, stood up front of the 70ft stage at Madison Square Gardens. A quiet, intensely interested member of the 20,000 audience.

I stood beside him. None of the 20,000 knew me – apparently he was equally anonymous, until he went on stage.

We were watching the George Harrison big band. An aggregation which no promoter could afford to book.

There was the wonderful, wonderful, piano playing of Leon Russell complemented by the vibrant, full-blooded organ playing and singing of Billy Preston – who even did a "Mick Jagger" pas de deux across the stage.

George Harrison at Madison Square Garden on Sunday had put the seal on that which Mohammed Ali could not prove – that a hero of the '60s can reappear and conquer. George was a knockout!

As Alfred G Aronowitz said in the *New York Post*, it was "an overwhelming spectacle… as much an event in the history of our times as anything that music has to offer". It was almost the understatement of the year.

Twenty thousand people, twice over, stood and cheered the greatest pop concert in two decades. Great, if one takes the meaning to be fine music. It was all happening for this 20,000 per concert as they stood on their peds and yelled their lungs out.

"As much an event in the history of our times as anything that music has to offer"

It was George's day. He had arranged it – he had worried about it. He cared tremendously about the purpose – that all the money went to the aid of the children who were the victims of the Bangladesh tragedy.

There was $250,000 in the box office – and nobody touched a penny. Every red cent was on a cheque from the Madison Square Garden's management direct to UNICEF to use for the kids of Bangladesh.

The overheads? It cost over $100,000 to put on the show in expenses. And Allen Klein, president of ABKCO Industries Inc and the business manager of Apple, picked up the tab personally on the hall.

Ravi Shankar, who had originally interested George in the venture, proved why he is India's greatest classical sitar player. A Bengali himself, he had persuaded George to ask friends to play the concerts as a benefit for his homeland.

It was George who got in touch with Dylan – it was George who invited the fabulous lineup to appear. And one has Ringo's authority for saying so, because they were in constant touch by telephone arranging this while George was in Los Angeles and Ringo was filming in Spain.

Dylan's contribution was tremendous – the audience stood and applauded for a full three minutes without sitting down. And the big band played on. On and on, and the audience stood as George contributed "Something", "My Sweet Lord", "Hear Me Lord" and concluded with "Bangladesh".

It's a lovely number – and New York on Sunday at Madison Square Garden was a lovely, peaceful place in spite of 2,000 people outside who tried to break down police barriers to get in – and failed. For them those inside must be sorry.

Although there were 150 police (25 of which were in plain clothes) the Madison Square Garden's authorities inside said it was the best-organised concert they had had. *Les Perrin*

GETTY

WorldMags.net

Slade pose in Amsterdam in 1971: (l–r) Jim Lea, Don Powell, Dave Hill (squatting) Noddy Holder

WorldMags.net

“We’re Black Country yobbos”

Their skinhead image caused them booking problems (“the universities didn’t want to know...”). But now SLADE are back with longer hair, a hit single, and a somewhat vulgar show. “We’re only talking to the audience,” says Noddy Holder. “We want them to be our mates.”

— NME JULY 17 —

SLADE, BRITAIN’S FIRST skinhead band, were launched just over a year ago in the true tradition of eye-catching pop publicity. But the implications of their hard-case imagery were so stark and foreboding that it quickly resulted in the most unforeseen repercussions.

“Things got to such a point that other bands wouldn’t even share the same dressing room with us,” a stocky Noddy Holder, his limp, tangled hair now fringing his collar, admitted with a chirpy “one of the lads” grin. “They were really scared of us.”

And it appeared as though it wasn’t just the groups who were suddenly side-stepping Slade... for with the vested interests of their venues at stake, the nation’s bookers and promoters were most reluctant to give this band a gig.

“I suppose I could see why other bands weren’t too keen to play with us, though,” Noddy continued, with an almost apologetic trait. “We used to get a lot of the local bovver boys turning up to our gigs, and though they acted just fine with us, they sometimes gave the other bands a hard time.

“Those places that did take what they thought to be a chance on booking us soon realised that as a band we weren’t into that whole aggro scene and quickly rebooked us. ’Cos wherever we played we nearly always went down a storm with the crowd.”

Up until just over a year ago, Slade, or as they were then known, Ambrose Slade, were just one of a thousand anonymous groups scratching out an existence in the provinces – Wolverhampton to be exact. Undoubtedly, the hardest task for any unknown group, no matter how good or bad they might be, was to get someone – anyone – to take an interest, no matter how small, in what they were doing.

Ex-Animal and now manager Chas Chandler took notice. And from then on in he set himself the unenviable self-imposed commission of trying to make as many people as possible aware of this band’s existence. A thankless preoccupation, for like, just what the world needs right now is yet another new rock band.

Initially, controversy had to be the password. Following that, the band had to rely entirely on its musical abilities. Sure, Arthur Brown may have set himself on fire, Pete Townshend excelled at guitar smashing and Keith Emerson proved himself to be an organ rapist, »

GETTY

WorldMags.net



but primarily it was talent that sustained them following these formative front-page-grabbing escapades.

To this end, in the now shortened name of Slade and their hair, an infamous publicity campaign was perpetrated. Right, people did talk about this mincing mob of spikeheads, but the truth was that the activities of the skinhead cult was not only wreaking havoc on the soccer playing fields of England but causing distressed questions to be raised in the House.

Though their press clipping book was full, their date book was empty. It appeared Slade were in fact worse off now that they were known, as opposed to the days when they were just anonymous hairies.

There was now only one alternative left – they had to grow their hair once again. "Well, we had to, didn't we," Noddy said rather glumly. "The college and universities didn't want to know us and the promoters were still giving us a real hard time.

"It's bloody stupid, for just because our hair is now a few inches longer we can get all the gigs we want. The only reason we cut our hair off in the first place was because we wanted to shock everybody.

"Well… everyone was beginning to look the same 'cos the groups were influencing the crowds and we found that the crowd was influencing us. I personally think that it has been the introverted ultra-cool attitude of far too many bands which has caused a general cooling off everywhere.

"Me and our mates are just a bunch of ravers. Black Sabbath are the same as us… Black Country yobbos. We like being like that; we don't care if we are a bunch of yobbos, and we are what we are, if ya know what I mean."

From talking to Noddy and the rest of the ravers, Dave Hill, Don Powell and Jimmy Lea, it would appear that their chart entry "Get Down And Get With It" constitutes their very basic "You-Jane-Me-Tarzan" philosophy. For as Dave, with hair resembling a Crusader's helmet, pointed out unsubtly:

"I think people wanna start dancing 'gain. It's still all down to having a good time… We can see it when we're on stage; as soon as we start bashing it out everyone starts leaping about.

"Now when it's like that, a bloke can get in and pull a bird, take her for a drink and have a good evening, then he'll go away and tell everyone that he had a good time.

"People, especially in the North, work hard all day and when they go out at night they want to be entertained."

All are in agreement that they have had to battle every step of the way, and just because they've got a chart entry doesn't mean that the struggle is over… it's only just begun.

"It's a bloody long road," Dave moaned, "but it's the only real way of making it."

When I asked Noddy if growing their hair hadn't taken the sharp edge off their impact, his reply was in the affirmative, but added with a dangerous twinkle of the eye. "Once we've managed to establish ourselves, we'll shock 'em all again and cut out hair off." *Roy Carr*



— NME NOVEMBER 13 —

THE SKINHEAD ERA worked two ways on Slade – who had become the first group of the skinhead kind. It brought them to the attention of a whole lot of new people, but it also meant some cancelled bookings when promoters got scared about bovver boys in the audience.

When I first saw Slade they were called Ambrose Slade and playing at Newcastle City Hall some three years or so ago. With me was Chas Chandler, who is now the group's manager, and he was there again when I met up with the lads again in London this week. A series of interviews had been arranged, but when Slade's single went straight into the *NME* chart at No 9, Chas decided to hire a suite at the Inn On The Park and turn it into a celebratory work/play afternoon. Soon after I arrived I sat round a table with Chas, Dave Hill and Jimmy Lea and began chatting about the group. I first asked them about the changes that have taken place within Slade.

"You'll probably find we're doing the same opening number now as we were when we started," Jimmy pointed out. "The only reason we had our hair cut was we were just fed up with looking the same as every other group. But if you look at pictures of us taken in the beginning, you'll see Dave's hair was short then."

Commented Dave, "People made more out of the skinhead thing than we did. We got scared going round London and seeing posters up of us as skinheads."

Manager Chas put in, "All we did was take three ads in the *NME* in a row and everybody else sprang in from there with labels."

So if Slade weren't real skinheads, why did a few promoters get the wind up?

"People were worried about the kind of people that we were going to appeal to and draw, and they thought, 'We'd better pull them out,'" Dave replied. Jimmy came in with, "We've never had any bother at gigs. Places we've played have built up and up and up for us."

Which led Dave into, "They've accepted us as a group and they come to see us. They don't bother how we look."

The single, which Jimmy and Noddy Holder wrote, has given Slade's career a big boost, and the group put their own success and that of the single down to five years of solid hard work building up a huge and faithful following.

Dave explained, "There was the following that we'd had for a long time anyway, and 'Get Down And Get With It' being played a lot through Radio One Club built a following over the top of that. It's hard to say just what it is about the group that people like – I think we've just been going round the country for so long, working so hard, that our name had built up and people keep coming back to see us.

"Our show isn't planned, it's a natural. Last week we did *Top Of The Pops* and we were really rushing about like mad and worrying about doing a recording session that night as well. We thought it would be really bad but it turned out so well we were surprised. You can hear the atmosphere on the tapes.

"The other night we went on and we felt really p––––d off, but it just happened, it just came about that people enjoyed us," Jimmy added.

Don Powell strolled over to join us as I was asking Dave and Jimmy about the report that they'd turned down a million-dollar American deal, to which Dave said, "It sounds a bit too good to be true. We're fine with what's going on here now."

Don commented, "The point is, if you hear two American guys come up behind you and say, 'We're going to put a million dollars behind you', you think, 'Hello?'"

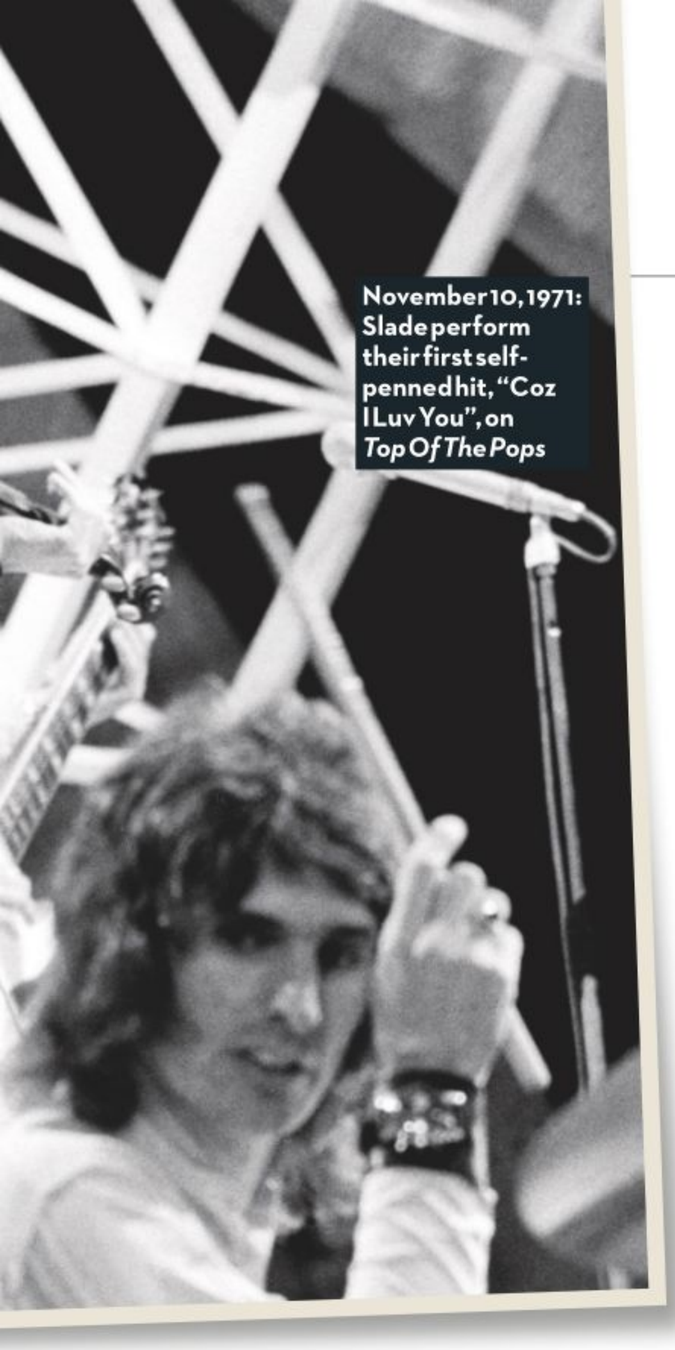
"We'd like to be successful in our own way in America," Dave chipped in, and Don added, "We've had to fight to make it here and we'd like to do it the same way in America. We didn't want to become another Monkees and go down as fast as we came up."

During Slade's recording session – to which fans had been invited – at London's new Command Studios, I popped in one night and was surprised at the sheer force of Slade's

GETTY


SLADE: BOVVER BOYS WHO GREW THEIR HAIR AND GOT A HIT

LADE, Britain's first skinhead band — were launched just over a year ago in the true dition of eye-catching pop publicity. But the



November 10, 1971: Slade perform their first self-penned hit, "Coz I Luv You", on *Top Of The Pops*

performance and the uninhibited way in which the audience responded. It is, it seems, all down to excitement with Slade.

Even when the group started out they were playing Tamla Motown numbers and giving them a bit of bite. Of that era, Jimmy recalled, "We were doing Motown when it was considered underground. The only other group we knew who were doing it were The Action, though I never saw them."

"We often think about doing it now – there are great melodies in Motown stuff. Will we do any? We never know; we never know what we'll do," said Dave. And Jimmy came in again with, "We just try to get as much melody and excitement as we can." And then Dave was saying, "We have mixed musical ideas, but that's good – we swap the writing round and different things come out."

Is there a typical Slade audience?

"It's mixed, there's no bag for it," Dave replied, and Jimmy took over by explaining, "About three-and-a-half years ago we had to play a Top Rank and we thought, 'Oh shit', but they were great and we went down well."

By now, the suite was getting mighty crowded. Drinks were flowing freely, sandwiches had appeared, boxes of cigarettes were everywhere and a real party was beginning to emerge. So just to dampen the proceedings, I asked the lads if at any time, during all the years they've been cracking away before getting a hit record, they ever felt like packing it all in.

"We spent four months in the Bahamas getting ourselves together and we said, 'It'll be make or break when we get back', and it started to go up and up as soon as we got back," Jimmy told me. "It's all becoming very solid, building up brick by brick. We've been improving all the time."

"There are things coming out all the time," Don remarked. "More ideas seem to come out now than ever before."

Perhaps Jimmy summed it all up best when he said, "We've been together five years and we've been a *group* all that time, not like four blokes just thrown together. The Beatles and The Who were together years before they made it. We've got past the stage where we'd break up – we've been together so long. When I see old mates that I haven't met for years they sometimes say, 'Are you still with Slade?' and they seem surprised, but none of us could play with anybody else now."

And with that explained, we all got down to the serious business of ordering another round off Slade's passing publicist. It all became a bit hazy after that – probably something to do with being so high up in the building! *Richard Green*

> "We were doing Motown when it was considered underground"

— NME DECEMBER 18 —

GOING TO SEE Slade live is like attending a drunken party. You can see what's happening but you don't believe it! It's very crowded, and very hot. People are packed in like sardines, yet remarkably, you don't want to leave.

I went to see them at Watford Technical College – a venue they hadn't played before, yet they broke the house record and people queued for two hours to get in. Backstage the group were lounging around. Before they go on they change into their stage clothes – Dave Hill in a bright orange track suit affair, Noddy with white trousers, the familiar braces and his ever-famous hat. The hat isn't to cover baldness, incidentally; he wears it "because people expect it now and if I leave it off they ask me where it is".

Noddy is an important part of the band. It's his strained vocals that shout out at you on every number they play. "Before we got anywhere the mums and dads of the other members in the group always said, 'You'll never make it with a singer like that. He's always shouting – you can't call that singing."

Shouting it may be – but Noddy has an incredible range and, with their PA system, an incredible amount of volume. Does he ever worry that if he's shouting, as opposed to singing, the strain on his vocal chords might eventually lose him his voice?

"No – because it comes naturally to me now. I always sing with a shouty voice and I haven't had a sore throat for more than 12 months now. But I believe in looking after my throat. I always drink honey and lemon before I go to bed – I don't know if it does me any good but I feel it helps.

"The vocals are a very important part of our sound. I mean our sound, because I think we've now got to the stage where you can switch on the radio and recognise who is singing."

Slade are now in the enviable position of being able to play almost any type of gigs – clubs, ballrooms or colleges – and are sensible enough not to outprice themselves. Noddy comments: "We're not putting up our money astronomically. We'd rather keep our price realistic and go back and play a venue several times rather than get a lot of money and only play a place once."

At the places the group played when they first began to make a name for themselves – back in the days when they were known as a skinhead band and were unable to get bookings because of their unsavoury image – the band only worked for a percentage. "Well, they were good to us," said Noddy. "No one wanted to book us then because they didn't want trouble and we spelt trouble."

Playing virtually every kind of gig around the country is one of the contributory factors to the group's success, Noddy feels. "That's how we reckon we broke into the charts – by doing continuous one-nighters. It's taken us one-and-a-half years to build up a following and I think now that same following would help us even if we had a downer.

"Before, people were frightened to come and see us because of the image – or they were frightened the place would be full of skinheads. And it was harder in those days to get the audience going. If you can't get the audience leaping about then you've had it."

One thing that separates Slade from any other band is that they talk to the audience as opposed to at them. And if the audience is enjoying themselves then the band draw their strength from that. Of course, they are not everyone's idea of a pop band – and if you find offence at programmes like *Casanova* on the telly, or feel you couldn't attend a rugby party without feeling a trifle embarrassed, then you might indeed find the band guilty of a certain amount of rudery.

If he thinks the crowd looks miserable he'll say, "Don't sit there looking as if you've crapped yourselves." With the occasional effing and blinding, that's about the extent of their rudery.

Noddy comments, "We've had a few complaints from promoters because some of them thought we were being filthy for the sake of it. I don't honestly believe we influence the audience in that way, because we don't use any words they haven't heard before. Older people get offended – that's all.

"Three weeks ago a promoter brought in the police because 20 people complained. But out of 3,000 that's hardly the majority. We thought we were going to have a writ served on us, but were lucky in that one policeman had been there all the time and said he found our act amusing rather than offensive. Anyway, as far as I'm concerned we're only talking to the audience. We want to talk to them as if we're their mates – we want them to be our mates."

How did the talking to the audience like this first develop?

"Well, we haven't always used vulgarity. It originally stemmed from when we got smashed on the night and it just came out. It went down a storm and we've used it ever since. People aren't only bothered about the music they want taking out of themselves.

"We're not a group who goes on to play perfect every night – if you just make people feel good about the act then that's something. Even if they only dig the vulgarity, that's alright with us. Crowds want to get on their feet and loon again – I'm sure that's what will happen much more in the future. People are fed up with just listening. 'Get Down And Get With It' is what we are all about." *Julie Webb* •

WorldMags.net



"It was the whole thing of *Tommy* being taken up in the States as a masterpiece that threw us": Pete Townshend and The Who at the Miami Beach Convention Centre, Florida, November 25, 1971



“I’m 26. I’ve seen and done it all”

THE WHO are now millionaires, but says Pete Townshend, have “already spent it”. While developing *Who’s Next*, the band explore new directions. Computer music. Film scripts. Chimney cleaning and cattle farming. “What we want is to be able to justify ourselves,” says Townshend.

— NME JULY 17 —

ALL THE WHO bar Pete Townshend have just got themselves new houses – that’s ’ouses in ’Oo terminology. “We ’ad this business meeting, right,” says Townshend, “coincided directly with the time they all started buying their ’ouses, when someone announced to each of us, ‘You are a dollar millionaire.’ And they all said right, bang, bang, bang. Next week they’d spent it all. The idea was, ‘Now take good care of your money and when you’re old and grey…’ I said, ‘I’ve already spent mine.’ Like Keith spent thousands and thousands of pounds buying his ’ouse, because someone had said, ‘You are going to be a very rich young man.’ Keith thought, ‘Oh… spend it, spend, spend, spend.’” »

PHOTOSHOT

WorldMags.net

Breaking down barriers

MM SEPT 25 Townshend considers "the state of rock". Which way will it go? How will it change?

IT WILL PROBABLY change much sooner than people think. There will always be things about rock which don't change, because the music will always be something which makes you feel at ease and which stimulates and entertains.

You will probably find that the best musicians will be those who continue to give the most through their performances. The ethics won't change so much as how people go about it.

I don't think the surface things are going to change, but there will be some incredible changes in other areas. Musically, all that will change is the hardware, like someone inventing a new electric guitar or synthesizers. Changes like this don't really affect the structure of the music.

In many respects the sound of a rock band would sound to a Martian just about the same as the sound of Ken Colyer. To really get into the differences you have to look at the way audiences are changing; what they want from rock music and how rock itself is creating audiences.

I don't think rock music is keeping up with the audience's demands. Nowadays there are different kinds of audience: the ones who like rock because of its glamour, the extreme left-wingers who use it as a political vehicle and the intellectuals who see in rock a high intellectual content. There is definitely a need for the barriers between an audience and the group to break down, and for this reason the success of groups like the Faces is no surprise to me. The difference between the Faces and The Who is that we have got used to working as larger-than-life figures. We can't maintain this sort of status unless we have really valid roots or unless it is justified in terms of our performance. What we are looking for is a way of performing which will allow us to connect the pieces and ideas we have. Sometimes they come out in the music and sometimes they don't.

In order to change rock, audiences are going to have to lose their preconceptions about what a rock band is. We have to make a fresh start with something totally different and not just a new Beatles or Stones.

At the Young Vic we were looking for the perfect audience; one which didn't know The Who. Audiences are very tolerant because they get a lot of rubbish, and in the future they must take part in a concert as much as the group. It's got to the point where audiences can't get a word in edgeways and our lives are spent saying what the audiences want to say.

I don't think you can make any hazy predictions about this. If we as The Who knew what directions rock would move in we would have done it by now. It may be a new form of media.

What is obvious is the best rock musicians and the ones that stand out are the pure musicians, like the Emerson, Lake & Palmers or the Jack Bruces. We don't pretend to be musicians but we maintain we are reflective. Glastonbury was more of an event than The Who could pull off. We could work for years and still be The Who. We are still The Who. Audiences know us as The Who and it is very, very hard to do something new as The Who.

"In the future, audiences must take part in a concert as much as the group"



GETTY

Townshend rocks back in his chair, hoots with laughter through bleary sleep-starved eyes. In the mind of the public, outrageousness and The Who are inseparable. Of the groups in the '60s – when hotel wrecking, beer bathing and being turned off aeroplanes were all part of pop's hellsapoppin ' attitude to life and before glamour attained the smudgy connotations it has today – The Who were the unchallenged leaders in the looning league.

It was The Who, largely through the conspirational partnership of Pete Townshend and co-manager Kit Lambert, who contributed a lion's share of what made mid-'60s pop the razzle-dazzle, pop art, technicolour merry-go-round it was. Pop stars were pop stars, and those on the outside looking in could only press noses to the window and dream themselves into the never-ending carnival. At the engine room of The Who's climb were Townshend and Lambert, pushing the band to its status alongside the giants on the strength of each new group venture being that bit more absurd and outrageous than the next.

The *Tommy* album was perhaps their greatest success, pulling The Who through a bleak patch in their career and adding the vast progressive generation to the pop market that was already theirs. But if it was their greatest triumph, it was also the beginning of the end of that particular facet of the Lambert-Townshend relationship. Today, on the surface, little has changed. Lambert remains co-manager but not producer – Glynn Johns does that job on The Who's next album. More significantly, his scope of influence over The Who's direction has been curtailed.

Tommy, which Townshend admits was primarily conceived as an image concept, was a catalyst; it was the hailing of that album as a musical masterpiece that knocked the band out of its stride. It's not quite as simple as the group realising they had better do something quick to bring their music in line with what the public and critics seemed to think they already possessed; more that the acceptance of *Tommy* accelerated an increasing realisation that music should hold sway over image.

Tommy, explains Townshend "was definitely a result of image building. I mean, I'd spent two years writing the thing, but it was still more an image idea than a musical idea. And it was the whole thing of it being taken up in the States as a musical masterpiece that threw us. From selling 1,500 copies of *The Who Sell Out*, right, we were suddenly selling 20 million or whatever it was, of *Tommy*. It was the ridiculous from the sublime.

"It had to have repercussions. Christ almighty, we thought, here we are being told we are musical geniuses and all we are is a bunch of scumbags. I mean, we've always been respected as a group, right, but we've never among ourselves had a good feeling of being a good musical band. We've always been like a gimmicky band.

"It wasn't directly as a result of *Tommy* being hailed the way it was, but it was like a natural thing that we should be a wee bit turned around by something we didn't think was that musically good being so strongly approved… when really, and let's be completely honest about it, it was mainly a brilliant example of the ad-man visualising that Kit, in conjunction with myself, was so good at.

"Did you know I'm in American *Who's Who* now?" he broke off. "Pete Townshend, composer of the first rock opera."

And returning to his theme, feet up on a chair: "You see, it has got to the point where Kit has bigger ambitions for us. But we haven't. What we want is to be able to justify ourselves to each other as musicians. We are at the point where the last thing we are thinking about is image. Yet Kit's still talking about concerts on the moon. That's image. When we first started we went out blatantly image-creating. That is undeniable, and we have ended up believing much of it…"

He gazed out of the window, comes back with a smile: "But that is only because it worked. Stuff like The Who's pop art… that turned into an explosion, and believe it or not the whole thing started among a tiny group of 20 people who used to gather at the Scene Club just round the corner from here… but each of those 20 was a star in their own area. We just had access to that influence. That is when image is successful… when it reflects life.

"Kit and I… we used to sit and talk about the most absurd thing The Who could do. Like playing at Covent Garden, things like that. But all that is evident by its absence in The Who today.

"I don't think Kit really understood the fact that the group wanted to improve its sound, as well as other things. So we got slightly frustrated despite the fact that he is an incredible producer. I think when Kit realised we were unhappy with him he was hurt and opted out completely rather than take a downward slide. We just generally moved apart. We think completely differently now.

WorldMags.net

July 15, 1971: (l–r) Roger Daltrey, Pete Townshend, Keith Moon and John Entwistle launch their *Who's Next* album at a press party in Chertsey, Surrey



"Like the way I see it, the last five years of heavy managerial activity has gone to put the group where we are… but where we are is a bit of a problem. There's grave danger of a group in our position breaking up, because when any group feels that it's done it all and can't get any more mileage out of what is happening it tends to do the obvious, which is to say that the individual can do his own thing. But we know from watching other groups that is all bull…"

Obviously the group is currently in the throes of a painful period of self-examination. Townshend sees the answer to their debate most emphatically in a group film. It's a project that has sapped a great deal of his energy during the first six months of this year. Three of these months have been spent writing the music. But the plans collapsed, he says, because of a confusion of ideas. Also because he'd spent so much time working on the film that other urgent group matters were being neglected.

With two American tours and a British tour to complete before the end of the year, pressing engagements as much as the confusion of ideas have forced a postponement of the film project to a future date.

"I still feel that the group should be making the film," he says with passion. "There is so much that the whole Who organisation, our whole team, could do in a film. This may sound like blowing our own trumpets, but I don't think there are very many other groups who have the knowledge of stage rock theatre but at the same time the necessary lack of ego to carry it off. At the moment we are leaning heavily on the fact that we are good experienced musicians and can put on a good stage act. But… and I hate to rub it in… what we really need is a film." *Nick Logan*

— NME AUGUST 21 —

EVEN WHEN THEY bomb out with relative flops like "The Seeker" and "Dogs", a Who single is invariably something a little special. I suppose it's a hangover from those amazing Who classics "My Generation", "Substitute", "I'm A Boy" – singles that as mouthpieces of a particular generation's muddied but angry refusal to be slapped down rank on a par with the best of the social compositions of Chuck Berry. For a work like "My Generation" alone, The Who's place in rock's hall of fame is already secured.

Personally, news of each forthcoming Who single has me hoping that Pete Townshend once again will direct himself with the same special insight at today's generation. Widening the view, it seems a shame that a number with the potency of Lennon's "Power To The People" is the exception rather than the rule and that, while musically rock mirrors social change, lyrically it seems reluctant to take up the challenge.

As far as singles are concerned, Townshend says he finds it difficult today to compose for The Who. "I'm thinking of putting out an album of demos of singles," he smiles. "I was listening to some of them through the other day and I thought, 'Christ, aren't some of these bloody lyrics banal?' I think that's one of the reasons I find it so hard to write something which could be a single these days."

The writer now honoured with a listing in American *Who's Who* as composer of the first rock opera leans forward in his chair and grins: "I mean, I'm trying so desperately these days to be a classy composer. What it all boils down to is that all I really am is the songwriter for The Who. Like, it means nothing to be the spokesman for The Who or the guitarist for The Who – mainly because there isn't another guitarist alive who couldn't wipe the floor with me. The Who is bigger as a total thing, if you see what I mean, so maybe it would then be far better if I concentrated on singles. The point is really: where is the audience for singles today? They're not our audiences. I suppose we were a singles band when we made things like 'My Generation' and 'Substitute'."

They were great singles…

"They were really worked out as singles. Even 'Anywhere Anyhow Anywhere' – they were all worked out as pop singles with as much happening in two minutes 30 seconds as possible, which is still the way I likes singles to be."

"Won't Get Fooled Again", the group's current single – and already much more successful than some of its recent predecessors – does go some way towards a return to the quality of "My Generation".

"It's really a bit of a weird song," says Townshend when I bring up the subject of the lyric content. "The first verse sounds like a revolution »

GETTY



WHO ENTER PERIOD OF SELF EXAMINATION

IN the mind of the public, outrageousness and the Who are inseparable. Of the groups in the 60s—when hotel wrecking, beer bathing and being turned off aeroplanes were all part of pop's hellsapoppin' attitude to life and before

band to its status alongside the giants on the strength of each new group venture being that bit more absurd and outrageous than the next.

The "Tommy" album was

window, comes back with a smile; "but that is only because it worked.

"Stuff like the Who's pop art . . . that turned into an explosion and believe it or not the whole thing started among a tiny group of 20 people who used to gather at the Scene Club just round the corner from here . . . but each of those 20 was a star in their own area. We just had access to that influence. That is when image is successful

song and the second like somebody getting tired of it. Basically it's the same vein as 'We're Not Gonna Take It' [on the *Tommy* album]. It is an angry anti… not anti-establishment song… more an anti- anti- song. It's anti people who are negative.

"A song against the revolution because the revolution is only a revolution and a revolution is not going to change anything at all in the long run, and a lot of people are going to get hurt.

"When I wrote 'We're Not Gonna Take It', it was really we're not going to take fascism. 'Won't Get Fooled Again' I wrote at a time when I was getting barraged by people at the Eel Pie Island commune. They live opposite me. There was like a love affair going on between me and them. They dug me because I was like a figurehead… I was in a group… and I dug them because I could see what was going on over there.

"At one point there was an amazing scene where the commune was really working, but then the acid started flowing and I got on the end of some psychotic conversations and I just thought, 'Oh, f–––it.' I call it 'The Glastonbury Syndrome'. It's not where I'm at; this isn't really what I want to be involved in. I don't really want to be talking to people about things flying around in space. I'm very old-fashioned. I'm 26, I've seen and done it all in a lot of ways, and I've come back full circle to being right in the middle of the road.

"And that's not as boring as it sounds. It's, like, terribly exciting. Like a revelation to find that there is a middle of the road which is stable. A lot of people find this incredibly frustrating. It makes me angry when people insist that I have a responsibility to do what they think I should do."

"Won't Get Fooled Again", an extended version with organ fed through a synthesizer, is also on the next Who album, cunningly entitled *Who's Next* and released next week, as the closing cut.

The guitarist – we met up at Track before the group left for the States – volunteered a run-through of the rest of the material, after explaining that initially they recorded enough material for two LPs, then left producer Glynn Johns to programme the selections into one set.

Nick Logan





September 18, 1971: Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend on stage with The Who at The Oval cricket ground, South London

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 23 —

ROGER DALTREY OF the 'Oo lives in a 15th-century mansion equipped with 30 rooms, 18 log fireplaces, 35 acres of land, several horses, an oast house, trout fishing in the lake and the finest view across the Sussex weald courtesy of the National Grid.

"Not a bad bungalow, is it?" says Roger tersely, a Shepherd's Bush mod who doesn't like to mince words.

He fought for his mansion, like others from his kind of environment have fought for street status. But instead of venting frustration and aggression with unrewarding bovver boots, Roger made a career for himself as a singer. He gambled on rock – and won. Now he can escape by fast car from the drudgeries, noise and insecurity of the big city where he was born, and savour the life that until only recently was the sole right of wealthy farmers, the aristocracy and successful criminals.

"At the age of 21 we were in for 60-grand debts – each," says Roger, with a grimace of pain at the memory. Even now, after the years of success, he claims that he got the house "cheap".

The Who saga is well known – the once clashing personalities, the unpredictable burst of creativity, victory in America, survival into another decade. And Roger is proud of the band they said would never make it, never survive. But it doesn't make him satisfied. Criticism of The Who only makes him angry when he claims, "It isn't constructive." He is the first to say when they have played badly, or made a poor record. Today he feels The Who are still searching for the successor to *Tommy*, which gave them one of the greatest stage acts in rock history.

An afternoon and evening at Daltrey Towers and the nearby inn proved a shattering experience. Wives and fiancées were left fuming as Roger embarked on a game of darts that explored every sophistication of the art.

Tanks of lager flowed and the darts whistled over the heads of locals who seemed to gaze quite fondly upon the new squire up at the big house, with his polo neck, white pullover, mud wading boots, pack of dogs and American wife. "I've never seen Roger play darts before," said Heather in a long dress, smiling upon the scene.

But Roger played so well that he managed to thrash the *MM*, incorporating arm muscles developed from spinning microphones.

A slight chilliness detected at Daltrey Towers may have been imagination, but might well have been due to Roger's pique at recent *MM* attacks on The Who. At any rate, he began to thaw soon after we arrived, and cheerfully showed us part of the mansion which sits on the crest of a ridge, "like the 'ouse on 'aunted 'ill".

> "We haven't been together enough lately to get a creative spurt"

Autumn sunshine filtered through the clouds and huge hedges huddled around the house to protect it from the stiffening breeze. Ancient brick paths wound about the garden and across the valley stretched Roger's fields. Two horses could be seen chewing something on the horizon. "Do you ride them?"

"Not half!" says Roger, stomping across priceless carpets, dappled by light through stained glass windows.

"I've been here about four months," he revealed in a downstairs rooms, as he sprawled in antique furniture beneath a massive portrait in oils of Roger Daltrey, lead singer with The

GETTY

WorldMags.net

Who. "I 'ad to clean the chimneys myself. I 'ad to climb up this bleeder, and clear it out with an 'ammer and chisel. I even had to put a garden rake up it. All sorts.

"No, I never really wanted a big house when I was a kid. I was born in Shepherd's Bush – and I never want to go back! I noticed this place was going cheap and now I can stay here, for at least a couple of years. I want to be a farmer. I really want to get out and work at it. Cattle. I've got friends who are into it, and I can learn from them."

Has Roger no… er… musical plans?

"Oh, I want to produce some records. Hopefully I want to do an LP for Steve Ellis." Roger waxed enthusiastic over the talents of the ex-Love Affair singer, who has been staying at the house. "I think we've got a hit single in the can." He was referring to Bent Frame, a group he also produced. "It was called 'Accidents'. But for political reasons it never came out."

Soup was served and Roger warmed up. He listened intently to some new Keith Moon stories that are told where'er journalists and publicists gather, and laughed heartily.

"I've heard Keith's house is wrecked already," he offered. "Someone told me it looks derelict. Put it this way – it hasn't improved."

Why do The Who live so far apart?

"We just moved to where we could find houses, that's all."

How was life in The Who?

"The work has been getting hard. It's getting harder, keeping on the road, and keeping up the ideas and enthusiasm. The drive is still there. I just think we should come off the road for six months. We had a short while off, sure, but we need time off to think. We need to get off the road and work out a whole new chunk of material."

A film featuring the group is the next major project. "We start in January, and Pete is writing the music. The film should have been *Tommy* when the LP came out. That's when there should have been a film. In the film we do what we are good at – and that's playing. We'll get more involved as it progresses. It's going to be called *Guitar Farm*, but I don't want to say too much about the story."

The last film I saw of The Who was of them as short-haired mods known as The High Numbers. "Oh – that old film clip! That's really funny. It really hurt cutting our hair for that. It was when we were discovered by Kit Lambert. We didn't really have short hair at all."

Had Roger seen the recent book on The Who?

"What's it like? Very intellectual?"

Were The Who men fed up with their material? "*Tommy* was the greatest stage act any group ever had. What we had to follow was not good enough. It's history now. But Pete is working on something and he'll get it out. We haven't been together enough lately to get a creative spurt. We have been going down incredibly well on gigs, but I wish I could put my finger on what was wrong. There's nothing I like more than being on stage and having a good time. But it is so hard to follow *Tommy*. It's not dissatisfaction – I don't know what it is."

Roger has the task of compiling The Who's stage routine and says, "I try to get a flow of numbers. We use some tapes on stage now, which are a bit strange, and only in two numbers. But it's better than getting another musician in or playing the poxy synthesizer. At one time it was in the air for Pete not to play guitar any more, and just play keyboards. But you can't beat just guitar, bass and drums."

A mental picture of Peter Townshend smashing up Moog synthesizers was quickly dispatched. So will there be any surprises from future Who?

"No, we hope to play better than we have ever played before. Cup of tea, Heather, CUP OF TEA, 'EVER!" Roger suddenly bawled at the top of his voice that echoed through the 30 rooms. "That's the trouble with this house. You never know where anybody is. The thing is, you can't please all the people all the time. Roy Hollingworth (who had recently written a critical live review of the band) seems to think you can."

What did he think of The Who's new single?

"I haven't heard it. What's it like? No – I really like it, but I haven't heard the shortened version. It can't do any harm. We've got a lot of material ready. What we really need is a new direction. I like our last LP. It's good for what it is, treading water. You know, rock used to be a right laugh. The trouble is the rock press have made it all serious. Fifty per cent of rock is having a good time. All that slagging that groups like Led Zeppelin get – they don't deserve it at all. That criticism of us – it was as if we were a bloody great rip-off, and when 300,000 people read that, it matters to me. The kids would sooner believe what they read in the papers than what they see with their own eyes." *Chris Welch* •

"I had a rough script"

NME AUG 21 Pete Townshend goes track by track through studio album five, *Who's Next*, and explains how it derived from a recent live/film experiment at London's Young Vic theatre.

Baba O'Riley

This was a number I wrote while I was doing these experiments with tapes on the synthesizer. Among my plans for the concert and film of the concert at the Young Vic was to take a person out of the audience and feed information – height, weight, astrological details, beliefs and behaviour, etc – about that person into the synthesizer.

The synthesizer would then select notes from the pattern of that person. It would be like translating a person into music. On this particular track I programmed details about the life of Meher Baba, and that provides the backing for the number.

Love Ain't For Keeping

That is the current set opener, one that we did on acoustic guitars.

Bargain

One of the best numbers on the album.

My Wife

A John Entwistle song. It's a really good number. I don't know whether I should say this, but it's much better than a lot of the stuff on John's own album. There's more meat in it. It became quite clear when we were doing this album how much experience John has gained from doing his own album. He did the horn parts in half an hour, whereas before it used to take him days.

The Song Is Over

This would originally have come at the end of the film. I had a rough script where all the Young Vic audience would dance and dance and all freak out, and then disappear. Then you would have heard this song. Nicky Hopkins plays piano here.

Getting In Tune

Also features Nicky Hopkins and is another stage number.

Going Mobile

Again connected with the script. I've got this big Dodge bus which we use to travel round in, and this is just about the joys of travelling in it. We did this with acoustic bass and drums and

I did the vocal because the words are real tongue twisters.

Behind Blue Eyes

Really the one that is the least Who-like. It was going to be the single but we thought it was too much out of character.

Nick Logan

WHO'S NEXT
TRACK BY TRACK
THE WHO



WorldMags.net

"Look, who wants to die?"

CURTIS MAYFIELD's music – personal, political, uplifting – is a velvet glove concealing an iron fist. A quietly spoken man of great industry who plays for the military as well as the public, Curtis is growing in reputation, as his productions are in sophistication. "I believe that anything that is happening should be told as it is," he says.

— MELODY MAKER JULY 3 —

ONE OF AMERICA'S most important writer/musicians made his first visit to Britain this week. The man's name is Curtis Mayfield, and the fact that most people didn't even know he was coming is a sad reflection on our scale of values. For over the past 13 years, first as a member of The Impressions and now as a solo artist, he has laid down a body of work every bit as valid and moving as anything produced by our contemporary rock heroes.

The fact that he is black helps to account for his relative obscurity over here. Also, he neither plays at 5,000 watts nor turns out albums of self-obsessed songs supported by this week's Laurel Canyon superstars. But his neglect is our loss. For he is the Thinking Man's Soul Man. Over the years, in a series of unpretentious but beautifully simple and true songs, he has mirrored the changing mood of black America – from the fantasy of "Gypsy Woman" (recently reworked with great success by Brian Hyland) to the gospelly, inspirational "It's Alright" and "People Get Ready" to the harsher realities of "If There's A Hell Below" (from his first solo album, *Curtis*). »

GETTY

WorldMags.net

Curtis Mayfield backstage at *Top Of The Pops* in July 1971: "My split with The Impressions was not through personal disagreements or anything like that"

WorldMags.net

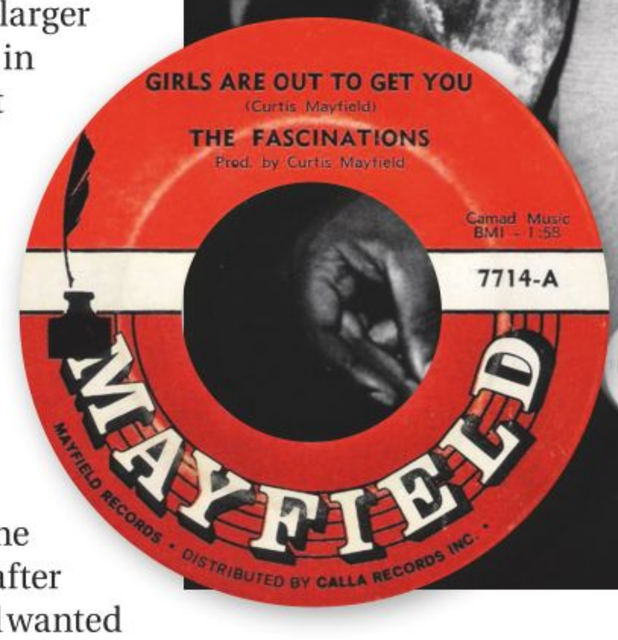
1971

JULY – SEPTEMBER

His is a voice from the ghetto, but it's a long way from the apocalyptic scream of The Last Poets or the aggressive sloganeering of James Brown. He seems to represent the silent majority of black Americans who just keep on pushing. And as president of his own successful company, Curtom Records, he is an important figurehead in the black community.

His message songs, like "Choice Of Colours", "Mighty Mighty" and "This Is My Country", have been called politically naive, but his 1967 "We're A Winner" with The Impressions was one of the very first black pride songs and was banned by some radio stations.

If he is guilty of naivety, then it is surely a result of his sincerity. For talking to him one gets the impression, as an American writer has said, "that he never really left the church choir where his emotional involvement with music began. And perhaps Mayfield himself doesn't really think of his audience as anything but a congregation, larger and more varied than the one in Chicago where he started, but still in need of a message: the inspiration that only music can give."



After 12 years of steady success with The Impressions, things started happening in a surprising way for Mayfield after he decided to quit the group last year. Then, in a phone call to the *MM*, he said that he was tired after so many years on the road and wanted to spend more time in the studio, writing and producing for other acts.

But while in the studios he laid down tracks which turned into one of the best albums of the year, called *Curtis*. Musically it was more adventurous than anything he has done before, with a stunning use of extended percussion passages, and lyrically it was a crystallisation of all his recent themes. The album was an enormous success in the States and has forced him to get back into live gigs.

"You can't predict your fate, and it looks like I'm right back out here all over again," said Curtis this week at his London hotel. "My split with The Impressions was not through personal disagreements or anything like that. It was a reasoned-out thing. I sat with the fellows and decided I was gonna come off the road.

"We brought in a new fellow called Leroy Hudson who incidentally is a five-year music student from Howard University. People say he sounds a lot like me, and the funny thing is he even looks a lot like me. It all worked out perfectly well, and if it hadn't been for the success of the *Curtis* album everything would have laid just as planned. However, we're not unhappy about what's happened!"

Curtis was in Britain to promote his new double album *Curtis/Live!* and to play several USAF bases. Sadly, apart from London's Speakeasy on Monday night, he played no other dates.

It was, surprisingly, his first visit here – partly because of a dislike of flying, which he only recently conquered, and partly because previous plans to bring The Impressions over here have always fallen through. He brought with him the four musicians who play on the *Live!* album. Three of them have been with him since Impressions days – Craig McMullen (guitar), Tyrone McCullen (drums) and Lucky Scott (bass). The fourth is an incredible Chicago session man called "Master" Henry Gibson (bongos, congas, tumbas), who is heard on the *Curtis* album, notably on "Move On Up".

"I first used that percussion thing on 'Check Out Your Mind' [one of his last singles with The Impressions] and at that time I was beginning to get into new sounds: Santana, I suppose, were a big influence. But what really got me into that was Master Henry himself; he is so excellent at laying in rhythms whatever the song might be, in fact, I plan to record the four of them as a group."

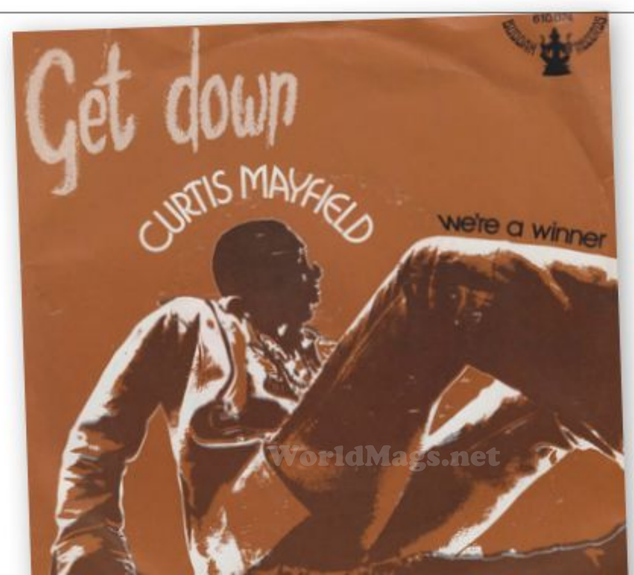
The *Curtis/Live!* album was recorded at New York's Bitter End a few months ago. It was his first live album – and his first live gig without The Impressions.

"I had just had the new group together about a week. We had only rehearsed to do a press party at the Bitter End and we decided to carry on and do four days there. I was pretty scared."

In retrospect his split with The Impressions was a natural step. His songs were becoming more personal and direct and less suitable for framing in a group harmony context.

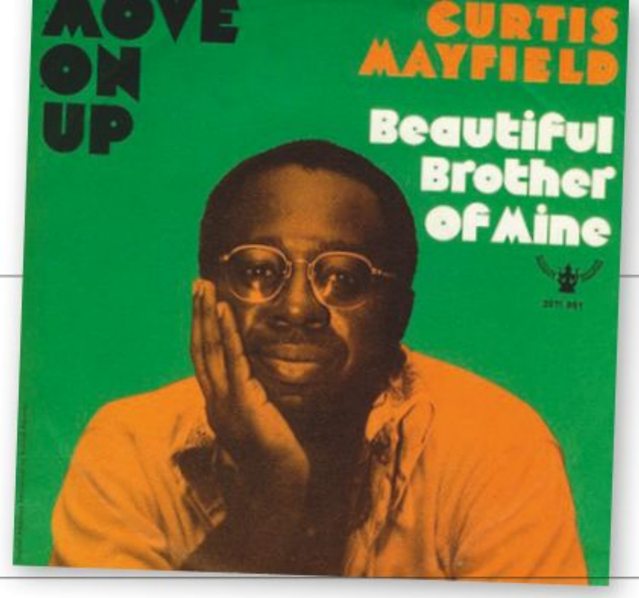
"I find that as an individual artist I can analyse myself and be more serious in my songs without

> "First and foremost I'm an artist. I don't claim to be a preacher"



WorldMags.net

CHRIS WALTER



jeopardising anyone else's livelihood," said Curtis in his soft, precise tones.

And in this, the age of solo performers/writers like Taylor, Young, Nyro, Mitchell and co, the move has probably made him more acceptable to young white audiences.

"I think perhaps I'm being more accepted by white audiences, yes, but then The Impressions also were always well received because we were for real; we tried to be honest even maybe at the sacrifice of greater sales if we had just recorded things on a commercial basis.

"Our song 'We're A Winner' was banned by many radio stations. Of course, when you make such statements you run into programme directors who feel that this isn't what he wants his audience to hear even though it might be true.

"I look upon 'We're A Winner' as a song which anyone could listen to and take pride in being a part of, especially those minority groups who are actually experiencing the problems we have in our country. The blacks and the Puerto Ricans and others take these kinds of songs and it helps them create inspiration and pride for themselves."

He also ran into trouble in certain quarters with "Stone Junkie", a track from the *Curtis/Live!* album. "I believe that anything that is happening should be told as it is. I could sit around here all day singing '*Love, love, love*' and '*Shake it, shake it*' and '*We are all havin' a good time*', but the young are not fools. There's no need to play games today.

"What keeps me going is that everywhere I go, from black and white, people say, 'Hey, keep on doing your thing, we respect how you say it, it's the truth.' Or if there's something they don't dig, they don't just accept it, they come up and say, 'Hey, what do you mean with those lyrics?'"

Mayfield's work has inevitably brought him into contact with black political groups, but he declines to tie himself to any particular banner. "Just as there are many who don't want to play my songs because they look upon them as militant, so there are many different black groups who do want to play up on it for the same reason.

"But first and foremost I'm an artist. I don't claim to be a preacher or anyone trying to start a great movement. I'm just trying to tell it like it is. Of course there are many black movements that I'm sympathetic with, particularly the ones to help keep the young from involving themselves with drugs."

After the usual gospel-choir training, Mayfield's career began in 1958 with The Impressions' first hit, "For Your Precious Love" (written by Jerry Butler, who was with the group at that time).

"After six months Jerry went on to do a solo thing and for a year after he left us things were very rough for us. In fact so rough that we split up for about six months and I worked for Jerry and his guitarist and helped him write some of his early hits like 'He Will Break Your Heart'."

Things picked up for The Impressions and Mayfield went on to write and sing dozens of hits for them. He also wrote and produced for artists like Gene Chandler, Major Lance, Walter Jackson, The Five Stairsteps, and, more recently, the late Baby Huey. And on one of his earlier record labels, Mayfield Records, he cut a Detroit girl group called The Fascinations doing "Girls Are Out To Get You" – which is currently getting a new lease of life over here on the Mojo label.

"Yeah, I just recently heard about that myself. That goes back about seven years ago; since then the girls have broken up, but now we're gonna try and form them back together."

Today Mayfield lives with his wife, two sons and daughter Sharon (who appears on the *Curtis* sleeve) in Chicago and they have another house in Atlanta where he hopes eventually to build a recording studio. He hopes he hasn't lost his roots, but he doesn't push the point. "I don't want to play upon that 'Hey yeah, I'm from the ghetto and this is why you gotta take me'. True enough, being black and not having been born with that silver spoon I know what it's all about and I guess my songs reflect that. But I don't like to classify myself, because what I am today I may not be tomorrow.

"I try to write for everyone, but of course being black and knowing that we as a mass are the poorest I want to see our people build ourselves up and pull in not only the money but the respect and the equality as people.

"It may seem to some that my songs are more controversial now, but really it's just that the world has gotten that much more complicated. I started out singing 'It's All Right' at a time when we maybe didn't feel the realities around us. But times change and today I'd feel ridiculous singing a lightweight doop-de-doop song with all these problems that we have all around us.

"I write my songs anywhere because it has to be through some experiences that's inspired me; usually something that I've heard someone say. I don't think anyone really influenced me to start writing. I've written ever since I can remember; I wrote 'Gypsy Woman' when I was 14 and 'Rainbow' [a hit for Gene Chandler] when I was 12."

Curtis got up, preparing to leave for an afternoon's shopping in the King's Road. Judging from the ultra-hip yellow leather outfit he was wearing, there was little they could teach him about style.

"You know," he said, "I won't sing nothing if it don't fit! The Impressions recorded many different types of songs but I think most fans would agree we laid it down natural, whether it was a standard or an original. The important thing is to have a style, so whatever you do, people know it's you, and I feel I have been blessed with that."

> "It's important to have a style, so whatever you do, people know it's you"

— MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 27 —

IT IS A sign of the times that new albums by black artists like Curtis Mayfield, Isaac Hayes and Sly Stone are awaited by a large section of the rock audience with as much eagerness as the latest offering by Lennon, Dylan or The Band. These artists have broken out of the ghetto in every sense. Not through any compromise on their part, but through sheer determination – and an increasing awareness on the part of the general audience that what they are saying, both musically and lyrically, is The Truth.

For 15 years, the music Curtis Mayfield made with The Impressions was confined chiefly to a black audience. Today, his new solo album will be guaranteed a far wider hearing. After two best-selling solo albums, and a recent chart smash with "Move On Up", the new set, titled *Roots* is a certain success, particularly as the single from it, "We Got To Have Peace", is already climbing the chart.

Speaking from his home in Atlanta, Georgia this week, Curtis agreed that the new album seemed a little lighter and more optimistic in mood than previously.

"I think that it reflects the mood of the people after the last 10 years of what we've been going through… It doesn't say, 'Hey, everything's OK, we can let up now', but it does suggest that maybe we can get things done without taking them so hard and head-on.

"Going round the colleges, it seems to me that that's the way a lot of the kids are thinking. After all the unrest when they were showing the authorities all the problems and mistakes that had been made, they seem to be cooling off a little and involving themselves more with their education.

"It seems that any changes in the future will have to be made through reason and persuasion rather than turmoil and violence. Also, this album doesn't come on quite so strong about race, except perhaps on 'Beautiful Brother Of Mine'. Really, I just think and hope it's an album of nice listening."»



We got to have Curtis

IT IS a sign of the times that ne albums by Black artists lik Curtis Mayfield, Isaac Hayes an Sly Stone are awaited by a larg section of the Rock audience wit as much eagerness as the lates offerings by Lennon, Dylan or Th Band.

WorldMags.net

Musically, the album maintains the same high standard of playing and arranging which distinguished the first solo album, 'Curtis'.

"I used my rhythm section, Henry, Tyrone, Craig and Lucky [Henry Gibson, percussion, Tyrone McCullen, drums, Craig McMullen, guitar, Lucky Scott, bass – the unit we first heard on Curtis' recent live set] but the brass and the strings are the same musicians who have worked with me over the years. In fact I went back and used Johnny Pate [the man who arranged all the early Impressions hits] on several of the charts. Johnny has been working freelance in New York for some time now."

Who, I asked, played the fine tenor sax which embellishes tracks like "Move On Up" and "We Got To Have Peace"? "Oh, that's Clifford Davis. He's been with me for some time and he always manages to complement what we're trying to do beautifully."

The vocal back-up work is credited to Mr and Mrs Michael Hawkins and Mr and Mrs Leroy Hutson – a lineup which, as Curtis explained involves a little bit of history. Leroy Hutson replaced Curtis as lead singer with The Impressions and both Hutson and Michael Hawkins sang with a certain Donny Hathaway, who is currently getting the big superstar push from Atlantic.

The Mayfield Singers were recorded by Curtis for his Mayfield label back in the early '60s (he didn't actually sing with them) and released several tracks, including a version of "I've Been Trying". "But we never really were able to get them across to the public," said Curtis. "They were always a little ahead of their time… they were into a Fifth Dimension thing before the public were really ready for it."

Curtis is still very much involved with The Impressions and is currently working on a new album for them. He says it will be a "concept" album, similar in feel to their recent single, "Inner City Blues". That song was taken from Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*, an album which Curtis admires very much and which, along with his own, seems to represent the new trend in black music.

"People expect an artist to have a sense of direction now. You can't just shove 10 tracks on an album and push it out any more. You can't get away with albums full of B-sides and offcuts. You have to have an album which has something to say, and that's what we're shooting at."

In the States, the single he's chosen to release from his new album is "Get Down", while in Britain it's "We Got To Have Peace".

"I felt it was more appropriate for Britain because really that's where it started: I first sang the song for the troops when I did that tour for the Air Force bases over there earlier this year. They seemed to like it very well, and all round I think it's my favourite cut on the album.

"It's really a very simple song. It just says, 'Look, who wants to die?' I guess it started with me thinking about all the soldiers who had died in Vietnam and thinking there's got to be another way of solving our differences. People have their prejudices and their racial hang-ups, but basically, whatever their colour, people just want to get along.

"No, I never had any trouble from the authorities about singing that song for the troops, and I sang it at every base we played. It's a very warming song to sing…and you know, the soldiers were all for it!"

> "Basically, whatever their colour, people just want to get along"

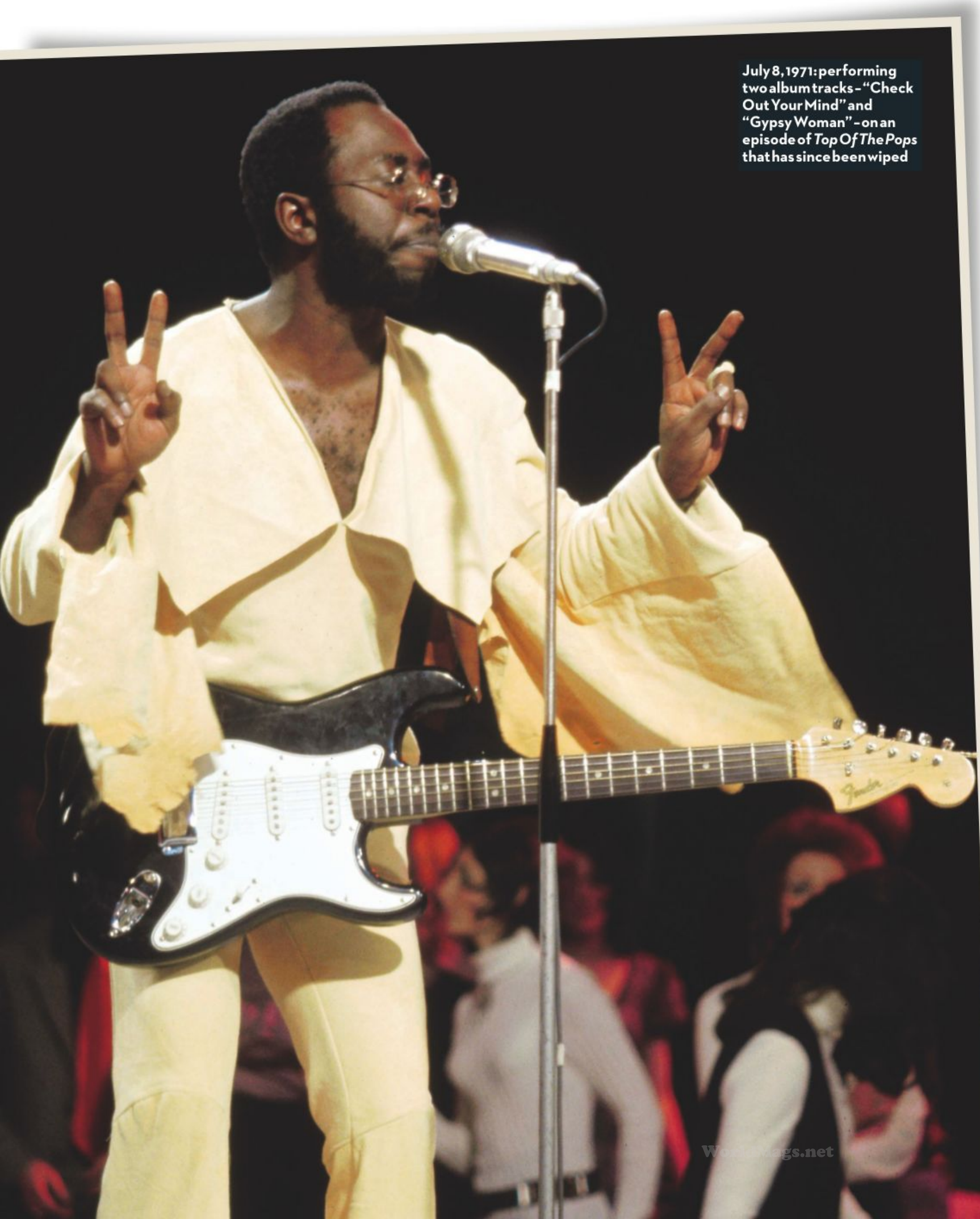
After spending most of his life in the northern cities, Curtis recently bought an old house in Atlanta, which he has renovated. He does most of his writing there, putting down ideas on tape with the help of a guitar. He hopes eventually to build a studio there, set up a subsidiary label to record local artists.

Contrary to the usual idea of the South being more race-conscious than the North, Curtis finds Atlanta a very agreeable city. "It's a very busy, progressive town and I guess it's too busy being progressive to worry about anything else, which makes it real nice for all sorts of people to live and work here."

Besides The Impressions, Curtis is currently working with a singer called Patty Miller and a group called Ruby Jones, whose lead singer, he says, sounds a lot like Janis Joplin and whose album is getting a lot of FM airplay.

He also plans to reunite with Billy Butler, who was on one of the rosters of excellent artists like Walter Jackson and Major Lance who Curtis wrote and produced for on the old Okeh label in the early '60s. Billy is the brother of Jerry Butler, who sang lead with The Impressions way back before taking up a highly successful solo career.

Curtis is set to make his first proper tour of Europe in the New Year, and will be in Britain in January. "I'll be bringing Henry,



July 8, 1971: performing two album tracks – "Check Out Your Mind" and "Gypsy Woman" – on an episode of *Top Of The Pops* that has since been wiped

GETTY

WorldMags.net

ALBUMS

REVIEW

1971

Benign intelligence

MM JUL 10/DEC 4 A live double LP taped in a New York nightclub and a second solo studio set – Curtis' 1971 albums assessed.



Curtis Mayfield Curtis/Live! BUDDAH SUPER

Curtis Mayfield, along with Sly Stone and Isaac Hayes, is one of the key figures responsible for pushing forward the frontiers of black music in recent years. But while Sly borrowed from white rock and Hayes leans heavily on traditional concepts of orchestration, Curtis, it seems to me, is creating something entirely new.

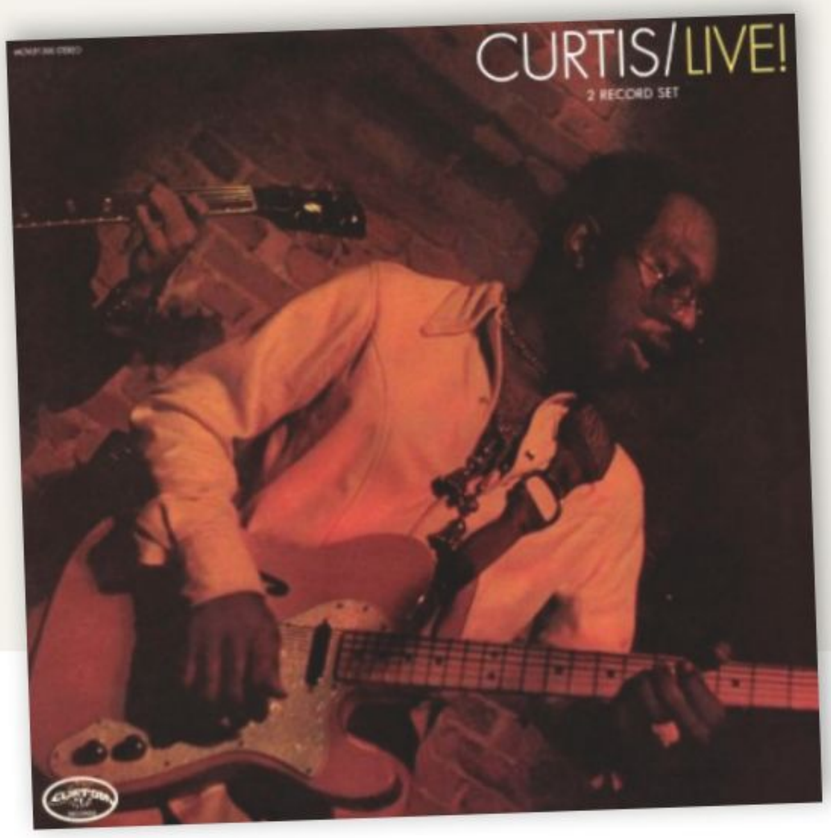
He has always, even with The Impressions, stood out about the mainstream of soul music, avoiding cliche and histrionics and even using such fundamental devices as melisma with restraint. His approach has been pure and simple and intrinsically soulful.

But now he is extending this concept. Like his first solo album, this second set owes nothing to traditional ideas of soul music. Vocally, musically and lyrically, it is in a world of its own. For this set at New York's Bitter End club Curtis used only four musicians: Henry Gibson (bongos, congas, tumbas), Craig McMullen (guitar), Tyrone McCullen (drums) and Joseph Scott (bass). But unlike conventional soul, where the various instruments form a clearly layered sound, these men merge together into an organic whole, through whose inner depths and spaces Mayfield's vocal floats naturally and effortlessly. McMullen's guitar throughout is a model of economy and tasteful understatement, and Gibson contributes some stunning percussion passages; but never is one instrument allowed to dominate.

The overall mood of the album is restrained and low-key, well suited to the thoughtful nature of the material, which is mostly familiar: "Mighty Mighty", "People Get Ready", "Check Out Your Mind", "Gypsy Woman", "The Makings Of You", "We People Who Are Darker Than Blue", "If There's A Hell Below" and "We've Only Just Begun". Those who find some of Mayfield's writing politically naive will probably say the same about the three new songs here – "I Plan To Stay A Believer", "Star And Stare" and "Stone Junkie" – but it's worth noting that the far from sycophantic audience do not share such cynicism.

Mayfield's lyrics, in fact, are better than ever: full of sharp, unexpected and telling images. But then the whole album is like that, communicating heart to heart in an unexpected, inspired and inspiring way.

Alan Lewis, Melody Maker July 10



Curtis Mayfield Roots

BUDDAH SUPER

Curtis has roots all right: stretching back through 15 years of dues-paying with The Impressions, and that's what lends credibility to his current position as black culture hero and social commentator.

In truth, there are times when his messages of brotherly love, worthy though they are, slide dangerously close to being fey or trite. It's hard to think of anyone else who could get away with them – but Curtis does, simply because they are consistent with what he has been saying all along.

His appeals for love and black pride are not part of a new "significant" image: they are filled with the same spirit of benign gentle intelligence which has been present in everything he has ever recorded, right from his early Impressions hits like "It's Alright" and "People Get Ready". Thus, "We Got To Have Peace", in other hands, could easily have sounded trite: from Curtis it's not only convincing but positively uplifting.

Communicating heart to heart in an unexpected, inspired and inspiring way

Similarly, his subtle, magical touch is present in the music itself. As colleague Richard Williams has said, Curtis spreads it a bit thin sometimes, and certainly the melodic ideas behind many of his songs are fairly slight. Always, though, Curtis' skill keeps the songs floating and flowing, and always he lends a touch of imagination, like the jaws harp on "Keep On Keeping On" or the (full-size) harp on "We Got To Have Peace". The musicianship and arranging throughout, indeed, is of a very high order.

If you've got Curtis' first solo album you'll find this set musically very similar and every bit as satisfying. Lyrically, its a little less 'political' – "Now You're Gone" and "Love To Keep You In My Mind", for instance, are simply beautiful love songs of the kind he might have cut with The Impressions. If you haven't got his first set, for God's sake don't miss this one too.

Alan Lewis, Melody Maker December 4

Craig, Tyrone and Lucky with me… Oh, by the way, I'm cutting an album on them too. Lucky sings, but basically it will be them doing chants behind their heavy percussion thing."

Who is Curtis listening to at the moment?

"Well, I was very interested to hear the new Sly & The Family Stone album. My interest is basically as a producer… I like to keep up with the new sounds that are happening. I'm very interested in what people are doing with this gospel-rock thing, too. *Jesus Christ Superstar* seems to have been very influential and now Motown have just released a gospel album. And, of course, Isaac Hayes is doing very, very well with *Shaft*… and he really deserves it. Matter of fact, we're thinking of going into films too… we're in the process of setting up a company to make specials for TV and, hopefully, a full-length film."

With all his business interests as head of Curtom Records, together with his own performing and recording and his work as writer and producers for other artists, Curtis admits that he's busier than he's ever been in his life. Does he see the day when Curtis the businessman takes over from Curtis the musician?

"Well, in a purely commercial sense that would be satisfying because it would mean that we had achieved our goal of becoming a really great company. But no… I can't see it happening, because that's not where my head is. I'll always be content to leave most of that to my manager and concentrate on the music. I could hardly do anything else…" *Alan Lewis* •

WorldMags.net



TRACKS REVIEW 1971

"Take it off. It's some chick singer"

MM SEPT 25 Over three successive weeks, Emerson, Lake & Palmer review the singles. First up, Greg Lake.

The Delfonics
Ready Or Not Here I Come BELL

It should be commercially successful. I have heard it a thousand times before, this type of song anyway. Somebody arranged it and session men came in, yawned, and then drank tea while making it. I quite liked the brass. Some of the brass lines were quite attractive. I don't watch *Top Of The Pops*, so I couldn't begin to guess who it was.

Lee Michaels
Do You Know What I Mean A&M

If Mick Jagger recorded it, it would be a hit. It sounded like Bob Dylan in parts. I didn't like it, though. The production was very thin. That might have been what they were after, but I don't think so. It's so repetitive that it became boring. That line "*know what I mean*" was repeated over and over again and it reminded me of the nudge-nudge thing in *Monty Python*. It could be commercially successful. Do people still dance to things like that?

Herb Alpert **Jerusalem** A&M

It's so repetitive. It started out with promise, and had it actually gone into something it might have been better. I can't quite understand what the composer was doing repeating the riff so many times, unless it was to create a bolero effect, but you can't do that in two-and-a-half minutes. It was well put together. Who was it... Herb Alpert?

The Elgins
Put Yourself In My Place TAMLA

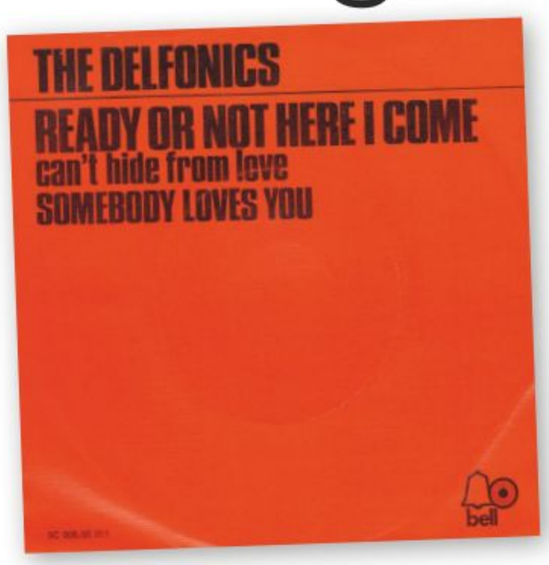
It's The Supremes or Martha & The Vandals or whatever you call them. Something like that. They're all the same. They all sound the same because the tambourine comes from the left-hand speaker with the snare drum on the offbeat. Some of these Tamla things are very good. They get someone really good in to do the session, especially the bass players. But they all sound the same. There is no point in making any more. They've made enough now.

Paul Stookey **Wedding Song**
WARNER BROS

This is nice – well performed. It seems meaningful lyrics. It was delivered with emotion, which is very rare in singles. Mostly it's contrived emotion. Technically it was well produced. It may not be as commercially successful as the others, but I'd like to hear an



GETTY



album by this singer. I don't know who it is, but it's the best record you've played yet.

Clodagh Rodgers
Lady Love Bug RCA

Take it off. It's some chick singer and she ought to join Mungo Jerry. The double tracking on the voice was so poor. I'm not impressed at all.

Friendship **Stop Living Alone** B&C

(*Laughter*) Take it off. It lacked any character or anything at all. It was so flat it was laughable. I just don't want to know.

Cher **Gypsys, Tramps And Thieves**
MCA

It's a great song and it's sung very well. But the arrangement and the way it is played had more commercial motivations than artistic motivations, which is a pity because whoever wrote it and the singer sound more artistically motivated. There is a lovely line about a baby being born and pennies begin thrown. It would be better with a Joni Mitchell type of production.

MM OCT 2 Carl Palmer

Carl is the eternal enthusiast, and it takes a lot to dampen his good spirits. He tore into his Blind Date session like one of his all-action drum solos with ELP.

Barclay James Harvest
Mocking Bird HARVEST

Quite nice and the tambourine sounds good. I like the arrangement, but I don't like the words much. It doesn't really make it as a single. That line about the mocking bird singing is a bit repetitive. He's sung it about 50 times already. Who is it? Well, happy birthday!

The Move **Chinatown**
HARVEST

Gong could have been a bit better. The Move? Ah, I knew them well! Roy Wood's voice gave it away – very high pitched. As far as The Move go, their best record was "I Can Hear The Grass Grow". I don't think this has catchy enough lyrics.

Melanie **Alexander Beetle** BUDDAH

Family Favourites! It's like "The Fox and The Goose" song. Did you ever hear that? Hmmm. It can't be English. It's the sort of thing they play in the middle of the sets at a college gig to keep the hippies brewing. Oh, I can't get into that – no way. I think a gum shield may help her.

T. REX **Rip Off**
FROM THE LP *ELECTRIC WARRIOR*, FLY

Must be the elf himself. Marc Bolan? Clarity is very bad and so is the separation. Different from what he's done before and it's quite nice and tough. It's amazing for T. Rex!

R Dean Taylor
Ain't It A Sad Thing RARE EARTH

Nice voices – it's the best one yet, but it doesn't do anything. That's probably your actual pop hit. Leave the whistling out. It must be Jack Smith strikes again.

Tony Williams
Some Hip Drum Shit AND **Lonesome Wells** FROM THE LP *EGO*, POLYDOR

It's different to what he's done before. The intro goes on a bit too long! He should come in with it. Oh well. How good? I think he plays more on his past albums *Emergency* and *Turn It Over*. I've heard this album a lot, and he seems to be playing more straight rock'n'roll. He was more spacey with Jack Bruce, and I prefer that.

WorldMags.net

MM OCT 9 Keith Emerson

Keith arrived for his record session on a tiny Japanese motorcycle which does 30mph and 150mpg. "It's the only way to get around town," he explained. "Soon the car will fade away."

The Byrds Glory, Glory CBS

I still can't quite suss out the singer. I'd say it was The Byrds. B-i-n-g! Their last album I bought was *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*. The piano intro was like the intro to a Joe Cocker tune. But I like the piano steaming along. The guitar solo didn't happen.

They seem to be on a Jesus trip – laying their burden down. It's funny; we didn't come across many Jesus freaks in the States. It seems to have become commercial. But one gig we did, somebody came on stage and started to preach to everybody, which was a bit embarrassing: "When you listen to Emerson, Lake & Palmer, remember, He's looking down on your children." Because of the record player you are using, there is a lot of sibilance on the voice. When is the *MM* going to get a good stereo?

King Biscuit Boy
29 Ways PARAMOUNT

What? Very confusing. The sound is so fuzzy, the sax sounds like a guitar. You want to get your grease and leather gear on for this record to bop to at a party. Very jumpy rhythm section.

Steeleye Span
Rave On and Reels B&C

(*Laughs heartily*) You really have to listen to things all the way through. If I'd said something at the beginning I'd have really put this down. That really is great (*during "Reels"*). This throws it all in a different light. This is where they are at. The first part was just... well, weird. I dig the fiddle. It's great. I think the drummer is playing spoons. That's something Carl wants to get into. He often entertains us at restaurant tables. I'd say it was Steeleye Span. No, I didn't look, in all honesty. I'll tell you how I guessed. I had the radio on the other night and they were playing some Irish fiddle. It was John Peel's show. I dig their style of fiddle playing a lot.

Keef Hartley
You Can't Take It With You FROM THE LP *LITTLE BIG BAND*, DERAM

(*Listens intently*) Oh, Grady Tate drum passage. It's like that Jimmy Smith thing, "Walk On The Wild Side". Is it Chicago? Yeah, it's good. I like the intelligent way the drummer is playing. He's laying down a nice top cymbal beat and stabbing occasionally with his left stick. He doesn't interrupt the soloist too much and just makes it flow evenly. That is a very good trombone solo! And that trumpet is going really high there. I'd say it was an American band, because I haven't heard brass arrangements played like that by English bands, with such fluency. The solos are very intelligently constructed and the arrangements are similar to Chicago. Who is it? Good lord! This is really cooking. I didn't know English brass players could play like that. And it's recorded live at the Marquee? Wow.



Olivia Newton John
Banks Of The Ohio PYE

It's very predictable, both words and music. It's not necessary to listen to the end, because you know how it will end anyway. It has a storyline, and a repetitive refrain, which is all you can say. It has a good example of harmony singing with a good bass singer who can go really deep. I don't think I've heard such a deep voice. But I can't say who the chick is singing. Who is it? Oh no, really? Goddam – she really has changed! It's a real drag, because she can really sing. It sounds like a traditional melody and it's so predictable. Was it produced by Bruce Welch? He produced the last two very intelligently. But this is a straight mix. It's a shame.

Seatrain
Gramercy, The State Of Georgia's Mind AND Protestant Preacher
FROM THE LP *THE MARBLEHEAD MESSENGER*, CAPITOL

Somebody else using a fiddle. Is it a new English band? American? If I'm going to listen to this style, I prefer Steeleye Span. Yeah, take that track off if you like. The Band. A lot of use of gospel piano recently. I guess Leon Russell has got everybody onto that. I don't really like this. Just a pleasant record, that's all you can say.



ALBUMS REVIEW 1971

ALBUMS

Joni Mitchell Blue REPRISE

Yes, it's all here: the plangent guitar, the moody, swirling piano, the wistful, yearning songs, the beautiful blue sleeve with the brooding cult-image portrait. Everything we need for another volume of vicarious heartache.

Guess that's a pretty sound way to begin a review of what, in many ways, is Joni's most perfect album. But then her songs have come to mean so much to me over the years that my reactions to this album are hopelessly subjective and ambivalent. The problem, I suppose, is one of empathy. Her songs are autobiographical and one's reaction to them depends to a large extent on how far one can relate to the experiences she describes. On her previous albums she has dealt with the joys and sorrows of love; the communication has been direct and often (particularly on her first album, which dealt with the aftermath of her unhappy marriage) sharply poignant.

But now, as they say, the scene changes. The success of those songs has made her a rock star, a member of the new elite, able to fly on a whim from Laurel Canyon to Amsterdam or Spain or the Aegean Islands. The songs here reflect the hang-ups of such an existence and, for me at least, it's hard to relate to them. There is little pain or passion here: where once she described the nightmare of city life in "*Nathan La Franeer*", she now muses on the sweet dilemma of being stuck in Paris when she wants to be in California.

It's an inevitable process, and one which has already affected artists like James Taylor, Neil Young and Van Morrison. We elect our heroes because they tell us truths about life, but their very success divorces them from our field of experience. We go on digging them only by becoming, in effect, vicarious rock stars.

None of it is Joni's fault, of course. Her songs continue to reflect her own reality, but where once the truths she distilled were universal, the songs here tend to be inward-looking. The slightly claustrophobic atmosphere is underlined by the cosy presence of Messrs Stephen Stills and James Taylor.

But if her lyrics are less satisfying, her songs are musically (and in particular, melodically) stronger and more assured than ever. Each song seems not to have been worked out but to have been born whole and perfect and complete with shining guitar and velvety piano. The songs are concerned with the men ("All I Want", "My Old Man", "A Case Of You") and places ("California") or both ("Carey") in her restless life and several express an underlying theme: a love/hate relationship with the rock milieu, voiced in these lines from "A Case Of You": "*I'm frightened of the Devil and I'm drawn to those that aren't afraid*". Her singing is more adventurous than ever, soaring and swooping in the space of a single syllable in a way that recalls Laura Nyro.

It is, perhaps, as a singer of richly contoured, beautifully singable songs, rather than anything more profound, that she now has her greatest strength. All I know is that despite everything I've said above, this LP hasn't been off my turntable in five days. *Alan Lewis, MM July 10*

GETTY



WorldMags.net



John Lennon at home at Tittenhurst Park near Ascot in 1971, in the room the video for "Imagine" was shot



JOHN LENNON is notionally helping YOKO ONO promote her book. Talk turns to The Beatles, Paul McCartney – and Lennon's own great new record, *Imagine*, which may feature a number about Paul. "Paul's mistake was he tried to take it all..." Later in the year, the pair return to the fray. "In the States, we're treated like artists," Lennon says, "which we are."

"This'll show 'em, the bastards"

— NME JULY 31 —

THE LENNONS HAVE been holding court this week, unashamedly plugging Yoko's new *Grapefruit* paperback from the fine but homely splendour of their white Georgian residence near Ascot. Macrobiotics out of the window, Lennon himself drinks a beverage called "Dr Pepper" (with sodium benzoate) and we sit and talk at the low pine table in a quarry-tiled kitchen that's all sunshine and stainless steel. Ordered chaos prevails and there's a film team ("Been here a month, going back to sanity") and a photographer from a straight daily.

Yoko comes into the room with black hotpants and a deep cleavage. "Now," says the photographer, "I wonder if I could have a picture of »

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY



"Most people in Britain think I'm someone who won the pools": John Lennon and Yoko Ono at home



you cooking?" "Cooking!?" explodes Lennon. "In an outfit like that? You must be effin' crackers!"

His own recording studio is behind the kitchen ("It's better than EMI's, because I've got newer equipment") and in there I listen to his new album for autumn release. More next week, but there is no doubt of it whatsoever, it's the best thing he's ever done. I know it – he knows it.

"Isn't it GREAT? This'll show 'em, the bastards."

The thing with the new album is that he's got a medium line between the need to bear his soul and the need to make good music. It's not only worthwhile, it's more than usually commercial. And as for Side One, Track One, a gently felt journey into his imagination… tremendous.

It's a nice day, and Lennon is in fine form, hair cropped, face fresh. What happens when you've finished the promotion of *Grapefruit*, I ask.

"When that's over, answered Lennon , "Yoko's having an off-Broadway play in New York. It's based on the book, and it's called *Of A Grapefruit In A World Apart*. She did it 10 years ago at Carnegie, and now she's sort of pepping it up. There might be an off-Broadway play of my book, but I've got to read the script and I find it very hard to say yes or no to the people who're gonna do it. I've been carrying it around for months. Yoko's directing her play, and from September to January we reckon we'll be in the States. We're doing a few things there. So don't worry."

How about the Bangladesh concert in the States? That's George, but I won't be there because we have to go to the Virgin Islands to go to court about Kyoko, and then I have to go to Texas about it too – 'cos Tony [Cox, Yoko's second husband] is suing us from Texas or somethin'. If we got the kid back we might do it. But otherwise… The whole thing's been going on for two years. Forever.

Is that today's paper? What's in it… Paul and wife… sued. Oh that, that's been goin' on for years. You see, what Paul's mistake here was, he tried to take it all for "Another Day". Now I wrote "God Save Us" with Yoko, and "Do The Oz", and there's one track on the album she wrote. She had written other things, even "Julia", back in the Beatles days, although I never put it on. What we did was, we just called Lew Grade, and they know she writes music, and we said, "Look, we've done it, so what do you want to do about it?" And he said, "Well, let's split it", so we just split it. Ono Music and Northern Songs.

The thing with Paul is, he wants all the action. He wants it all. It's not just the money. It's the principle. I think, for instance, that Paul's cost us probably over a million since he started this thing. And his tax counsel's just come up and given us exactly the tax advice we gave him two years ago, to tell him exactly not to do all what he's done. So it's cost us quite a bit… trying to see it his way.

Does it needle you, deep down, or maybe only about so far? Only so far. I tell you, it's like Monopoly, only with real money. And it's costing us a fortune, so the sooner it's over the better.

About your comments on the *Parkinson* TV show, on the possibility of making it up with Paul… Yeah. We were great on that show. We were

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

WorldMags.net

GREAT! It's like they said, isn't that old John we used to love? I said it is, I said it IS!

You are, indeed, looking very fit. And to what do you owe this new-found glow? We're both in good condition. No special reason, we're just feeling good. Wait till you hear the album. It's gonna blow y'mahnd!

So how about the possibility... (*He called across the room*) Peter. Peter... I'm straight. And it's late. You realise that? Now where were we? Carry on.

About the possibility of a reconciliation with Paul. I was asked the usual thing on the show about Paul, and I said that maybe about a year or two after all the money thing's settled, we might have dinner or forget about it, y'know. We might even celebrate getting it all over with. I don't know. I can't tell. And there's no possibility at all, till it's settled.

I'd like to talk to Yoko in a moment about the book. She'll be back in a minute, and she won't let you talk about anything else.

Is Yoko a withdrawn woman... or shy? Oh, shy, sure. She won't ever say anything, unless you actually ask her. Although she might do now, because we're really on the push for *Grapefruit*. We've really been selling it. We've done appearances in Selfridges, the Claude Gill Bookshop, interviews every day... We're really trying to sell it. Yoko's like me. All extroverts are shy. I'm shy unless I know somebody. And then I'm a bighead.

> "I'm shy unless I know somebody. And then I'm a bighead"

Some people may sneer at the whole concept of you both "doing the rounds" of the bookshops – throwing yourself in at the deep end of the publicity circus, so to speak. Any comments? Well, the answer is that last year, because we were in the therapy, we couldn't plug the hardback, and so we only sold 2,000. That's the answer to that. We also had the publisher then, Peter Owen, badmouthing us in the press saying what bastards we were because we didn't turn up to plug it. But we were in the therapy. We couldn't. And then I couldn't get to America to plug the book, of course, because they wouldn't let me in when it came out.

I reckon that if we push *Grapefruit* then it might sell 5,000 here and 200,000 in America. And that's what I'm doing it for... because I think the book's important. Having been through a lot of trips, like macrobiotics, Maharishi, the Bible, I Ching... having been through all those trips... and, you know, Yoko brought me out of all of them... the first thing I did was a *You Are Here* show at the Robert Fraser Gallery.

That's all them gurus'll ever tell you. Remember this moment now. I was talking to George the other day, and I forgot to say to him, "What are you searching for?" You Are Here. What I'm really saying is, I think, this is an important book to help people act out their madness. If you do some of the things in it, you stop going crazy in a way.

This Yoko book has changed some people's lives. It's on the curriculum of at least 10 to 15 universities in America. It was even at Liverpool University. They set it as part of the course.

There's a girl called Charlotte Mormon who used to be a very straight New York School Of Music Cellist. Then she dropped it all and went out, after reading *Grapefruit* in its original form 10 years ago, and ever since she's gone around the world performing Yoko's pieces. You might have heard of this girl, she's the one who goes around playing cello with her tits out.

The thing about Yoko's art is, it lets people contribute themselves. It's like her *Cut Piece*, in which the audience is invited to cut the girl's clothes. It was done before an audience of some of the finest intellects in America, and they did it like animals. They went mad. Then, on another occasion, there was a performance for nuns, and even they asked for *Cut Piece*. But this time there was a difference. The nuns cut hearts, and flowers. They were like children... gentle.

Do you see it now, the way her art is your own reaction? Julian picks the book up and loves it. But somebody with an intellect... they'll have a tough time getting through. The intellectual physicists who'd gone mad, with the scissors, they complained to the papers and so on. But the nuns and the Mother Superior, they said they understood the meaning, because they gave themselves fully to Christ.

YOKO BURST IN at this moment – happy, warm, eyes afire. "It's so beautiful, because Mimi's come around and we're really going to be friends and I thought I'd invite her here and to stay and meet my mother and father and it will really be great."

This understandable flood of pleasure stemmed from the possibility of a coming together between Yoko and Aunt Mimi – the Aunt Mimi – but Lennon was strangely ill at ease with such raw emotion.

Yoko told how Mimi had seen them both on TV, and there was now acceptance again. "John is now looking like what I used to like."

How did the Janov therapy affect your marriage? YO: Ahem, yes. Yes, there was a great strain on it, but it brought us closer together in the end.

OK, Yoko, now come and get on with yer plugging. YO: If we can get Mimi and everybody together, it will be some dream. I'm going to send her a really nice copy of my book.

Yoko, in *Grapefruit* you give instructions for readers to burn the book once it's finished with. Is that serious? YO: Oh yes. If you go back on the things in it all the time, then you always have to rely on the book. But once you read it, you know, it's here in your head. This book is really just to give a frame of mind. Anybody can get anything out of it, without special skill. It was like The Beatles being famous. They had a frame of mind to be famous. And they were famous. *Alan Smith*

— NME AUGUST 7 —

Yoko's art seems to me to exclude appreciation of the more established works of art: the *Mona Lisa* and so on. JL: Not necessarily, but her art is the very opposite of making a saint out of the *Mona Lisa*, or having it in a building where people could be living.

YO: I'm not somebody who wants to burn the *Mona Lisa*. That's the great difference between some revolutionaries and me: they think you have to burn the establishment. I'm not; I'm saying make the *Mona Lisa* into something like a shirt. Change the value of it.

JL: Yoko feels that any woman can create; a man destroys; and an artist revalues. An artist doesn't create because everything's already here. And a scientist doesn't create, he discovers.

YO: It was like those four boys got together to make The Beatles, and »





July 15, 1971: John and Yoko promote the second edition of Yoko's book *Grapefruit* in Selfridges department store, London

GETTY

WorldMags.net

without kidding anybody, they changed the whole world. And that's beautiful. That's all I'm trying to do. The only thing with The Beatles was that they changed it, and then they stopped there. They weren't going on being revolutionaries. Tell him, John, about that Japanese temple… because that's just what you yourself did.

JL: Yeah. Well there was this Japanese monk, and it happened in the last 20 years. He was in love with this big golden temple, y'know, he really dug it like. And you know he was so in love with it, he burnt it down so that it would never deteriorate.

That's what I did with The Beatles. I never wanted them to be has-beens or, you know, not the Marx Brothers – who were those people – the Crazy Gang. It was like they were dragging them on out of their death beds. To give a laff… y'know? I wanted to kill it while it was on top.

Remember, I did say 10 years ago: I'm not going to be singing "She Loves You" at 30. Although I expressed it that way I really meant that, by 30, I guess I would have woken up a bit, or changed my sights.

Isn't there room today for The Beatles as a living band, a contemporary band? You're surely now all far more aware as people. Must it always now be for you that The Beatles made "yesterday" music? Or is the difficulty that you're all now too egocentric to be able to work together fully, even if you tried? JL: We always were egocentric. But look, George is on half of my new album playing guitar. The only reason Ringo wasn't on it was because he was abroad, making his movie. So then the three of us would have been on, but then it wouldn't have been The Beatles, it would have been Plastic Ono… because I would have had final say. There would have been no decision-making by George and Ringo, other than if I liked the idea I'd take it. Which is what happened in The Beatles – but then it was a bit more diplomatic. So yes, that's quite possible about The Beatles as a working unit… because I might just as well play on George's or Ringo's, if they wanted my style of playing!

But imagine how we've flowered since then. George is suddenly the biggest seller of all of us. I think my music's improved a million-fold, lyric-wise and everything. And Ringo's coming out and writing "It Don't Come Easy", and now he's gonna write the title song for this cowboy thing he's in, and he's playing a really tough guy and all that. It's really beautiful.

The fact is, The Beatles have left school… and we have to get a job. And that's made us really work harder. I think we're much better than we ever were when we were together. Look at us today. I'd sooner have *Ram*, *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, George's album and Ringo's single and his movies than *Let It Be* or *Abbey Road*.

YO: If the four of them had gone on, then they would have suffocated each other.

Do you resent journalists talking about the past? JL: No, I don't resent it: I'm always doing it myself. Maybe I'll meet you or Ray Connolly and I'll say, "Hey, d'you remember when we did that, or this?" It's only human. Something funny happened the other day. I went into Apple and they said, "Jesus, you look like a Beatle again." And do you know something – just for a second, I'd forgotten what a Beatle was. Really. It was 'cos I'd just got back from New York, and I hadn't been a Beatle at all. It'd just been me and Yoko, and we'd been doing all sorts of things.

Do either of you now feel any pain of any kind, any problems, either mental or physical. Or are you totally cleansed of the hang-ups of the past? JL: Oh no. Oh, sure not. I just know myself better, that's all, so I can handle myself better. That Janov thing, The Primal Scream and so on, it does affect you because you recognise yourself in there. The difference between us and Janov, as Yoko puts it, is that the past we remember is the past we create now, because of the necessity of the present. I wouldn't have missed it, though. It was very good for me. And I still "Prime", and it still works.

> "Everything here in this country belongs to everybody"

Tell me about your philosophy of life. Many of your comments on society have been construed as extreme left wing or communist. JL: They knock me for saying "Power To The People", and say that no one section should have the power. Crap. The people aren't a section. The people means everyone.

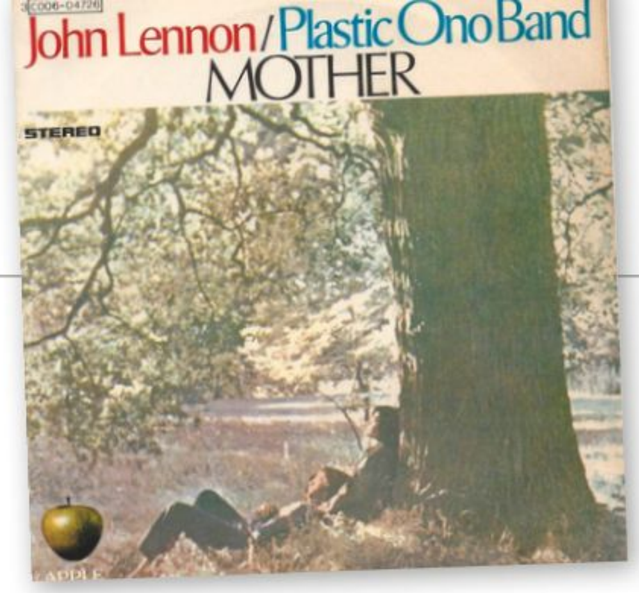
I think that everybody should own everything equally and that the people should own part of the factories and they should have some say in who is the boss and who does what. It's the same as students should be able to select teachers.

It may be like communism, but I don't really know what real communism is. There is no real communist state in the world, you must realise that. Russia isn't. It's a fascist state. The socialism I talk about is a British socialism, not where some daft Russian might do it, or the



"It's another way of promoting our politics": John and Yoko in Selfridges

GETTY



Chinese might do it. That might suit them. Us, we'd have a nice socialism here. A British socialism.

Shouldn't "the people" then own part of Apple? Shouldn't the employees there have a slice of the profits? JL: They would. In socialist Britain, I'm not sure how something like a record company would be run, but they would certainly have a piece; the thing at the moment is, it's not mine. What do you think this whole thing is that's goin' on? If I had my way, it would be different altogether. If the workers ever took it over, they could have it. I said that years ago. Maybe in a true socialist state they could have a piece of a record and say whether Clapton or who came in. Everything here in this country belongs to everybody, not just a few chosen people. And it was taken off 'em.

Films… Don't you both spend a great deal of time filming yourselves. And having yourselves filmed? JL: Why not? It's home movies. And the ultimate movie is a home movie. Luc Godard, or whatever his name is, is now making 8mm films. Home movies is where it's at. Poetry's done at home. Why shouldn't movies be the same way? In our film *Apotheosis*, you see us only for two seconds. In *Fly*, Yoko's film, she's not in it. In *Rape* there was a Hungarian girl. In *Erection*, the one I've just made about a hotel, it was just done with still photographs over a year and a half, so it just grows in front of you. There's only a couple with us in – so that whole thing is a lie.

YO: If we were putting ourselves in films all the time, so what? We do not pretend.



Are you now even remotely interested in singles or chart success? JL: Yeah! Sure! I get all the musical papers and the daily papers, I get my world chart thing and *Billboard* and the other one, *Cashbox*, and I mark off all the Apple records, including Paul, all round the world. I tell you, The Beatles are blasting the world up. We've got records everywhere… and two or three in every chart. It's fantastic. George, Ringo, Paul and me are in every chart in the world. It's great. I get a kick out of it both because I'm getting through to all those people, and because I'm doing it on my own or with Yoko. It's all that. And I like singles and not LPs, really, because I like the idea of saying everything in three minutes.

Did you listen to *Ram*? JL: Yes, of course I did. A couple of times. The first time I heard it I thought, f––––––hell, it was awful. And then, ahem, the second time I fixed the record player a bit, and it sounded better. I enjoyed a couple, like a little bit of "My Dog It's Got Three Legs" or something, and the intro to "Ram On" and the intro to "Uncle Albert". I can't STAND the second track from the… I mean, well, that doesn't matter anyway.

You know, in general I think the other album he did was better, in a way. At least there was some songs on it. I don't like this dribblin' pop opera jazz, y'know. I like pop RECORDS that are POP RECORDS. I know you yourself didn't like it. I was really surprised when I saw that bit…

I didn't like the last Beatles album either, I'm afraid. I thought the whole thing came over as some kind of cardboard epitaph… lots of cardboard, not much music. YO: I think you were right, probably.
JL: Except for "Across The Universe"!

And the bootleg tape… JL: Ah, you've got that. So you see what Spector did, don'tcha? I'm glad the bootleg is going about, because it shows that Paul was wrong when he was putting down Spector. All he was trying to do was put down the album, 'cos he was out then.

Is there a song on your new album which refers to Paul… lines about pretty face and the sound of muzak? JL (*smiling, words spaced*): Er, there's a song which could well be a statement about Paul. It could be interpreted that way. But then, it could be about an old chick I'd known… Or somethin'!

John talked about his forthcoming *Imagine* LP, out next month: JL: It's the effin' best thing I've ever done… fantastic. This'll show 'em. It's not a personal thing like the last album, but I've learned a lot and this is better in every way, technique and so on. It's lighter, too. I was feeling happy. There's a guy called George Harrison who's on it, and who does some mother of solos. George used to be with the Bubbles or somebody. Then there's a guy called Nicky Hopkins.

Then there's Jim Gordon on drums, Alan White on drums, Jim Keltner on drums, and they're fantastic. Yoko's on whip, and that's very good. Whip and mirror, actually. Then we had John Barnham on a few things, King Curtis is on sax, the Flux Fiddlers are on violins. Eighty per cent was recorded here in seven days. I took them, remixed them, and took it to America like they used to do it in the old days. It took me nine days to make this album and 10 to make the last one. So I'm gettin' faster." *Alan Smith*

— MELODY MAKER OCTOBER 2 —

WE'RE THERE BECAUSE Yin and Yang are in town and the word is out that they're doing interviews. Not more than 10 yards away, in fact, behind that door with its tall glass mirror, which is reflecting the green upholstered sofa and the white walls decorated with album covers of all the Apple artists.

We're not alone, me and the photographer. There's a man from the *Sydney Herald*, rather straight-looking, in a mackintosh, perched on a chair, just opposite. Fiddling nervously with a notebook, turning it over in his hands. And a young receptionist who shakes her head and says no, we don't have any tea, sorry. Or beer. Or anything else for that matter. It's a clean machine. Oh dear.

The fans, too. Apple scruffs. About 30 of 'em, mostly girls. Not shouting or screaming, just talking and swapping fax and info ("No, haven't been up to St John's Wood for a while. He's never there. Always up in Scotland").

The door to reception is invitingly open but they're as obedient as novices. They don't move a muscle past that entrance, even though they know that Big G is somewhere around. Lots of self-control there; the pavement is as dry as a bone.

The mirror door, of course, has remained tantalisingly shut throughout, but… "will Sydney from the *Herald* come in next, please?" It's more of a command than a request, delivered in a voice midway between a gruff bark and a humorous Southern drawl. There's a glint of spectacles. Gathering recognition as the sandy hair, short and unfamiliar, registers. Take in the smart grey trousers and the conventional shirt. Well, who'd have guessed it. The head disappears and Sydney walks in.

Do you like jokes? Jokes that are meant to be taken seriously, I mean. Because much later, when we find ourselves in the same room, we are shown a little metal box with a lid. It says: Box of Smiles. "Look inside," he urges. Hawk eyes behind the pale tints fastened on you.

Open up expecting a spring with a boxing glove. Instead, it's your own stony reflection in the shiny bottom surface. Obviously the first move in the game. Anyway, he looks pleased. And she looked gleeful. The man from the *Times*, he says, was very sensitive. "He asked us to look in it before he would."

She is wearing hot pants, a tight top and uncomfortable-looking clogs as she sits behind the desk with him. Cigarette smoke curling past her sleek, dark hair. Creamy complexion. Hard, bright eyes like coal chips. What shall we say? A filmmaker, artist and, some claim, vocalist.

He is a working-class hero of 30; a vocalist, artist and, some claim, filmmaker. Desmond Morris, was it not, who called him the most important figure of the '60s. She is excitable, garrulous, argumentative, nervous, intense and self-assured. He is funny, aggressive, sardonic, egomanic, rude, likeable and laconic.

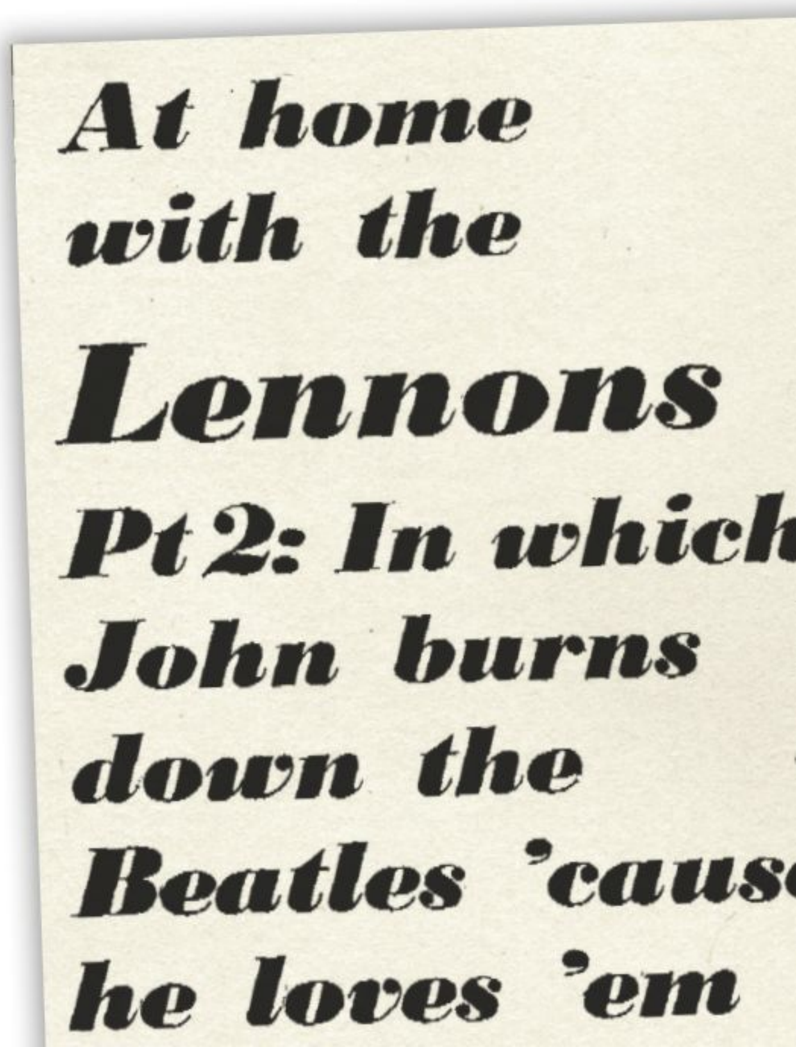
He cuts into a conversation like a meat cleaver on a chopping block. She chatters frequently while he's talking. She is serious. He jokes. And often teases.

She: "I feel very lucky that I have a husband who understands these problems."

He: "Yes, dear."

She: "You know, he was in a very tough showbiz world."

He: "Yes, dear." »



WorldMags.net



"Let him be, set him free": John and Yoko at the John Sinclair Freedom Rally at the University Of Michigan, December 10, 1971



She: "Oh, come on!" (*kisses him*)

He: "Hee hee. I wondered when you'd catch on."

You could say they get on well together. They may not be the world's sweethearts, but they're certainly this generation's Liz and Richard. All the best things come in pairs, you know. And this is the closest pair I've ever interviewed. They appear to be two halves of an indissoluble entity. Their answers and remarks intertwine and overlap like baton changes. This hand always knows what the other one is doing.

I was under the impression I was there to interview him. He is under the impression I am there to interview her. About her book which has just been reprinted. She's under that impression, too. No matter. We talk about art.

He says, "Don't you think her work is surreal? The box? Or what about the book itself? I have a house full of her work. It's very far out. The first thing you do is come to a door and it says, 'This is not a door'. You go in the front door and walk up a ladder and look on a spy glass to a painting on a ceiling which says, 'Yes'. Then you go into the room and you have to walk on a painting, and then into a room of her stuff. She's straight out of Duchamp, Dad, but she's now."

He says she calls what she does "con art", short for concept art, which takes the view that "the idea behind the piece is more important than whatever the piece of paper is". He thinks that as a way of life, her book stands up with the Bible and I Ching. "There are people – because this book came out 10 years ago – whose whole way of life has changed. They go 'round performing the works. It's in the curriculum of many universities in America."

"It's another way of promoting our politics," she says. Of slowing down society. Selling *Grapefruit* is much more effective than carrying placards and marching down the street to bring peace.

These days he considers himself an artist in the all-embracing sense of the term rather than just a musician. The scope of the vision that was expressed in those early books, *In His Own Write* and *Spaniard In The Works*, has widened to take in the roles of lithographer, movie director and avant-garde music maker.

His film *Apotheosis*, which follows on from *Self Portrait* and *Rape*, was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and will open Edinburgh Festival. Its concept is simple. He draws a diagram on a sheet of paper, explaining [all] the while. It's film taken from a balloon which takes off from a field in an English village and ascends into the clouds. The soundtrack is the fading noise of dogs barking, a hunting horn and a gun being fired. When the balloon gets in the clouds, there's silence for five minutes. He talks scornfully of *Newsweek*, which he says dismissed it as "a 20-minute film in the clouds". That's rubbish, he exclaims.

His next movie is *Erection*, an almost-finished volume of nine months of still photographs of a hotel going up opposite the BEA Terminal in London's Cromwell Road. "I've just sent the rushes yesterday," he enthuses, "and it's fantastic. Over nine months the guy's been filming every day in the same position. It's gonna be the most famous film I ever do, I think."

In terms of music, John is now consciously seeking out the more avant garde artists. He has great admiration for Fluxus, a group of 30 New York experimentalists whose founder member is George Maciunas. He's used Joe Jones from the group on his new album. Jones has assembled a Tone Deaf Music Company, which consists of a variety of musical instruments and electrical gadgets that play themselves. His toy violins were used as the string backing on *Imagine*, the new album.

What hurts and frustrates John is that he can achieve acceptance as an artist abroad and with such experimental groups, whereas here (in England) he is little more than an ex-Beatle.

"Most people in Britain think I'm somebody who won the pools, you know," he says drily, drawing on a Gauloise. "Won the pools and married a Hawaiian dancer or actress somewhere. Whereas in the States, we're treated like artists. Which we are! Or anywhere else for that matter," he added. "But here, it's like, the lad who knew Paul, got a lucky break, won the pools and married the actress.

"It's like 1940 here. I've just spent a couple of months in America and it's like coming back to Denmark or somewhere. It's really the sticks, you know. While in New York there's these fantastic 20 or 30 artists who understand what I'm doing and have the same kind of mind as me. It's just like heaven after being here. Oh, it's terrible. You've seen how they treat me in the press. There is an avant garde here, but it's small."

But unlike him they were not generally well known, she ventured. She rose to his defence. The Beatles are pretty intelligent people but even they don't understand what he's talking about, she remarked. "John was always pretty isolated in a sense; he was very alone. And the avant garde in London – I'm sorry to say this – but they are really sort of secondhand Fluxus. They all took after Fluxus. They all know Fluxus, they all read Fluxus and they're doing more or less the same thing."

Perhaps the reason for the refusal of the British to take him more seriously than they did lay in what they believed was just pure gimmickry and showmanship, I said, and referred to bagism and the nude album cover.

Oh come on, she expostulated. That's silly! But he is conscious of that attitude of conservatism. It's a stance that he seems to have been fighting all his life. He refutes it by referring back to Dadaism again. What they had been doing were events. In his eyes, the event of the Bed-In was one of the great happenings of this century. His logic is simple and sane: the fact that every Western world newspaper had as its front page that John and Yoko got married and went to bed. It's the world that is illogical, he suggests. It's a scream that two married people lying in bed can hit the news like that.

GETTY

WorldMags.net

He relishes the memories: "When we took *Rape* to Vienna to show it on Austrian TV, we did a press conference in a bag and it was a fantastic experience for us and for the people that experienced it – whether they know it or not. Askin' a bag what it's wearing underneath, and was it really us, and how're you getting on with Paul and that this bag's talking! They're all holding mikes to the bag! It was beautiful."

And would he call that art? Yes, he would. It was an event, communication. And art is communication. "Of course it's art! Look, Yoko says a woman can create, a man can destroy; but an artist re-values."

Yes, but what if it had been Fred and Elsie Smith in bed and not John and Yoko?

He has an answer for that, too. "If Fred and Elsie Smith had done the Bed-In in Yorkshire, the *Yorkshire Post* would've done it and it might've been picked up by the *Daily Mail* or *Mirror*. I'm tellin' you, anybody could've done that bed event. If somebody suddenly appeared who had got married in a bag in the local church, it'd be everywhere!

"You see things like that. Who were those people…? Old Lady Docker and her husband used to be the last couple that had all the events in England. The English are famous eccentrics. I'm just another one from a long line of eccentrics."

Another thought occurred to him. "The Hanrattys [the family of James Hanratty, hanged in 1962 after being found guilty – wrongly, they believed – of murder] rang us up to ask for publicity – a lot of people say we jump in from, like, stamp collecting to yo-yos; we're consistent from 'All You Need Is Love' to 'Power To The People' – the Hanrattys asked us for publicity and we gave 'em as much as we could get 'em without the press losing interest. Every week, Mr Hanratty goes to Hyde Park and talks on the corner about his problem and his son and all that. One week we sent the Rolls-Royce out with two people in the bag and we told everybody it was us. And all the papers went, it was in all the papers and the Hanrattys got more publicity – and we weren't even there! It was just a bag with two friends in!"

Nevertheless, I put it to him, the fact remained that the concept of an artist consistently going to the press and courting publicity seemed meretricious at times, totally at odds, as it were, with the public's idea of the artist commenting upon society while standing slightly outside it.

What about Warhol, then, he counters; the biggest publicity man in the world. Or Dali. Or Duchamp. He stabs a finger at me and says you name one artist who isn't struggling to get publicity. The only one I can think of is Maciunas and they'e even persuaded him to put his name on the typography of the album.

He resents intensely being dismissed as just a circus act. Artists have always been the centre of attention, and for Chrissakes, this is the 20th century, you know!

"And they're responsible. Just as journalists are responsible for telling the news as it is, we are responsible for showing our pieces as they are, and any artist who doesn't do that part is lazy, a lazy egoist."

This view of "instant art" inevitably resembles propaganda at times. What could be more propagandist, after all, than "Power To The People"? It's a thinly veiled message to take up arms against The System, a call for revolution.

He agrees wholeheartedly with this evaluation. Sure it's propaganda. So was "All You Need Is Love". He's a revolutionary artist, he says, just as the poster painters in Cuba are. His art is dedicated to change and to the revolution. Art for art's sake is decadent. He's writing songs for the people to express themselves with. At the moratoriums in America, 30,000 people sang "Give Peace A Chance". Twenty-odd thousand were singing "Power To The People" on the streets.

But Goebbels was also a propagandist, I say. You can make anything good, he rejoins. "Bread can be lousy. You can have gas to help get your teeth out, or to gas people with. It's ying yang or whatever they call it. If it wasn't for Goebbels you wouldn't have *Melody Maker* and its adverts, and you survive by adverts."

But adverts existed before Goebbels. "Yeah, but Goebbels finalised it into a fantastic art form. All modern advertising came from Goebbels. I mean, I'm not saying he's a hero, I'm just telling you what he did."

Wasn't it a dangerous practice, though, for music to be used as propaganda? "Why?" Because it implied it could also be used for a bad reason, I said.

He leaned forward in exasperation. That was like saying you don't make knives unless they kill with them. He made music for his own reasons first. "You can't blame me or the song. I'm not here to provide power to the people: I'm singin' about it. I'm the songwriter who sang the song about it that the people sang at the meetings they had. That's all. That's my job. Like if we're a community on an island, I'd be the singer. You might be the writer. Somebody would be the carpenter. Somebody else would be the cook. My function in society is to be an artist.

"You see, society is under the delusion that art is something you have extra, like crème de menthe or something. But societies don't exist with no artist. Art is a functional part of society. We're not some kind of decadent strip show that appears on the side. We're as important as prime ministers and policemen, so 'Power To The People' isn't expected to make a revolution. It's for people to sing like the Christians sing hymns.

"I like slogans, you know. I like advertising. I love the telly. I spent an afternoon talking to Tariq Ali and Robin Blackburn and we got to the point where my part in the revolution – what is the artist's part in a revolution, etc – was songwriting. And that night I just came out with 'Power To The People'. Same as the afternoon the *Oz* people came and said, 'Will you write us a song?' That night we wrote together 'God Save *Oz*' and changed it to 'God Save Us', 'cos nobody understood it…"

It's the role of a musician, of course, that the majority of people relate to him, so the talk switches around to his last album. He thinks it will be around for a long time, that it can stand in any generation. He doesn't agree with me that it was rather masochistic. People, he says, think it's masochistic to take their clothes off.

"All I was doing was strippin' myself mentally and singin' about it. All poets've done that throughout the ages. I did it on 'Help!'. It's the same kind of song. 'I'm A Loser' is the same. So is 'In My Life'. It's nothing that suddenly happened because of therapy; it was more condensed because I was doing therapy, that's all.

"Those songs are just the same style. Simple lyrics. They're all personal songs. My songs have always been like personalised diaries. I wrote these books, which are personalised diaries, or mostly in the first person or incomplete madness, and it's no different from that, except that it just happened to be an album about the same thing."

Was he very down when he made it, I ask. He shakes his head. He had been through the therapy and that wasn't all a downer, he says. It was just a simple fact. "All I was saying was, 'Yeah, me mummy left me, I think this about God.' It's just newspaper facts, you know – death in Venice and a volcano in Israel, or whatever. I wasn't depressed when I made it, 'cos I'd been up and down through the therapy… It was just like… some days you're up, some days you're down, so when I was doing 'Mother' I was just making a record. It's when you don't express it, when you don't act out your madness – that's when you're insane and in pain and down."

By the same token his films and books are forms of therapy, because he believes that all artists create through pain.

"Just look at Dylan Thomas, Brendan Behan, anybody. They're always in great pain, artists. True artists produce through pain. The rest are just not artists."

I wondered if he had a general philosophy of life that he could expound on; he had said earlier that he was consistent in his madness. He had indeed, he replied. His philosophy was, in a nutshell, the existential one of "you are here". That had been the title, in fact, of a show he did at the Robert Fraser gallery two years ago when he met Yoko. All the Bibles, Jesuses, gurus, poets and artists, he claims, have ever said to people is that this minute is the one that counts; not tomorrow or yesterday.

"That's the whole game. There's no other time but the present. Anything else is a waste of time. Like Yoko says, most people spend so much time trying to be proper, they waste all their energy. People wonder where we get all our energy from. We're like children; we don't spend any time trying to be proper. That doesn't mean not dressing up in nice clothes – we like doing that – but being proper." *Michael Watts* ●

> "My songs have always been like personalised diaries"



"I've always had style"

The success of the Faces is in large part down to the talent and charisma of ROD STEWART – a former picture framer, now making his third solo album. In the autumn, he recalls his route to the top: from skiffle to Brentford FC ("It's very lonely in apprentice football"), Jeff Beck ("a bastard") and beyond...

— MELODY MAKER MAY 15 —

ON A WARM evening in Willesden, Rod Stewart is mixing down the tracks for his third solo album – the one which, after *Old Raincoat* and *Gasoline Alley*, will finally confirm his reputation as one of the finest and most sensitive artists in the whole of modern music. According to my dictionary, "artist" is defined in part as "one who has the qualities of imagination and taste required in art", and it's these qualities which Rod is exercising right now in Morgan Studios, as he sits back, scratches his unruly hair, and discusses some small problem with engineer Mike Bobak.

The giant speakers are roaring out a song called "It Seems Like A Long Time". Culled from a Brewer & Shipley album (thinks: maybe I should pick up on them), it builds to a fine climax with Rod and Maggie Bell twining their voices round each other, helped by the piano of Pete Sears and Mickey Waller's driving, open ride cymbal. Typically, though, it doesn't fade where you expect it to, but goes right down to Rod singing alone over a very sparse backing, "*Peacetime... is just the other side... of wartime*"... and a quiet, resigned ending which contrasts well with what's gone before.

The album will be out in June, and Rod has to finish it by tomorrow night. All that's left now is a bit of mixing, and the dubbing of Maggie's voice onto the title track, "Every Picture Tells A Story". But that's tomorrow, and Rod offers to play us some of those he's already finished for mastering. The first is called "Mandolin Wind", and it's in the great tradition of Rod's most personal songs. The instrumental track is extraordinary: Ron Wood on pedal steel, bass and glints »

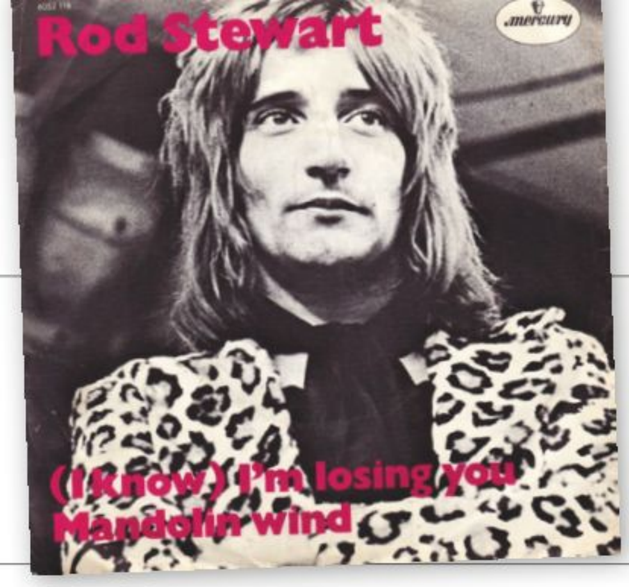
GETTY

WorldMags.net

Rod: artistry with roots

Rod Stewart in 1971: "The first song I ever sung professionally on stage was 'Night Time Is The Right Time'"

WorldMags.net



of slide guitar; Martin Quittenton on guitar; Rod on 12-string; and Ray Jackson from Lindisfarne topping it off with exquisite mandolin lines. "He's a great melody player," Rod says. "You give him a line and he knows exactly what to play on top of it."

It's a lament, achingly sad, with Rod's voice surging and cracking inside the utterly beautiful arrangement. "*I never was much good with romantic words*", he sings, and when it's over you want to clap, slap him on the back and tell him it's going to be an all-time classic.

But you don't, partly because he's already giving the engineers instructions to play "I'm Losin' You", which he performs on stage with the Faces as a kind of tribute to David Ruffin, the neglected ex-lead voice of The Temptations who seems to be his favourite singer. This one is actually recorded with the entire Faces personnel, just like they do it on stage, but it far outstrips any performance of it that I've heard them give. It begins with a guitar intro which… chimes in the most perfect way, adding Mac McLagan's piano and Ronnie Lanes' grunting bass halfway through. The piano is recorded in stereo, and the whole in stereo is completely devastating. But then, as Rod begins to sing, you start to worry: for once, it seems, he can't improve on the original; Ruffin's performance was perfect, and surely Stewart can't do anything better?

He doesn't try to. Somewhere after the first verse, just as you're expecting the song to progress normally, it takes another direction; the Faces start humming, funkily, a capella style, while Rod screams over them, and suddenly it veers away into another direction, as Kenny Jones' direct, positive drums take over. The fullness and vigour of the sound is overwhelming, and everyone in the box is suddenly physically alive. As it ends, my ankles being to ache.

"Wonder if old Ruffin'll like it?" says Rod. "I 'ope so." He doesn't say much else, but he's obviously glad that you like it, and on he goes with the chore of mixing, this time demanding to hear his version of Arthur Crudup's "That's Alright Mama". This one gives a bit more trouble. Like "It's All Over Now", on *Gasoline Alley*, the effect is meant to be one of studied sloppiness, but still tight and clipped. The playing is certainly right; the three guitars (Ron Wood and Sammy Mitchell – from Baldry's new band – twice) slip and slide, each beautifully positioned in the stereo picture, and they take a really smashing break which sounds as if it's falling to pieces, but gathers itself at the last possible moment and crashes back into the vocal. Waller's drums, too, are magnificent: thudding away with a real old-fashioned rock'n'roll sound.

They try one mix, and play it back on the smaller speakers. The effect is fairly disastrous, and most of the life is lost. So it's put away, for a while, as fellow Face Kenny Jones wanders into the box with a few mates. Kenny asks to hear "Losin' You" on which he's featured, and is so delighted that he demands a copy tape that very night. Rod promises to get one made before he leaves, and to drop it through Kenny's letterbox on his way home.

The relaxation continues and Rod picks up a few more tapes to play to his friends. The first is "Reason To Believe", the Tim Hardin song, and what makes it is an extraordinary blend of *Highway 61* organ (Mac) flying high and lonesome, and Dick Powell's superb fiddle solo, which has an ineffably beautiful tone. Once again, just as you expect the final fade, Rod comes back to sing unaccompanied, and the fiddle and piano build back around him. Somehow, it's delicately funky, quite delicious.

Dylan's "Tomorrow Is A Long Time" is next. Rod found it on Hamilton Camp's album, and he keeps the Dylan spirit by strumming a 12-string in the background. His voice is double-tracked on the chorus and the effect is lovely.

Maybe Rod's major asset is his ability to pick his material. He can take the greatest songs by the most personal of writers, and turn them into his own property without in any way desecrating the memory of the original. That's what makes him so unique, so personal.

Next there's "Maggie May", for which Rod wrote the words and Woody the music. "It's about a schoolboy who falls in love with a hooker," he says, smiling somewhat ruefully, and it's by turns humorous and touching. The emotions it contains, the experiences, are so strong that they're almost tactile. The overall sound is, once again, reminiscent of Dylan, and there's a celeste splashing notes at the end of the lines which is strongly reminiscent of "Can You Please Crawl Out Your Window".

> "My moment of stardom was on the Aldermaston marches"

"Oh yes," says Rod, "that's the old favourite sound, isn't it? That jangly sort of thing; wide open so that everything comes through."

He talks about Martin Quittenton: "He's just amazing, he can play so much… it's his classical training. The last I heard, he was selling ice-creams, and then he went to work in a record shop. He's completely devoted to his guitar. I told him he could make a fortune doing sessions in the States, but he says to me, 'Oh no, Rod, I couldn't miss my lessons.'

"Him and Dick Powell never go into studios, so when they come here they walk around like it's Christmas, staring at all the equipment. They really enjoy themselves."

Finally, by special request, Rod gets the engineers to play "Mandolin Wind" one more time. Again, it has an almost cathartic effect: in the wake of its pure, crystal-clear emotions, you feel cleansed, purged. It's time to go, and he's worrying about whether Arsenal will win the Cup on Saturday, and laying fivers on them to prove his allegiance.

That, best of all, explains why it's good to be around Rod Stewart: the perfect artistry of "Mandolin Wind" on one hand; the unselfconscious affirmation of his roots on the other. He's a great man. *Richard Williams*

— NME SEPTEMBER 11 —

SUDDENLY, EVERYONE IS discovering the Faces. With their Weeley triumph at one end of the week, the spurt of sales for Rod Stewart's solo album and single in the middle, and two riotous London Queen Elizabeth Hall concerts at the other end, the past week has probably been the most fruitful and significant seven days in the Faces' British career. Here and in the States, now that Britain is fast catching up on America's elevation of the band to a lofty status, the Faces are becoming a cult band.

For what it's worth, there are hairdressers in America and the King's Road doing Rod Stewart haircuts to meet the demand. The Faces are a band of immaculate style, none more so than Stewart. Self-assured, loud and exhibitionist he may be, but by God he's got style… Little wonder that amid the dull landscape of pure grey mediocrity that is so much the home rock scene in 1971 the Faces sparkle like a rare and precious gem.

The first band you were with was Jimmy Powell & The Dimensions, wasn't it? Yeah, I only played harmonica with them. I wasn't allowed to vocalise at all.

Why was that? I think Powell was a little bit jealous. He knew I could sing. But I was just lucky to be in the band. I was pleased to be playing anything. And harmonica was the "in" instrument of that time. So I just settled for that. I joined in a few backing vocals and I tended to blow him off the stage because I really overdid it; you know, shouting as loud as I could on the backing vocal. This was only when I was semi-pro. I was still working during the day. I was making picture frames with me brother for the big stores. That was after I'd played a bit of football.

The Dimensions were a Birmingham band, weren't they? Yeah, the bass player, Louis Cennamo – he did James Taylor's first album – I think he's the only one about now.

Were you singing before that band? Oh yeah, I did a lot of singing, just playing guitar and singing, yeah. The whole thing with the harmonica harness, doing a Jack Elliott.

On your own? Yeah, I never had enough nerve to get up and play at a club. My moment of stardom was on the Aldermaston marches. I used to play guitar, lead the crowds. I went on four of them, the Easter marches.

You were politically inclined? No, not really. I mean, basically I believed in it but I couldn't get that involved in it. I mean, you'd never own up at the time that you were just going along for a giggle… but probably thousands of kids went along to get f–––––. There used to be terrible orgies. About the same time there were the Beaulieu jazz festivals. I was about 16.

WorldMags.net

Were you into jazz? Yeah everybody was really. Jazz, traditional jazz.

What was the first music you remember listening to? First ever that had any influence on me? Well, I don't know that it ever had any influence on me, but the first I used to get hung up on was probably Al Jolson. My parents had his old 78s. I got them drummed into my head so much they stayed with me.

That would be when you first started to affect a "black" voice? Yeah, probably… that's all old Al was trying to do, plus the fact that he was a Jew made up to look black. Then there was Eddie Cochran. It's weird because everybody was having the same influences at the time. You know, you thought you were the only one into Woody Guthrie, but you read other interviews and find there were 3,000 others at art schools into the same thing.

Who were you the other people you were listening to? Well, probably the first thing after that comes to mind was the skiffle thing.

You weren't actively singing then, just listening? I was learning how to play the guitar, struggling through the three-chord thing. I used to do a very, very good "C'mon Everybody". I remember that, if I was asked politely, I would do that, then fall down in a gutter outside a pub. My ill-spent youth.

Where did you spend your youth? Where did I come from originally? I came from London. I always wanted to be born in Scotland. My brothers were all born there. I was the only one, because it was during the war. We lived in Highgate, which is still where I live.

Does that suggest that you parents had money? Oh no, it wasn't expensive then.

When did you first become aware that you could sing well enough to make a living from it? Difficult to remember exactly. It probably came to me when I was very drunk and singing and somebody said, "Christ you're good, you could probably go somewhere." It probably happened about the time I was playing football and a bit unhappy. It's very lonely in apprentice football.

You were with Brentford, weren't you? Yeah, it worked like you had a three-month trial and played a couple of games for the "A" team and then got through to the reserves… I don't think really I was that good at it.

What made you give it up? Well, I wanted to get into the music business with Jimmy Powell. It wasn't purely a choice thing… I was too bloody lazy to get up and trek over to Brentford and I didn't want to be cleaning the first team's boots any more. It's a terribly underpaid sport. I was talking to one of the guys with Leyton Orient and I said what a take on football is. This guy gets 80 quid a week… and I said, "But you entertain 28,000 people a week." For me that's really underpaid, because if we were to play to a crowd of that size… We played at Los Angeles Forum to 20-odd thousand and came out with about $35,000. There's quite a difference.

Is money important to you? It's not important to me; it plays a great part in my life. I like having it.

It's been said that you have a great deal of style? Style, oh yeah, but money can't give you style. I've always had a bit of style, even when I had no money. That's something that comes from trying to be different… different from everybody else.

So Jimmy Powell was the first group job you had? Yeah. I don't actually ever remember picking up a wage. I know I never used to get any money… I think they thought, "Oh, he's a silly bastard, likes being on the stage, don't give him any money."

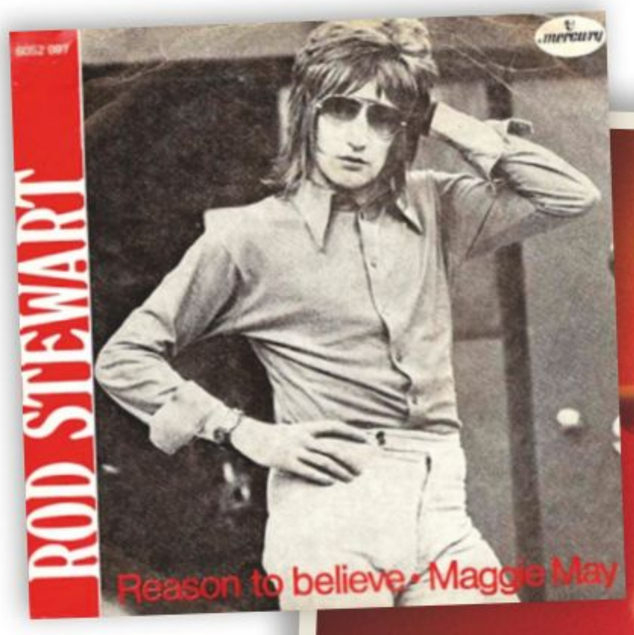
They never paid you? I never got a great deal out of that group. I think Powell did. I remember we had a punch-up once when we came under new management and the new management believed that I could sing, and demanded that I sung a few numbers this night in Birmingham. And he stormed off the stage… terrible dramas: "I'm the lead vocalist, no one else is singing." I wonder what that guy must think now.

How long were you with Powell? Oh, too long. We used to play some very unfortunate dates… rugby team weddings, things like that. We had a card: Jimmy Powell & The Dimensions, weddings – will travel. We used to get the odd gig.

They were pretty much looning times? No, actually, it was a bit of a calm period because I'd just come through a lot of looning on those Aldermaston marches.

The material you were singing then wasn't well developed but it was pretty much in a line with what you still sing now? I mean, you've never gone off at a tangent and done anything completely out of character? Yeah, it's just like matured a bit. I've never really changed radically like Baldry did. Baldry is a prime example of somebody flogging themselves down the road, desperate for some sort of recognition. That was f––––– terrible, that record he made.

Were you ever tempted to get into that kind of thing? Yeah, well, I'll tell you something. There were two guys who tried to get me to… Stevie Marriott was one. He wrote some incredibly commercial things for me to do. I've still got the old demos at home. And I came very near it when I released that single with Mike d'Abo, "Little Miss Understood". Mike's a great guy – I love him – but he would try and tell me how to sing… There were a lot of the guys who tried to give me a helping hand. There was that thing we did with Jagger. That was »





Stewart with the Faces at the Rainbow in North London, February 1972

WorldMags.net

incredible, with PP Arnold. It was when Jagger was knocking around with Chrissie Shrimpton. Well, I'd known Chrissie for years and years and she was determined to help me, and she got Mick to come down and make a record and we did a thing by Carole King that Wilson Pickett recorded. "Come On Baby" it was called. It had Keith Richards playing bass and rhythm guitar, Nicky Hopkins, Keith Emerson, all of Georgie Fame's brass section, Ronnie Wood, and Mick and Jimmy Miller produced it. Me and Pat sang.

Apparently Mick thought Immediate were going to pay for the session and Immediate turned round and said they thought he was going to pay, and nothing ever got done with it. I'd love to hear the tapes. Mick's still got them.

After Powell came The Hoochie Coochie Men, right? I was approached by Baldry, yeah. The Stones had just gone on the road. They left Ken Colyer's Jazz Club and we, The Dimensions, moved in. It was terrible. We knew two-and-a-half numbers. It used to get packed out every Sunday afternoon and we had to take over their place. We died a slow and sad death. Anyway… two weeks later, Baldry approached me and asked me if I wanted to join his band. "I'm going to leave Cyril," he said. I said, "Yeah, great." And then Cyril died, January 9, 1965… would that be right? And that was all a bit sad, and I had to step in. John moved up and took Cyril's place and I took John's place. I remember when I first joined, no one wanted to know. John was the only one who believed in me. They were a horrible load of bastards in that band, but they all changed their minds in the end. There was Jeff Bradford, an incredible finger-picking guitar, Cliff Barton, who's no longer with us…



Have you always sung in the same way? Yeah, but I wasn't very good then. I was too conscious of trying to sound black, I suppose. I had to work hard to find myself, you know. Everybody's got to go through that period. I can't listen to anything before my first solo album. I can't listen to the Beck albums any more. They really grate on me. Vocally, that is; everything else is great. The vocals on the Beck albums were so bad.

Where did you go after The Hoochie Coochie Men? Well there was first a little intermission of unemployment, not knowing what to do because the band busted up. This was a very sad point, because John's managers then were determined to make him into a star. He was always very easily led. He still is, although he's getting his head together a bit now. So the group disbanded. I wasn't that upset that the group busted up, but I wasn't that worried about doing anything else. In fact, I thought that I wasn't going to sing again. I thought, "Oh s–––, that was a good laugh; put it down to experience and do something else now."

Eventually I was just looning about and John came up and said that's all failed, let's start another group. So we started Steam Packet.

The lineup most people remember of Steam Packet was you and John and Julie Driscoll and Brian Auger. Was it always like that? Yeah, it started like that. Then everybody sort of left one by one.

Was it a happy band to be in? No, not really. The only really happy band I've been in, where there's no backbiting or throat cutting, is this group, the Faces. There was always a bit of… well, you know, Julie was always in love with somebody and Micky Waller was in love with her, and Brian wanted more money. Ricky Brown didn't want to leave home 'cos he'd just got married, so we couldn't go further than Manchester. The dramas we had in that group. Real dramas.

Was there a leader of that group? Well, the leader to me is always the bloke who collects the readies, so it must have been Brian. But musical policy was up to three of us. Like if I wanted to do a new number then I had to put it forward to the "board". I never really got on with Auger that well. Looking back on it, there was never anything really very original about the Steam Packet. We probably sold ourselves on our characters more than our music. It was a good visual band, with everybody trying to outdo each other with clothes. We could have gone to America at one point with The Animals, but John turned it down, the silly bastard, though maybe it was a good thing. I remember when John turned it down his actual line was: "My American public isn't ready for me." *Nick Logan*

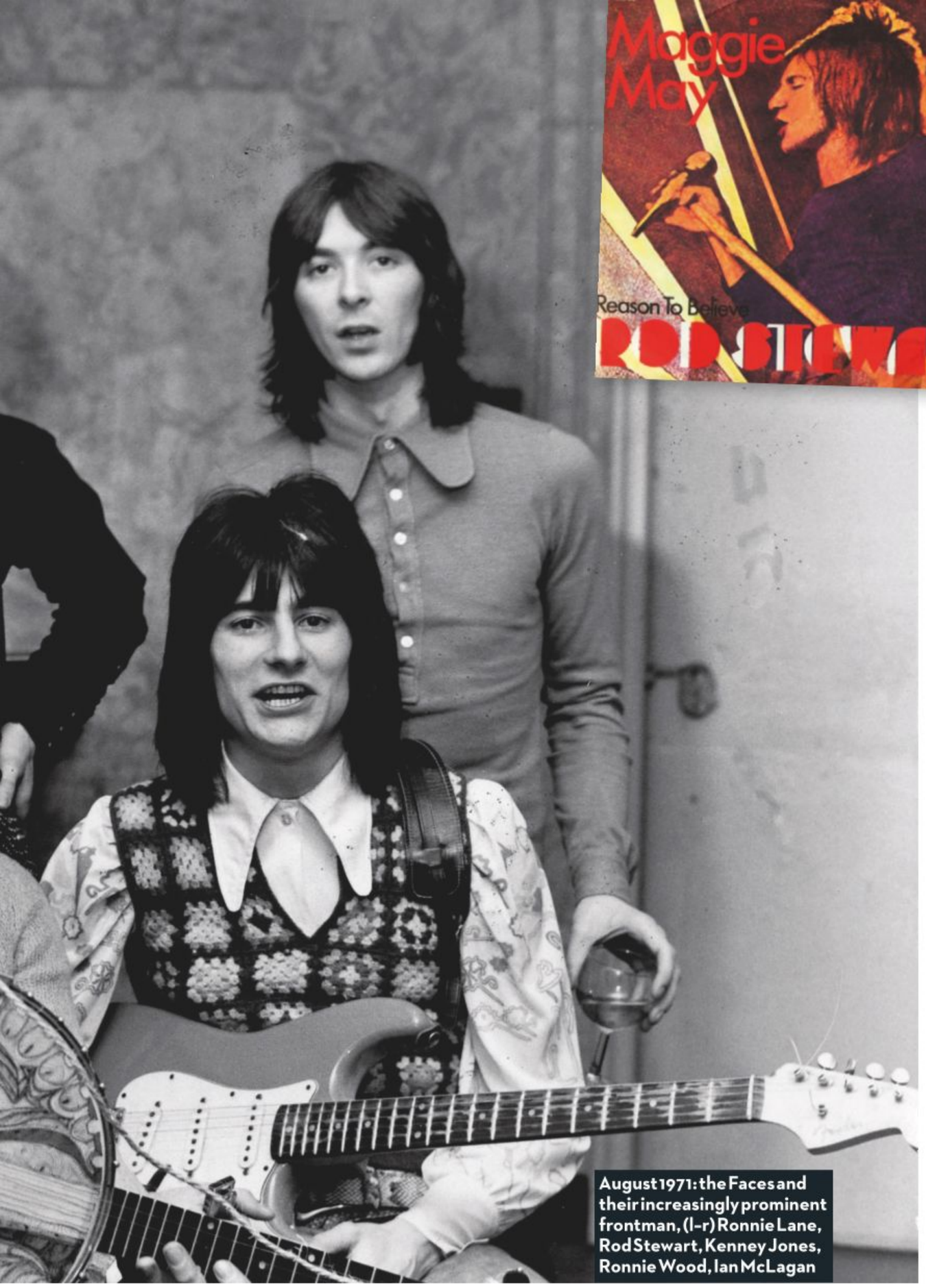
PHOTOSHOT

— NME SEPTEMBER 18 —

WITH STEAM PACKET, did you feel you were all playing something that would be more appreciated in times to come? I did with The Hoochie Coochie Men, but what we were doing with Steam Packet was just like a white soul revue. Like a white Ike & Tina Turner show but nowhere near as good. With The Hoochie Coochie Men I thought we were playing something that nobody else was. It was probably the finest Chicago-type band ever.

What records are there around from those days? Steam Packet never made any, because we were all on different labels. Of the Hoochie Coochies, there is just one record of me and John singing together. It's called "Up Above My Head", a B-side of a Baldry single, and that's probably all that came out of that period.

WorldMags.net



August 1971: the Faces and their increasingly prominent frontman, (l–r) Ronnie Lane, Rod Stewart, Kenney Jones, Ronnie Wood, Ian McLagan

How did Steam Packet end? Oh evil, really evil. The idea of Auger was to use everybody in that group to get himself off the ground. I was the first to go; I got the elbow. It was all down to Brian giving me the elbow, and I will never forgive John for agreeing with him. They thought I was getting too much money. Then John went soon after. I was out of work. That came as a terrible blow. It was really unexpected, because I had really got into singing and it was hard not being able to get up on stage and do it any more.

Then came Shotgun Express, I suppose…? Yeah, Shotgun Express was like a very poor Steam Packet. We had Mick Fleetwood and Peter Green, Dave Ambrose and Pete Bardens and myself. It was too soon after Steam Packet and it was just a poor imitation. I was still getting this terrible feeling of doing other people's music. I think you can only start finding yourself when you write your own material. It was writing, producing and singing my own album that really brought me together. I actually started writing when I was with Jeff Beck. I was still with Shotgun Express when Beck had "Hi Ho Silver Lining". I could never understand him doing that stuff. Here he was, a great guitarist and musician…

How did you come to join his band? I had heard a rumour that he wanted me to join, and then I eventually met him. We decided to go and have a rehearsal. There was that geezer out of The Shadows, Jet Harris, on bass and Viv Prince on drums… not too good a lineup. Then it all fell apart and then we got Ronnie Wood in. He was on bass. We did about four/five rehearsals and then went on the Small Faces tour. I swear their roadies pulled the plug out on us. The lineup then became Woody on bass, me singing, Jeff on guitar and this guy on drums who got the sack the same night he joined and he'd just bought his drums on HP. It was very sad. After that came a period of just doing nothing. Beck went into hiding. We eventually all got together again, and came across Aynsley Dunbar as a drummer.

> "The only really happy band I've been in is this one, the Faces"

Now there is a guy who really changed that band. I've nothing but good to say about Aynsley. He stayed six or seven months and really got the band together. He was a beautiful drummer; he introduced some beautiful rhythms. Then Aynsley left because he didn't think we were playing blues. We did a night at the Saville and it was just about the time of flower power and we all came on in flowers and caftans and no trousers – did we look a state – and Aynsley was really insulted. This wasn't blues to him. He left the same night and we got Micky Waller in. Then Beck did that "Tallyman" single. B-side was "Rock My Plimsoul", which became the Beck band's anthem. Then to add insult to injury he did "Love Is Blue". I just couldn't understand him. We were in the group at the time and I had to stand at the side of the stage while they did "Love Is Blue' and then we would start again singing blues. It was good blues, because we had taken the Chicago thing a step further. We did an American tour which was great, then a second tour which was also great, and that brings us up to '68.

What was Beck like to work with? The old ego ran away with him. He was never really a bastard to me. He was always, like, friendly, but it was down to the pay. We never earned a great deal.

But the music was good? I was very very happy with that. I learned so much with that band. That was where there was a change in my voice. I learned phrasing, how to blend with three or four other instruments, and that rhythm section of Ronnie Wood and Micky Waller was incredible. But after the second tour came the all-time blow. Beck decided to sack Micky and Ron. He got Tony Newman, and an Australian bass player who died an all-time death. So he asked Ronnie Wood to come back. But after that night they got the sack, the band was never the same again. Woody was obviously disillusioned with what he was doing and then he left to join the Faces. He wanted to play lead guitar anyway. I used to tell him he would never make as good a guitarist as he was a bassist, but he's proved me wrong. There never was a replacement for Ronnie.

I remember we all came back off the last tour and Ronnie was saying, "Oh, the lads are pretty good, the Faces, but there's no one who can sing." And I'd go, "Oh yeah, shame innit." And he was, like, hinting that I should join. And about this time I'd signed up with Mercury Records and was going to put my own album together, which I did in a week and a half. The Faces used to come down and help out.

There were two Beck albums the band did? Yeah, they were good albums. I think the first one was a real hallmark. Did you ever see those Beck albums… they never had a picture of the group on them.

Before then, what recordings were there? You've mentioned only the Hoochie Coochie Men B-side? There was "Shake", the old Otis Redding thing, with Brian Auger backing. I'd put out "Little Miss Understood", which I did with Mike d'Abo. And the PP Arnold thing, which was never put out, was just before I left Beck. That's all.

And the Faces thing happened how? I remember I was at the Spaniards pub up at Highgate with Kenny just before he was going to rehearsals and he said, "Why don't you join the band", and I said alright. We all drove down to Ronnie Wood's and they put it to the "board". Everybody wanted me to join, I think, but they didn't want it to happen again like it did with Steve [Marriott]: a dictatorship, which was what that band was all about, I think.

You started off trying to ape a black voice. At what point did your singing become natural? The first album, the solo album. '68 or '69. Up until then, I don't think I had improved over a period of four years, whereas now I think I've improved more in this last year and a half than I did in those previous five years. And this came through jumping in at the deep end and putting an album together, trying to make it sound different, writing my own songs – there were six originals on that – because if you do one of your own songs it has just gotta sound like nobody else. *Nick Logan* •

WorldMags.net


elody Maker
Miles, Ornette, Dizzy and Thelonious in MM shows
JAZZ GIANTS DUE
TOWNSHEND:
IOW triple album out

1971

OCTOBER – DECEMBER

PAUL McCARTNEY, T. REX, LED ZEPPELIN, THE KINKS AND MORE

GETTY

"Don't look at music – listen to it": Miles Davis in the studio, New York City

WorldMags.net



"I look through your paper and all I see are white guys"

MM OCT 30 Miles Davis telephones the *Maker*. To complain.

CALLING MILES DAVIS "arrogant" might reasonably lead to some kind of response, but even so it was a surprise when a call came through to the *MM* office late one night from Milan.

"Who is that?"

"Miles Davis…" came the faint response. "Did you write the review of the Isle Of Wight records?"

Right. Miles had just been shown a copy of the *MM* containing the review which praised the rock acts on the 1970 festival recordings, but dismissed the Davis set. And Mr Davis wanted to know: "What kind of man can call me arrogant?"

Miles did not sound angry. Just surprised, and maybe hurt. Already I was kicking myself and finding it hard to explain. But Miles deduced his own explanations. "Oh, I know where you're at," he said at length. "You shouldn't be a critic."

Miles proceeded to address me on the inadequacies of white rock music and its apologists. He spelt out the self-evident truths that it was stolen black music. "You are a white man looking for white excitement, but there are more subtle forms of excitement. How can you say we are arrogant when Alvin Lee was playing – you must be out of your f––––– mind! Listen to me – Alvin Lee is s–––. And I heard a record by Eric Clapton and he copied a BB King solo… note for note. I look through your paper and all I see are white guys."

Miles went on to explain the influence his music had, took a swipe at Tom Jones but said that even f––––– Yoko appreciated his music sufficiently to want to do something together.

He stressed the importance of learning from music rather than displaying the rock-star penis on stage and finished by adjuring, "Don't look at music – listen to it."

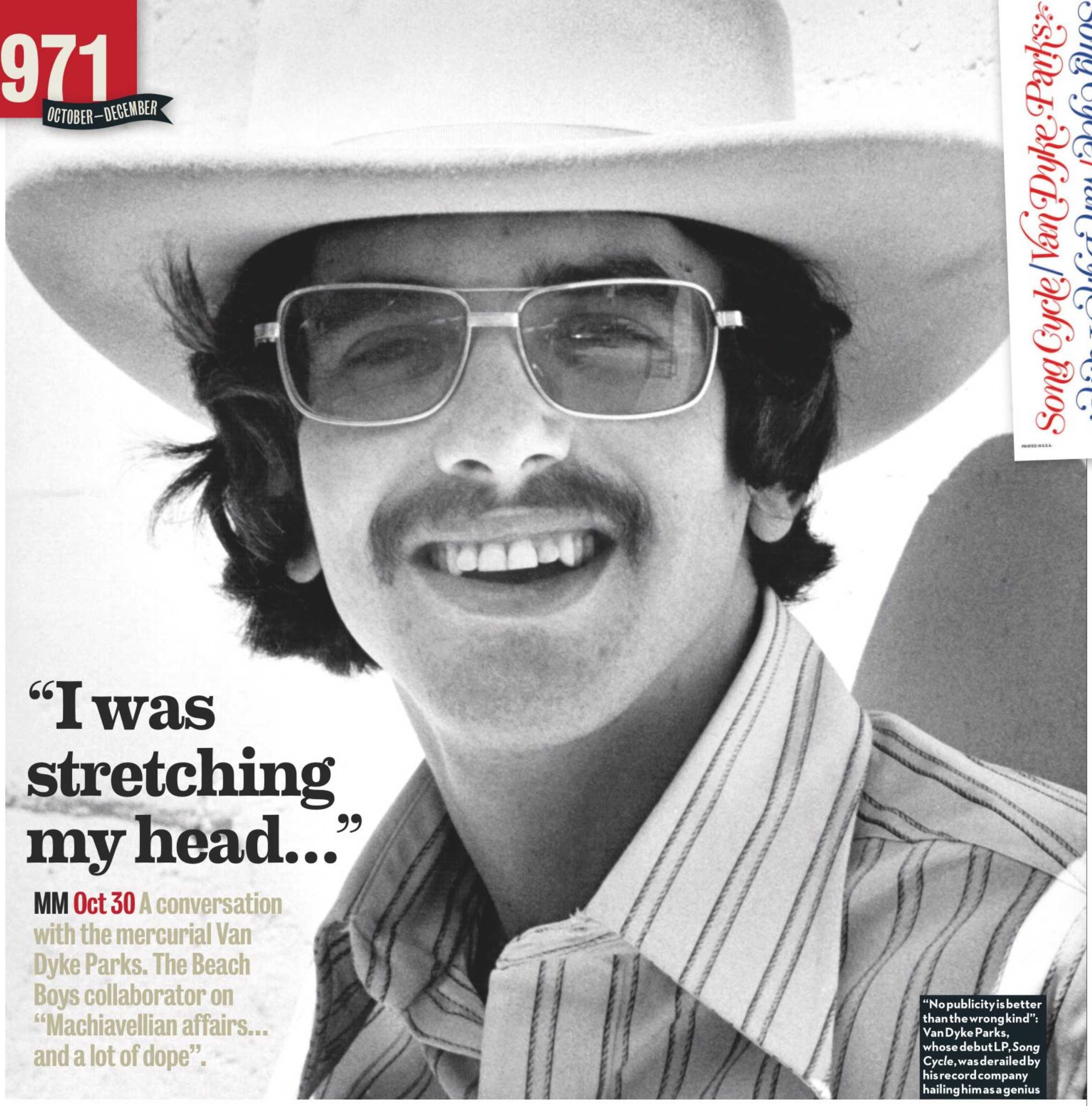
All true, of course, and well said. It was wrong to call a man whose contribution to jazz and music in general has been so enormous, arrogant. What I called arrogance, I sensed, was contempt for the entire rock set-up – rightly, as it transpired, from Miles' comments. But why then play at a rock festival? Much of modern rock is shallow and derivative. What are we going to do – ban it? Meanwhile it thrives in the absence of anything better in its ability to communicate on a large scale.

Miles' set at the Isle Of Wight and recent albums do not appeal to me, not because they lack excitement, but because they lack conviction. Maybe the conviction is there, but it doesn't communicate to me. *Chris Welch*

WorldMags.net

1971

OCTOBER–DECEMBER



Song Cycle / Van Dyke Parks

Song Cycle / Van Dyke Parks

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

"I was stretching my head..."

MM Oct 30 A conversation with the mercurial Van Dyke Parks. The Beach Boys collaborator on "Machiavellian affairs... and a lot of dope".

"No publicity is better than the wrong kind": Van Dyke Parks, whose debut LP, *Song Cycle*, was derailed by his record company hailing him as a genius

GETTY

VAN DYKE PARKS' troubles began the day somebody called him a genius. Since then, he's never looked forward. His record company was responsible for the "genius" thing, and it was they who, not long afterwards, were forced into the extraordinary step of publicly offering thousands of copies of his unsold first – and only – album at one cent each.

That's right. For one cent, Warner Brothers of Burbank, California would send you a virgin, pristine, cellophane-unbroken copy of Parks' *Song Cycle*. And this, mark you, is the same Van Dyke Parks who wrote and arranged for Randy Newman and Harpers Bizarre, and who collaborated with Brian Wilson on "Heroes And Villains", "Vegetable", "She's Goin' Bald", "Wonderful" and "Cabinessence".

The same Parks who, again with Brian, created that masterwork called "Surf's Up", which only now, four years after its historic conception, is gracing our turntables courtesy of the Beach Boys' latest album. Parks' reaction to its release it somewhat ambivalent. One suspects that the attendant notoriety will come not amiss, but with a laugh he murmurs: "I never had drawn up a contract and since my wife and I are eating irregularly..." One gets the point.

But all good tales are told from the beginning, and in Parks' case that was as an eight-year-old, back in 1952, when he became a member of the Columbus Boys' School Choir, which took engagements in many major American cities with many major American orchestras, when the latter were performing choral works. So, in effect, he's been a professional musician for 19 of his 27 years.

After school he spent two years at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, where "they had a good music course, and my grades said I was a good student. My talent is keen and I have potential..."

Ten years ago he moved to California, and was immediately arrested, falsely, on charge of possessing marijuana. "Since I'd never even heard of it at that time... well, after that I took plenty of opportunities to find out what it was that I'd been arrested for. After I found out, I stayed in a stupor for some time." More laughter.

Singer Danny Hutton befriended him and took him to MGM, where he cut a couple of singles, "Farther Along" and "Come Into The Sunshine", both of which bombed heavily. Derek Taylor was managing Van Dyke, and those singles held a couple of interesting seeds for the future: "Farther Along" had its composition credited to the

Richard Williams talks to composer VAN DYKE PARKS, legendary associate of the Beach Boys and Randy Newman

rican orchestras, when the
r were performing choral
s.
, in effect, he's been a
ssional musician for 19

"Farther Along" had its com-
position credited to the Hopi
Indians, and on the flip-side
was something called "Num-
ber 9" — "A rip-off from

Boys all my life, talking about
California, so when I was
brought there I went down to
the beach with that ingrained
image, and I was very im-
pressed by the opportunity, so

that he should ever have
doubted his own place in the
field, but it was hard for him
and at the time there were a
lot of Machiavellian affairs
. . . and a lot of dope."

Brot
tion
scrit
my
and
'So
gon





Hopi Indians, and on the flip-side was something called "Number 9" – "a rip off from Beethoven's well-known favourite. I'd been taking a lot of LSD and I thought it was hip for all men to act as brothers." In addition, there was the overall mood of "Sunshine", which put you in mind of Fred Astaire, Busby Berkeley musicals, and that whole airy, dream-like pre-war feeling. It was something which would later become the trademark of *Song Cycle*, and which was a strong common bond with Randy Newman.

After MGM he spent more than a year as a session musician, playing piano on various dates in LA studios. But it was Hutton again who took a hand to bring Van Dyke to his most fateful meeting, with Brian Wilson on Terry Melcher's front lawn in Hollywood.

"Brian needed a lyricist, and he'd been recommended to me by Danny. I'd been hearing The Beach Boys all my life, talking about California, so when I was brought there I went down to the beach with that ingrained image, and I was very impressed by the opportunity, so I took it."

The way he and Brian wrote during the period of the aborted *Smile* LP was that Wilson would bring him a tune, and it would have "absolute note-by-note criteria, into which I put as many rhyme sequences as I could."

He remembers that *Surf's Up* came at a time when "I was stretching my head, much to the suspicion of the other Beach Boys. I'd had it up to here, so I said, 'You're The Beach Boys and this song's called 'Surf's Up'. After that it was Dump The Punk Week... know what I mean?"

He was out, but says that from Brian he learned a lot about self-determination. "It was five years ago, and that five years has been a period of recovery for Brian, recovering from the impact of a new view he might have had of the competition in the field of pop music. It was ludicrous that he should ever have doubted his own place in the field, but it was hard for him and at the time there were a lot of Machiavellian affairs... and a lot of dope."

The next step was to compose and record *Song Cycle*, a truly magnum opus originally titled *Looney Tunes*, and it's typical of Van Dyke's curiously pragmatic way of looking at things that he views both *Surf's Up* and *Song Cycle* primarily "as an employment opportunity for a lot of people. I see people in the studio, from first-chair violinists to skilled mechanics, and maybe they've got children. If they're employed, that's the most important issue... that the music is a by-product of the employment opportunity. That may sound cold and removed from art, but I feel it's respectable..."

The eventual history of *Song Cycle* is certainly one of the oddest in pop. "When it came out, I was promised mutual approval of all promotion material from Warner Brothers, and it was in violation of that, that I was described as 'a genius'. I called my dad, who's a psychiatrist, and told him, and he said, 'Son, a genius you ain't. It's gonna be a tough act to follow.'" Despite favourable reviews, barely a copy was sold.

"So they put it on sale at one cent, and that's when I started producing Randy, whose intention had been to go to George Martin. I told him to go to Warner Brothers because it was a challenging situation, and gave me something to do that I believed in."

To Van Dyke, now, *Song Cycle* is "an essential testament to the continuance of good land husbandry. I'm out to be a farmer now, which should give people even more food for thought."

But that's not his only project. "I called up Mo Ostin, the president of Warner Brothers, today," he said, "and asked him for $250 to keep us going for the week, to which he responded with a cheque, and we agreed that I'd go into the studios and deliver my new album on or before December 1. I told him that I'd appreciate it if he's remembers that my family home is in Warner Brothers' good hands. No publicity is preferable to the wrong kind."

"I called up Warners president Mo Ostin today and asked him for $250 to keep us going"

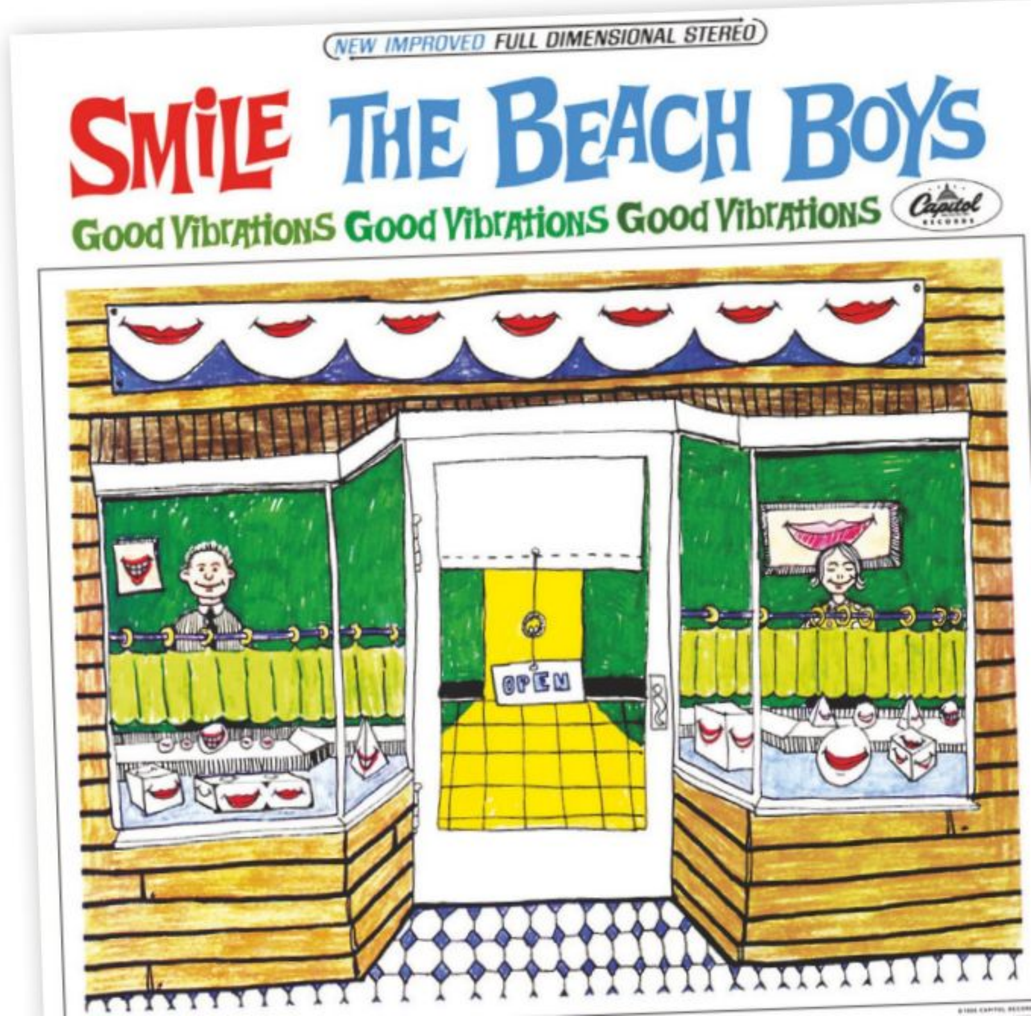
The concept of the new album, his first in three years, is acceptably unorthodox. It's based around the calypsos of Trinidad, which have been developed in relative quietude since the British government emancipated the island's black slaves back in 1838. These people were, he says, exceptionally literate, and "it's wonderful to me that the black people undertook this raising of a joyful noise at that time".

He'll be taking the songs and orchestrating them, using a string quintet with his own piano and voice, plus a rhythm section and the Esso Steel Band from Trinidad, whose album he recently produced. "I'll find only what's present and valuable, and orchestrate the remaining space. I feel that I'm a trustee..."

Of the music? "Yes, and also as the representative of an oil-consuming nation. That may seem irrelevant, but it's not."

Just talking to Parks on the telephone for half an hour, one gains an understanding of the broad concepts in which he habitually thinks. He is, for instance, firmly against the percentage system, by which some outsider sees the potential in a commodity (be it music or processed cheese), buys a percentage in it, and thus has a stake in perpetuity. "I've decided to waive that, to take a fair share return on which I can live and have the profits directed to one humanitarian stratum or another, like it's an incentive programme for these old Calypsonians to understand what profit is in their music."

"Van Dyke's a crazy," says Derek Taylor (who's one himself) from behind the pianola in his Kinney office. "*Dove-nested towers the hour was/ Strike the street quicksilver moon/ Carriage across the fog / Two steps to lamp lights cellar tune/ The laughs came hard in Auld Lang Syne*". Parks wrote that, for *Surf's Up*. Did you ever hear anything lovelier? *Richard Williams*



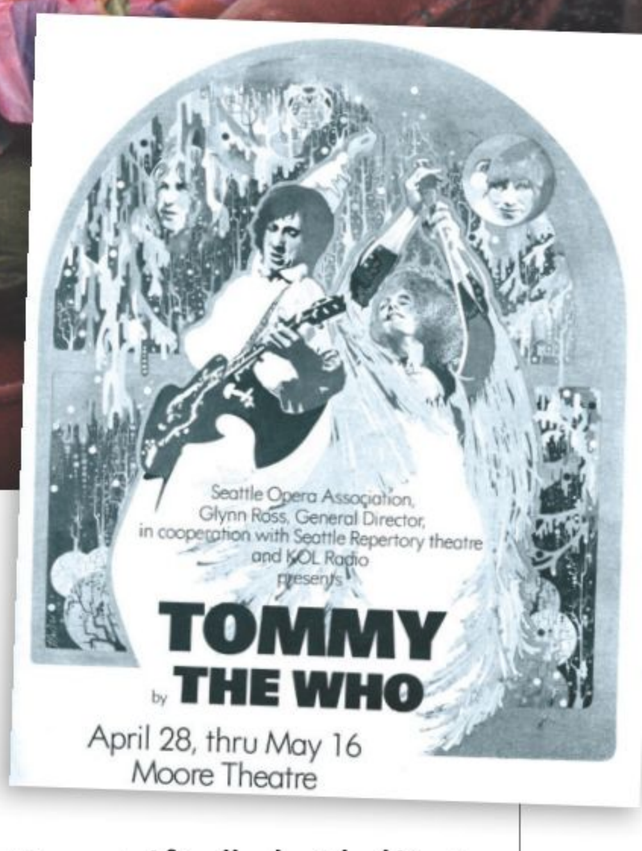
WorldMags.net



Just don't call her "kooky": Bette Midler, lounge singer, Broadway bit-part player and gay-bathhouse entertainer

"Larger than life"

MM OCT 30 A word (in fact, several) with Bette Midler, lately the Acid Queen in a stage version of The Who's *Tommy*.



"I MEAN, WHEN PEOPLE go to see a singer at a club, they don't expect to see some demented lady take off her clothes and expose her body to them and shriek this incredible song at them. They just aren't ready for it."

Bette Midler (pronounce it "bet") was explaining why she didn't perform "The Acid Queen" during a recent Chicago engagement, although it was her hit number in a production of The Who's *Tommy*. The production played three weeks in Seattle to critical raves and sold-out audiences, but it never went on the road.

"We wanted to do it in one of the big cities and I'm sure it would have done very well. But they're making a movie out of it, and Pete Townshend is going to play Tommy, I think. I don't know who's going to play the acid queen, but not me. It's too bad; I would have been a good one.

"I really loved that number. As we envisioned it, it had nothing to do with drugs but was about the pervasiveness of female sexuality, all the things that drive boys to be homosexuals and frighten men and make them run away. Larger than life, suffocating.

"She jumps out of a box in a carnival wagon and has a G-string on with fringe and this little brassiere with little red rubies on it. And it looks like I have nothing on from where you're sitting. I'd never done anything like that before. I wanted to know what it felt like, and it didn't hurt me. Except I got bruised a lot jumping out of that box. I had to put makeup all over my legs because I was black and blue for three weeks.

"Anyway, I jumped out and started shrieking, '*I'm the gypsy, the acid queen, pay before you start. The gypsy, I'm guaranteed to tear your soul apart*'. And of course, all she does is just freak poor Tommy out."

It's not hard to picture Bette Midler in the part, because while she has an excellent versatile singing voice that can handle any kind of material well – ballads, blues, rock, novelty songs – what really distinguishes her as a performer is a natural theatricality heavily seasoned with humour. As a result, she comes on so strong that some can't take the heat.

"I don't mind that people think I'm unusual, I really like that," says Bette. "But I don't want people to thing I am an object of derision. I've been compared to Tiny Tim. I don't think of myself as anything like Tiny Tim, even vaguely, except that occasionally I pick a tune that is a little obscure and old.

"That's what labels like 'kooky' do to you. That word absolutely makes me nauseous. I mean if they don't stop using that word, I don't know what." Bette taps the desk in front of her hard with her knuckles as her voice becomes furious. "You can write that for me. That word is out to lunch and don't call me that!"

Bette comes from middle-class stock. Her parents are from New Jersey, but they moved to Honolulu, Hawaii about 30 years ago, and Bette was born and raised on the islands. Her first taste of showbiz came early.

"When I was in the first grade, I sang 'Silent Night' in front of the class, and I got a prize for it. I was afraid to tell my mother because I was Jewish and we weren't supposed to sing Christmas Carols."

In sixth grade, Bette won a talent contest with her singing, but after that she gave it up in favour of dramatic reading and theatre. "By the end of my senior year in high school I was crazy to be an actress. Then I went to college and all I could think of was getting out. I finally decided I just had to go to New York City. I couldn't be bothered. I spent a year in New York running around and doing little things. And then I got into a Broadway show and it was awful."

"I don't mind that people think I'm unusual. I really like that"

The show was *Fiddler On The Roof* and Bette was in it for three years, first as an understudy in the chorus, then as the oldest daughter. She learned a lot about Broadway life, and for every lesson she can tell a horror story.

Because of her unhappiness in *Fiddler* she began looking around for an out. She found it after she went to see a fellow cast member perform in a small nightclub.

"She wasn't making no money at it, but she was having a good time," says Bette. "So the next time she went down there to sing I went along. And the first two songs I sang, nothing happened: it was boring.

"But in the third song something happened to me in the middle. I suddenly knew what the song was about. I had an experience, some kind of breakthrough. And when I came out at the end, I knew I had to do that. For as long as the trip will be, I had to live it out.

"The song was 'God Bless The Child', but it has never meant as much before or since. I don't sing it, as a matter of fact. But that was when I decided."

So Bette became a lounge singer. "Just torch singing, old blues ballads like 'What A Diff'rence A Day Made', 'My Forgotten Man', 'Ten Cents A Dance' and 'Am I Blue'.

GETTY/SEATTLE OPERA HOUSE


THE ACID QUEEN

MEAN, . when

But then came an event that gave her the push toward liberation of her inner humour and sense of theatre. She was hired by a place she calls "the Baths".

"The Baths is a male health club in New York. It's sort of, how you say, kitschy, decorated to death. It's an incredible multi-million-dollar operation. And these guys, they're into swimming and sauna and stuff.

"And on Friday and Saturday nights, they have the distinction of being one of the only health clubs in the world that has entertainment. And I was the entertainment. They have a little lounge, and they pack these guys in, on the floor, in chairs, in their bathrobes or towels or whatever, and they just watch the show and enjoy themselves.

"Working at the Baths allowed me a chance to really stretch out and grow in a way I had not been able to before. I was able to work with a piano player and drummer every week and I didn't have to pay for it. And I had a big, built-in, captive audience. I mean, where were they going to go. They were practically naked.

"And I had a chance to do material that was a little beyond what everybody was doing. By that time I had done that torch thing for about a year and it was getting on my nerves. So I used to throw in a couple of odd numbers, like 'Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy' and 'Marijuana', which is a '30s song, and 'Love Potion No 9' and 'Great Balls Of Fire'. Songs that make people laugh.

"I got into this laugh thing, this hysterical thing. Now I'm sort of passing through the hysterical point and trying to get into just plain old singing. But I don't know that I'll ever do that completely. Because it's hard not to be funny when it just comes so naturally to you.

"When I sing at the Baths, I can do 'The Acid Queen'. Because they're ready for it. But now I'm here on the road and it's different again. I have to calm myself down and change all these things."

Following the nightclub bookings, Bette is putting together a band of her own in New York. "I'm not worried about how good the band is. All I'm worried about is how good we are together. Because with Joplin, I remember, I used to think Big Brother & The Holding Company was one of the worst bands in the world. But playing with her, dynamite, great, didn't matter. And her next band wasn't that hot.

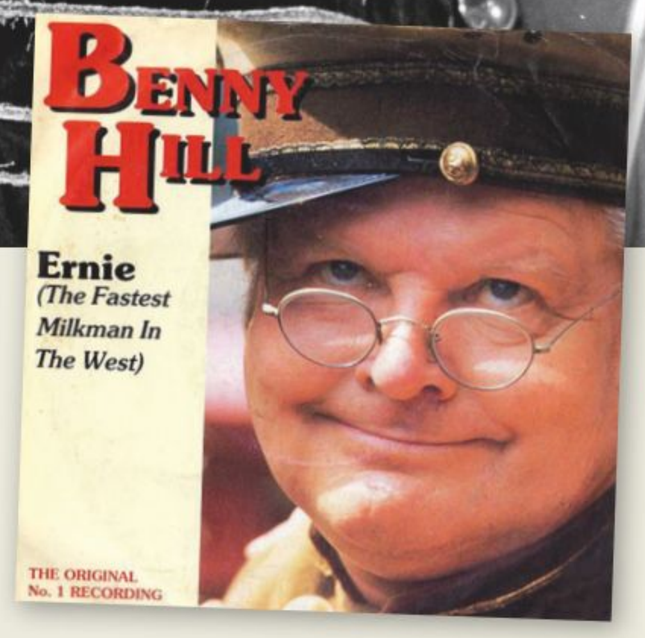
"It's all the vibrations. If I get the vibrations going with some musicians who really love me... either it's going to be the highlight of my life, or it's going to be a total bust. In that case, I will know what direction to go.

"I have seen enough performers to know that one way or another I'm not going to starve. And what more can you ask out of this life than not to starve and have a good time doing what you like to do."

For the present, Bette is still fighting against being typed as the nutty, kooky queen of camp. "Just make sure they get the last sentence in," she tells me in as cynical a voice as she can master. "Because the last sentence is bound to be the zinger."



Benny Hill: taking Ernie's *"ghostly goldtops"* from his Thames TV comedy show to the top of the Christmas 1971 hit parade



"I like to lead a very happy life"

NME DEC 4 Comic Benny Hill reveals the story behind his No 1 hit "Ernie (The Fastest Milkman In The West)": "I used to have a country round."

GALLOPING TO THE top of the chart this week in his milk cart is yer actual comedian/erstwhile pop star in the person of Benny Hill. And according to Mr Hill, he has never plugged his hit single, "Ernie", at all. Originally it was featured in his show some 12 months ago. But yer clever record company decided it would be a good single to release at this time of year – and how right they were.

Mr Hill doesn't feel at home sitting on a stool, singing into a mic on a programme like *Top Of The Pops*, which is one reason why he's just completed a film for them where he is seen galloping up and down in a horse and cart.

"I thought it would be better to act the record out. I've always thought it was wrong to just sing a record on *Top Of The Pops* – well, it's a kids' programme – and I'm not on their kind of wavelength."

"Ernie" is an appropriate enough record in that Benny was at one time in his life working as a milkman. "Yes, I was a milkman when I was 16 and I used to have a country round. I also used to gallop into Market Street. I remember they always gave me the newest and most nervous horses because my first customer was a mile away and I could give him a good run.

"I used to imagine I was driving a stage coach on the way back and really got up some speed, got all the bottles rattling, that did!

"Once I was on a television programme called *Guess My Secret* where they introduced an unknown man and myself and the panel had to guess what 'secret' we had in common. In fact we'd both stopped runaway horses. One day when I was on a milk round I saw the Co-op horse going hell for leather, so I ran out and pulled it to a halt."

Apart from "Ernie", Benny also has an album on sale at the moment, featuring material which has been on his shows at one time or another. He expounded: "One side is the best monologues taken from the show and on the other side are songs. And of course 'Ernie' is on the LP as well. I'm pleased they play 'Ernie' on the radio, but wish they'd play some of the other tracks from the album. Still, you can't knock being in the charts – I'm pleased it's done well."

"I write all the time – in a barge in Amsterdam, anywhere"

What Benny seems to have well under control is his relaxation time. "I like to lead a very happy life. Some people enjoy flying up to Aberdeen on a Monday, then going to Southampton on the next day – I don't.

"I've had offers to go to America, but if you're a flop then you've had it, and if you are a success then they give you 39 shows of your own and I couldn't stand that. At the moment I do six shows a year and bring out some records. I write all the time – in a barge in Amsterdam, anywhere. And I am able and free to be able to take off abroad when I want.

"You see I can write anyplace – I don't have to be stuck. I always carry a notebook and pencil with me so if I get an idea for a script I can write it down straight away." *Julie Webb*

REX FEATURES

WorldMags.net

March 16, 1971: representing The Beatles, Paul McCartney collects the Best Original Score gong for the *Let It Be* film at the 13th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles

“He can’t say all I did was ‘Yesterday’. He knows it’s not true”

— MELODY MAKER NOVEMBER 20 —

PAUL McCARTNEY is a new man: sheep shearing, farm living, Gilbert O’Sullivan listening. Except he can’t remotely let go his grievances about John Lennon and the other Beatles. “I wish he wouldn’t go on about it,” says his secretary as McCartney continues venting. “There’s no stopping him.”

“I JUST WANT THE four of us to get together somewhere and sign a piece of paper saying it’s all over, and we want to divide the money four ways. No one else would be there, not even Linda or Yoko, or Allen Klein. We’d just sign the paper and hand it to the business people and let them sort it all out. That’s all I want now. But John won’t do it. Everybody thinks I am the aggressor, but I’m not you know. I just want out.”

Paul McCartney is at home in the control room of Studio Two at EMI’s Abbey Road studios. He sits in the switchboard and looks around at the familiar studio walls. Classic Beatle songs were constructed in this very spot in London’s St John’s Wood. He’s in the mood for talking. The gathering was set up to listen to the new album from Wings, but conversation shifts inevitably to other things. There are so many things Paul can talk about.

Denny Seiwell, Wings’ drummer, and Denny Laine, Paul’s recruited guitarist, obviously aren’t too happy about Paul’s constant references to the past. Neither is Linda, »

GETTY

WorldMags.net

whose hand is in constant contact with Paul. Neither too is Shelley Turner, Paul's general secretary. "He's talking about money now. That's one of his pet points. He'll never stop. Denny S and Denny L are protesting, but there's nothing I can do," she says before I face the action.

"Please get him onto talking about Wings. That's why we are here, after all. The others can't join in talking about The Beatles. I wish he wouldn't go on like he does. There's really no stopping him."

The action is fairly fast when I reach the control studio. It's as if Paul wants to get all he has to say out of his system. The Beatles, Wings, money, Apple, Dick James, John and Yoko, George's Bangladesh concert, Allen Klein, the Scottish farm and the press are all brought up.

Paul is being very honest and straightforward – probably too honest. "Don't print this but…" is the preamble to many of his remarks. He talks about large sums of money casually… so and so sues me for a million in London and a million in New York… he's spent a quarter of a million… he promised him £100,000 that year from Apple… but he sold his share again because he was persuaded to by him…

The names have been changed to protect the innocent. Paul's bitterness towards the other three Beatles seems more of concern than of dislike. He worried about their affairs but is tired of warning them. They are tired of his warnings too, so Paul just wants to get out.

There is no bitterness when he talks of John. "John and Yoko are cool in what they are doing. I saw them on television the other night and thought that what they were saying about what they wanted to do together was basically the same as what Linda and I want to do. John's whole image now is very honest and open. He's alright is John. I like his *Imagine* album, but I didn't like the others. *Imagine* is what John is really like, but there was too much political stuff on the other albums. You know I only really listen to them to see if there is something I can pinch," he laughs.

And how do you sleep? "I think it's silly. So what if I live with straights? I like straights. I have straight babies. It doesn't affect him. He says the only thing I did was 'Yesterday' and he knows that's wrong."

Paul motions to the studio below. "I used to sit down there and play and John would watch me from up here and he'd really dig some of the stuff I played to him. He can't say all I did was 'Yesterday', because he knows and I know it's not true."

"Yesterday", it seems, is a bone of contention with Paul; in fact all the Beatles classics that he is associated with. He doesn't own them, but feels he ought to. "I don't own anything I write because of the old contracts. We get the royalties from them, but now when I write with Linda they sue me because they claim she can't write. Well, I know she can.

"The song publishers claim that they made the songs as popular as they were, but they didn't. It was us, because we bloody well wrote them. I'll never own 'Yesterday' – not in 50 years, not even when I die. I'm prepared to forget that. I just want to own the things I do now, but I can't because of the Beatles contract."

"I don't own anything I write because of the old contracts"

The contract, Paul says, has another seven years to run. Until then by law he'll be a Beatle. In the eyes of the world he'll always be a Beatle.

"The Beatles never actually copped for all this money," he says. "Everyone else did. I wouldn't care, but you'd think we could have a new deal now. You'd think they'd release us. They've made a lot of money and we could shake hands and part company, but now we can't. I'm being sued for a million pounds in London and a million pounds in New York by Northern Songs. It's so complicated."

PAUL SHRUGS HIS shoulders, seemingly indicating that he doesn't want to talk about money any more, but habitually during the conversation the subject crops up again. So does Lennon, so does Klein and so do The Beatles. He could go on forever…

"You know I was asked to play George's concert in New York for Bangladesh and I didn't? Well, listen, Klein called a press conference and told everyone I had refused to do it for the Pakistani refugees – that's what he called them. It wasn't so. I said to George the reason I couldn't do it was because it would mean that all the world's press would scream that The Beatles had got back together again, and I know that would have made Klein very happy. The press of the world would have been there. It would have been an historical event and Klein would have taken the credit.

"I didn't really fancy playing anyway. If it wasn't for Klein I might have had second thoughts about it, but I don't know really. Allen is a good talker. The others really dig him, but I've made the mistake of trying to advise them against him and that p––––– them off. I think they might secretly feel that I am right, though.

"You know when the *Let It Be* album came out there was a little bit of hype on the back of the sleeve for the first time ever on a Beatles album. At the time The Beatles were very strained with each other and it wasn't a happy time. I said it was a new phase Beatles album and there was nothing further from the truth.

"That was the last Beatles album and everybody knew it. There was no new phase about it at all. Klein had it re-produced because he said it didn't sound commercial enough."

Talk turned to Beatles live shows – or lack of them. "John wanted to do a big thing in Toronto, but I didn't dig that at all. I hear that before he went on stage for that thing he was sick, and that's just what I didn't want. Like anybody else, I'd have been nervous because of the Beatle thing.

"I wanted to get into a van and do an unadvertised concert at a Saturday-night hop at Slough Town Hall or somewhere like that. We'd call ourselves Rikki & Red Streaks or something and just get up and play. There'd be no press and we'd tell nobody about it. John thought it was a daft idea.

"Before John said he was leaving The Beatles I was lying in bed at home one night and I thought I would like to get a band together like his Plastic Ono Band. I felt the urge because we had never played live for four years. We all wanted to appear on a stage but not with The Beatles. We couldn't do it as The Beatles because it would be so big. We'd have to find a million-seater hall or something.

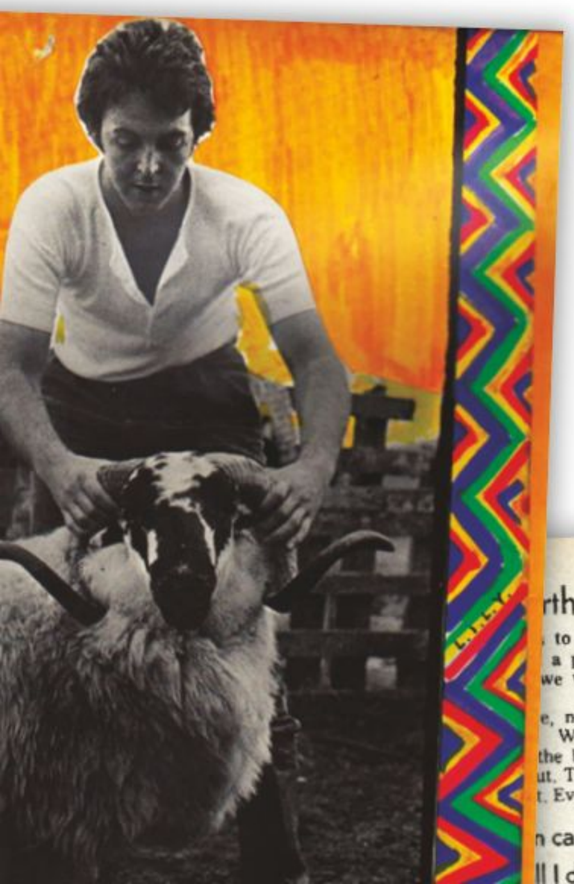
"My best playing days were at the Cavern lunchtime sessions. We'd go on stage with a cheese roll and a cigarette and we felt we had really something going in that place. The amps used to fuse and we'd stop and sing a Sunblest bread commercial while they were repaired.

"We used to do skits and things like that. I'd do a Jet Harris impersonation as he'd play there (*Paul imitates Jet Harris*). He fell off the stage once and I'd fall off too. You couldn't beat it. I'd walk off down the street playing my guitar and annoying the neighbours. I couldn't do that now, but it's what I want to with this new group."

WINGS, IT SEEMED, had at last been drawn into the conversation. A look of relief passed among the audience when I asked about how Paul formed the group and what plans he had for it.

"We met Denny in New York when we were looking for a drummer for the *Ram* album. We tried lots of drummers and most of them were really p––––– off with these auditions. We hired the sh––––– little cellar you could imagine and a really sh–– little drum kit. When each drummer came in I apologised about the condition and asked them to play a bit of rock. A couple of guys said they couldn't do it. It was a terribly embarrassing situation, but Denny made straight for his tom-toms and we knew he was the right guy. He was the right age for a start, whereas most of the others were too old.

"We worked on the *Ram* album together and really got to know each other, so he was the obvious choice of a drummer when it came to




McCartney

forming the group. Then I was thinking of getting another guitarist and I knew Denny and thought he wasn't really doing anything."

Denny: "I was, actually, but…"

Paul: "I thought 'Go Now' was fabulous. He came round to see me and brought a guitar and we played some things together and it was great. We just rehearsed a couple of numbers together."

Denny: "I was doing something but this is more what I wanted to do. I don't want to get into a political thing like most groups, and you can't sit back and do nothing."

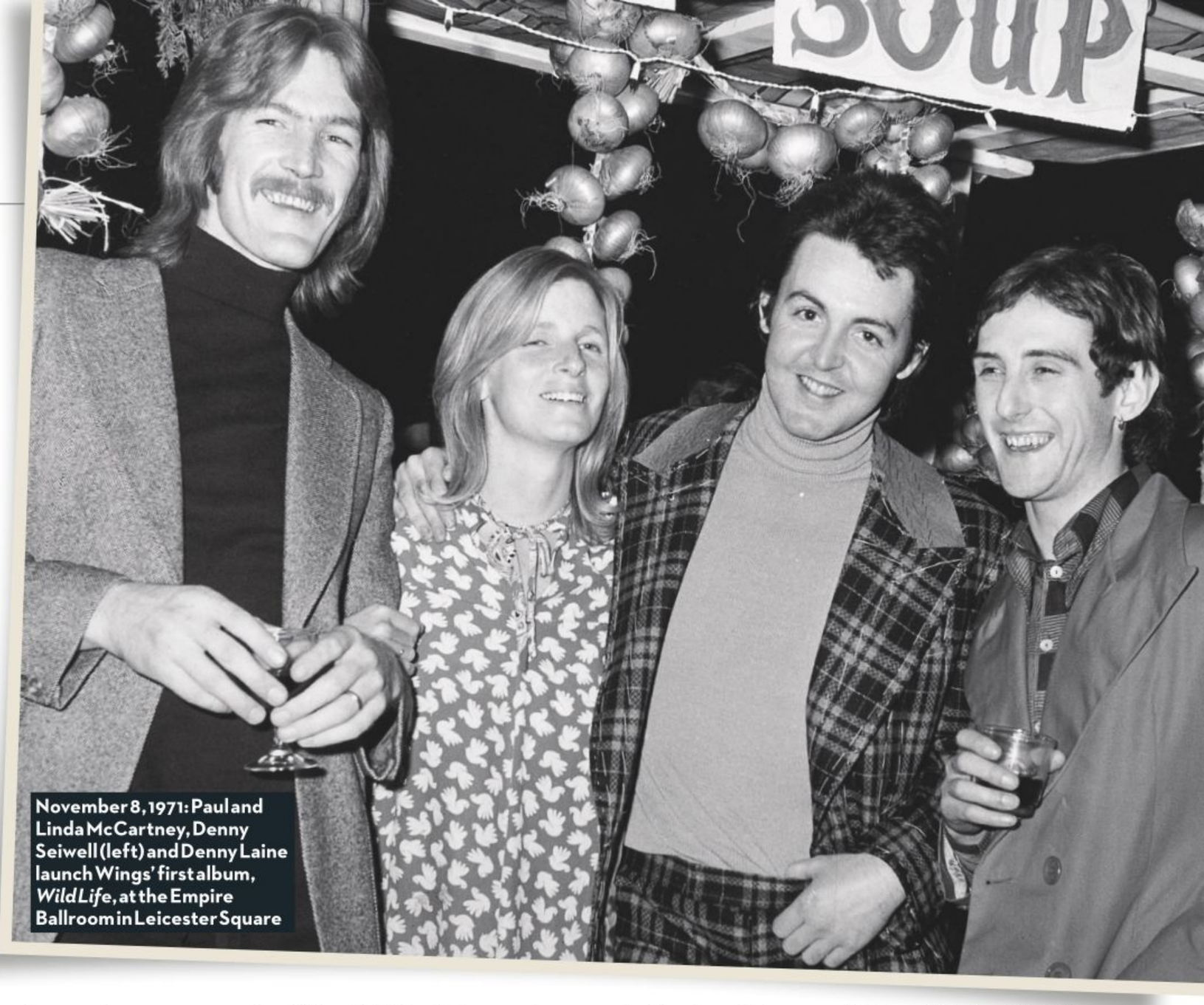
Paul: "We had a very very short rehearsal time. We just banged out a few chords and played what we wanted. It's very simple stuff on the album. Tony [Clark] engineered it for us and we told him we wanted it flat and funky. 'Mumbo' just bombed along. We took it on the first take."

It seems that, within reason, just about everybody plays everything on the album. The drums, naturally enough, are Denny S' main concern, although additional percussion is contributed by all. Paul plays most of the lead guitar – "I'd always fancied myself as a lead guitar" – while Denny L plays harmony lead, chords and some bass. Paul too plays bass, and mainly the basslines on the album – which are relatively simple – have been overdubbed. Linda plays most of the piano and organ lines. "Linda isn't very experienced, so the keyboard parts tend to be very simple, and that is, I think, very valuable. It has innocence rather like a child's painting," said Paul.

Linda: "We've put the rock songs on one side and the slow songs on the other. That's so you can play it at parties. When you want to dance you play side one; when you want to croon you play side two."

Paul: "I don't like it if you have a wild rocker and it stops and the next thing is some violins coming in."

Whatever had happened, I wondered, to the slow, melodic McCartney we used to know? "It depends on what you listen to on the Beatles things," said Paul. "I know most people think of 'Yesterday' and the like, but remember I used to sing 'Long Tall Sally' and other rockers with The Beatles. I like this kind of thing and I've never had a chance really to do it before."



November 8, 1971: Paul and Linda McCartney, Denny Seiwell (left) and Denny Laine launch Wings' first album, *Wild Life*, at the Empire Ballroom in Leicester Square

THE CONVERSATION TURNED again – this time to Paul's other two solo albums, both of which were heavily criticised on release… "Well, the first one was just like testing out a studio. I played all the instruments and did everything myself. It was simple, and I was just having a play. *Ram* was more of an album concept. With this album I tried so very hard and I really hope people would like it. I liked it myself and I still do.

"It was probably a little too important to me to feel that people ought to like my music. I really wanted them to like *Ram*. I thought I had done a great album. With this latest one I don't really care so much if people don't like it. I know when I am in the right mood I can put something good down, and there is an awful lot in *Ram*. I don't see how someone can play it and take in all that stuff and turn round and say 'I don't like it' just like that. You may well feel differently after some weeks."

It seems that Wings could make a live appearance tomorrow, next week, next year or never. The whole band is very, very loose, but it seems there are no immediate plans for a live show. But that doesn't rule out the possibility of Paul turning up and making an unscheduled appearance.

"We just don't know how we are going to do. I don't want to start with a Wings concert at the Albert Hall with all the world watching and analysing. I just want to play a small dance and rock a bit," said Paul.

"We will start by just turning up at a place we fancy visiting and just playing a straightforward gig. We might use another name to keep it quiet. We have rehearsed and we can play live together. In fact it sounds quite good. It doesn't really matter that much. Playing live was the tragedy with Clapton and Jimi Hendrix. People expected so much of them. I am just a guy who bought a guitar and learned to play it once and dug it.

"I don't want Wings to become a media group, with our signatures on knickers which are sold for promotion. I don't like that now. It's all over. I was happy with that situation in The Beatles, but it dies in the end. We are starting off as a new band, but if we ever get to be huge like The Beatles it will be very difficult."

Why did Paul choose to come to England to record Wings? "I decided it was a better studio here in England. There are so many facilities here and I think the engineers are better. In New York, if you want a harmonium you have to order it, and pay for it and then take a break for an hour until it is delivered. Here at EMI you ask for it and five minutes later a porter brings it in for you. It's all big business in New York. It's a nicer atmosphere here. We all like Britain better."

Britain turned to Scotland and Paul seemed happy to talk about life on his Scottish farm, bought purely for privacy. "We have a great time in Scotland but don't appreciate people coming to see us up there. We've 60 acres of very rough land and it's the kind of farm that everyone else has given up bothering with. We've over 100 sheep and five horses and we sell the wool. I shear the sheep myself.

"It's back to nature for me up there. The air is so clean and grass is so green. Last time we were in New York I went for a walk in Central Park and there was a layer of dirt on the grass everywhere. The grass on the farm is so much better. It's very out of the way. You need a Land Rover to get to it. It was only this summer that I had hot water put in. There's no luxury up there for us. The children love it and the climate isn't all that bad."

PAUL DOESN'T WANT to talk too much about the farm because it's very personal to him. A place where he can, for once, be an ordinary human being. The local inhabitants, apparently, treat him like one, giving tips on growing tomatoes, putting shoes on horses and the like. And so I ask whether there are any current rock artists he admires. Immediately he flicks his wrists into a reggae tempo. "Have you heard the *Tighten Up* records? The beat there is tremendous. The version of 'Love Is Strange' on the album is like that. I love that kind of stuff at the moment. And Gilbert O'Sullivan, too. His records are good.

"I like T Rex as well. They seem to be getting to be the new generation Beatles, with the girls tearing their trousers off. It's great at first but they'll soon tire of it all. I like what Graham Nash's doing as well. We met him for dinner in LA when we were over there, but the atmosphere was strained and we didn't really get to know each other. He played me his solo album and asked me whether I liked it. I couldn't say at the time because it was the first time I'd heard it, but now I really love the songs. Have you got the new Beach Boys album, *Surf's Up*… that's good too."

Any comments on Rod Stewart's version of "Maybe I'm Amazed"? "I like the way he's done it, yes."

Lastly I inquired whether Paul still wished to be associated with Apple. "Well, there's a delay with the record because we didn't want a picture of an apple on the label, but it looks as though we will have to. We didn't want to be on Apple Records but we can't get out of it. The sleeve won't even mention my name on it. Everyone knows who Wings is, and there's no need to tell them who I am, is there?"

It was time to go, for the group intended to use the studio to cut a single. In fact they stayed late to do it and a single may be released around Christmas. "Well, it's been good to see you," said Paul as I made my way out. "Hope to see you again sometime. I'm only human, you know." *Chris Charlesworth* •

REX FEATURES

WorldMags.net



"I had no real idea how to sing": a reflective Marc Bolan in 1971, six years on from his first solo single

WorldMags.net

“I believe in a cosmic force”

After years on the sidelines, MARC BOLAN’s T. REX are taking off. As “Hot Love” chases “Ride A White Swan” up the charts, the national elf tells of his journey from mod clothes horse to success, via Helen Shapiro and John’s Children. “If pop star is how people see me,” he says, “fine.”

— NME JANUARY 16 —

EVEN WITH THE wine Marc had put away beforehand, it must have required a good deal of precocious arrogance. A “dude” dresser from the age of nine, writer of his autobiography at 14, subject of glossy magazine features at 15, here he was at 19 making his first ever public appearance in front of six or seven million people. And he’d never sung before.

“I had no real idea how to sing,” remembers Marc of that *Ready, Steady, Go!* promotion on his first solo single, “The Wizard”, back in 1965. “I had only sung before in the studio when we made the record. I thought it would be easy. You just stood there and started singing and that was that.”

But, for the child Bolan, who’d learnt all he knew about singing from watching Cliff Richard in *Summer Holiday*, Elvis in *Loving You* and Eddie Cochran in *Untamed Youth*, that wasn’t that. The result, with the band starting late behind Marc and playing in a different key, was a fiasco.

“I was so embarrassed,” recalls Marc, who made a silent pledge to himself as he left the set “to really work at being a musician from that moment on”. »

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY

WorldMags.net



T. Rex perform "Get It On" on BBC TV's *Top Of The Pops* – their second No 1 single of 1971 after "Hot Love"

One-time sideman for Helen Shapiro (yes, really), male model, child poet and first of the East End mods before the breed had yet been given a name by the press, Marc's has been a chequered life.

"The first time I heard music seriously," he recalls, "was through my dad, who worked in Petticoat Lane and used to bring me home records. The first I had was 'Ballad Of Davy Crockett' by Bill Hayes. Remember that?"

Just in case I didn't, Marc was on hand with a half-remembered verse, "*Da-aavy, Da-aavy Crockett…*"

"I played that all the time until my Dad came home one day and said, 'I've got this new Bill Hayes record for you', and I thought, 'Great!' I looked at the cover and there was this guy jumping around with a guitar. I said, 'But Dad, this isn't Bill Hayes, this is Bill Haley.' It was a real downer. But I played it… 'Rock Around The Clock', 'See You Later Alligator'… and I thought, 'Wow… what's this?' Bill Hayes got thrown right out of the window…"

Apart from serving as a kid at the famed 2 I's coffee bar – where, incidentally, he can remember Cliff Richard being thrown out for jamming in the downstairs room – Bolan's next brush with the temptingly attractive world of rock'n'roll occurred at the Hackney Empire, where *Oh Boy!* was being filmed weekly and where the "fave" rock stars of the day could be seen and idolised and later imitated in front of the mirror at home, guitar clutched to breast.

> "I've got a sort of idea of the image we want to project"

Marc, as yet, couldn't actually play the thing, but he could pluck a nifty tea-chest bass, his dexterity on which got him a placing with a local outfit – not so much a church-hall as street-corner group – glorying under the name of Susie & The Hula Hoops. Lead singer was Helen Shapiro. It was when the friends of that period grew apart, and Miss Shapiro went on to be a teenage star – "I couldn't relate to that because it was outside my neighbourhood and that was all I knew" – that Marc got into the clothes scene.

The Life Of Beau Brummel being one of the first books he got deeply into, he'd been a "smart dresser" from as early as nine but at 13 fell in with an older crowd from Stamford Hill for whom clothes had become a way of life. These were the early days of what was to ignite the whole mod cult and the Carnaby Street bonanza.

"Visually," remembers Marc, "these cats were amazing. They were about 20 when I first knew them but I decided that that was where I wanted to be too, and by the time I was 14 I had the same sort of respect they had in the neighbourhood."

So strong became their reputation, spreading further afield than the immediate East End, that when the national press realised not only that mods existed but that they would make good copy, Marc and his friends were the people they went to.

At 15, *Town* magazine was devoting an article to Marc's wardrobe and his views. He got out, he says, when the media moved in but claims that

GETTY

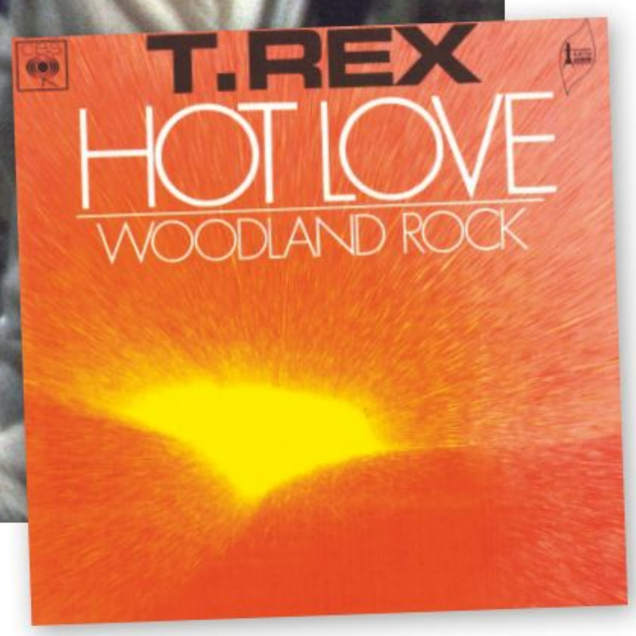
WorldMags.net



if you went around certain parts of the East End and mentioned Marc Feld, his real name, there would still be people who would remember. His obsession for clothes came to an end when the family moved to Wimbledon – "because nothing ever happened there".

Leaving school, he "went into exile for two or three years, like Beau Brummel had done". A living of about £4 a week was made nicking records from second-hand record shops and selling them back. He also did a bit of male modelling, for John Temple the tailors among others, and then, having learnt how to play as well as pose with a guitar – with assistance from the Bert Weedon *Play In A Day* instructor – he set about breaking into music.

He made demos for everyone and anyone, failed an EMI recording test singing Betty Everett's "You're No Good" and finally signed with Decca to cut "The Wizard", a new extended version of which is on the current T. Rex album. From that first abortive *RSG* he went again into a form of exile, cutting himself off from former friends and associates – as well as Decca – to learn the art of songwriting. His difficulty was a lack of anywhere to play. The underground was nonexistent and the choice for a solo performer singing his own songs with a guitar was either folk clubs or rag balls. "I knew that the kids were there, though," says Marc, "because they were buying Dylan records."



It was with producer/manager Simon Napier Bell that Bolan made his second solo record, "Hippy Gumbo". A press handout of the time was recording such illuminating fact as "Likes: £9,000 cars. Dislikes: £8,000 cars."

Again through friendship with what was then the elitist circle of the day, he was able to do a further *RSG* promotion. "I wasn't ashamed of that one," comments Marc, who remembers it primarily as the first unforgettable television appearance of Jimi Hendrix. Despite it, the single sold about 200 copies. Napier-Bell also managed a group called John's Children, who had had a minor hit with their first single. They wanted a lead guitarist. "Actually, they wanted Pete Townshend and I was the nearest equivalent thing he had under contract," laughs Marc.

John's Children are probably best remembered for publicity photographs posed in the nude (before Marc joined) and their single "Desdemona" (after). The single was Marc's song all the way through, and often looked back on as a source of encouragement when things looked black. When he finally split from John's Children because he didn't like the way their music was going, Marc started Tyrannosaurus Rex. It isn't commonly known that for a brief spell they were a five-piece electric group.

Marc had modelled them on Tomorrow and they managed a few gigs at The Electric Garden, later Middle Earth. "We didn't rehearse," recalls Marc. "We didn't know about rehearsing. We thought you just went on and said, 'Here are the songs…'"

Big Rex had a short life, permanently stunted when Track Records repossessed the band's equipment. Marc, bereft of his Gibson, bought a £12 acoustic with money his mother had given him and with Steve Took, who'd played drums with the five-piece, set up the bopping duo.

John Peel's assistance through Perfumed Garden and the duo's free gigs in Hyde Park aroused the initial interest and created the impetus. Before long they were back at Middle Earth. "A fiver a night and a cab home to Wimbledon we got when we started. A cab home… wow, that was really living." *Nick Logan*

— MELODY MAKER FEBRUARY 13 —

MARC BOLAN, TEASED, stimulated and tempted by the midday wine, looned around in the rain and stood in humorous mood viewing the vast hulk of Big Guy, an incredible creature whose world revolves around a meagre vault in London Zoo.

It seemed a fine idea to tear away from the world of humanoid fleas that exist around London City, and spend the day at the zoo, where life, although against nature, is somewhat peaceful. "Ride A White Gorilla…" bleats Bolan. It only takes a few minutes with this guy to know what his probably 60 years of life will be used for – fun, with capitals on all three letters, and creation from a clean mind.

Maybe you attach some crazy notion of deepness when the name T. Rex is mentioned. Maybe you'll be plain blasé and boring, mention pixie boots, toadstool armchairs and Noddy caps. Dismiss Bolan as a bit of a dreamer if you will. But in truth, you are wrong. If normality exists, and when you think about it there's no such thing, then Marc Bolan is possibly the closest to a valid, honest human you'll ever wish to meet. He's open, absurdly funny at times. He might resort to imagery, but that's far from being an own-up. He's an entertainer if you like an image in a pop world of images. But again, he's honest.

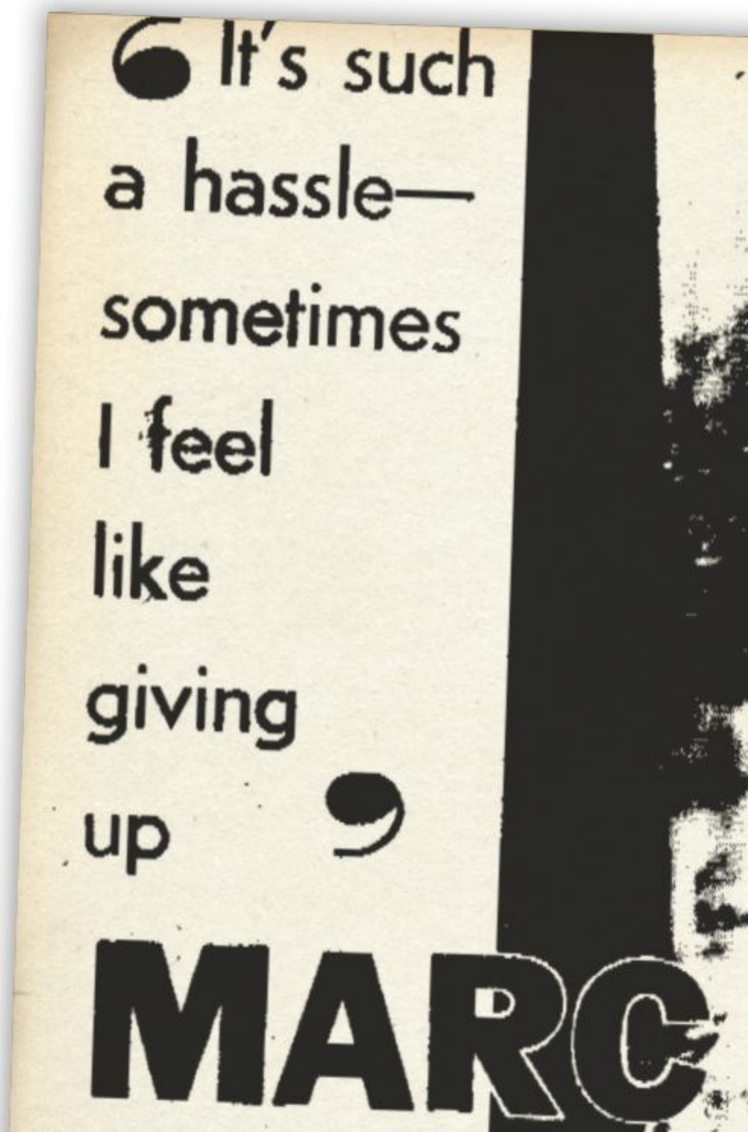
We gorged our meat. They serve excellent meals at the zoo. The wine sped down. The waitress tells Marc he's a good-looking bloke. There's a laugh, and another bottle of wine. Bolan is extremely talkative: you just tap the bottle and it all spills out.

Does it ever bore you to be termed as the National Elf, or the pixie, or the gnome musician, or whatever? No, it never bothers me. I only hope people write down what they think. I never think of myself like that, because I never see a picture. I don't even know what I look like; you only see it backwards. I've never seen the group on stage; I've never even seen a film of what we do. I've got a sort of idea of the image we want to project, and that's of a human being expressing the feelings inside him to other human beings.

And I'm very flattered that some human beings can listen with love in some cases. That's cool. But I never imagine all the 450,000 people who bought "Ride a White Swan" thought about it. Basically, there were probably about 50,000 people who really cared about it. The single thing, though, is a whole new phase, a phase which I needed, because I was becoming stale.

How has a hit single really hit you as a person? I don't really think it really ever does. I'm astounded. I don't think you are ever fully aware of it. I think it's important for the fact that people are taking us far more seriously. I don't mean intellectually, but just being noticed by people who just thought us a name that was totally unsellable. And hopefully because I'm a person and not a pop star.

Then me getting into the Top 20 – as a musician alongside the pop stars – opens up a great thing. It's fabulous. I mean the charts used to be full of Beatles and Cream, but then there was a great lapse when they didn't put out singles so regularly. I'd really like Dylan to put out more singles. Because between each album there's such a change in character it almost blows you over. If he puts out singles, you'd be able to see »



WorldMags.net

how he changed. You'd be able to see where he was. As it is, suddenly he's got a new voice. I mean, to take myself as a writer, I'm not using the same imagery as I did before, and the change is on record for all to hear.

You say your imagery has changed – for the better or worse? I'm no judge, none at all. It's certainly sold more records, and people are happy to say, "Wow, he's laughing all the way to the bank." But I can't understand all that bit; all I know is that what I'm doing now is appealing to more people. But that's no reason for me to stick to that. I mean, "Ride A White Swan" was a song I did in two hours; it was good, fine. I'm conscious now of deciding whether to put out a follow-up or forget singles completely.

But I do think they are important, and possibly we will put another out. Hopefully it will be a hit, because that's fun. I mean, we only have 60 years on this Earth, and one should fill them up with as much goodies as possible. It excites me at this period of my life to be on the cover of pop papers, when for years we had not one line mentioned. That's a buzz, but not a serious buzz. I never sit down and say, "Oh, we've got to have a cover." If people say they want one, then that's a gas.

But do you ever see yourself as a pop star, or being changed into one? No, there's no one to do it, you see. We are all in control of it. We just act naturally. If a pop star is how the people see me, fine, but there's no pressure anywhere. It's fun, that's all.

How does it strike you when someone like Jimmy Young plays your record, though? I'm just very flattered. If I met him I'd say thank you. I don't care what his motives are; he's just played it, when he needn't. I have no disrespect for any Radio One disc jockeys, but the fact is I never listen to it. As a musician I can't afford the time.

Was there ever a time, maybe a couple of years back, when you hated the commercial pop business? No, never. There were always pop records that I liked; and you could use the Top 20 as a gauge. People always look to the obvious; to Radio One we are now possibly regarded as a brand-new group called T. Rex.

> "To Radio One, T. Rex are now possibly regarded as a new group"

Did you ever feel there was a "deep and meaningful" aura surrounding T. Rex, and the underground units as a whole? No, look, music is music, and it comes from deep inside one – you can't get any deeper than that. That's why most things that children say are so good, because they don't have to think first. I wouldn't say that my songs are intellectually valid, but I'll tell you certain songs that to me were very important, songs that were written with great feeling. "White Swan" wasn't one of them. But that doesn't matter, it's of no importance. "White Swan" has imagery; some of it is maybe image provoking.

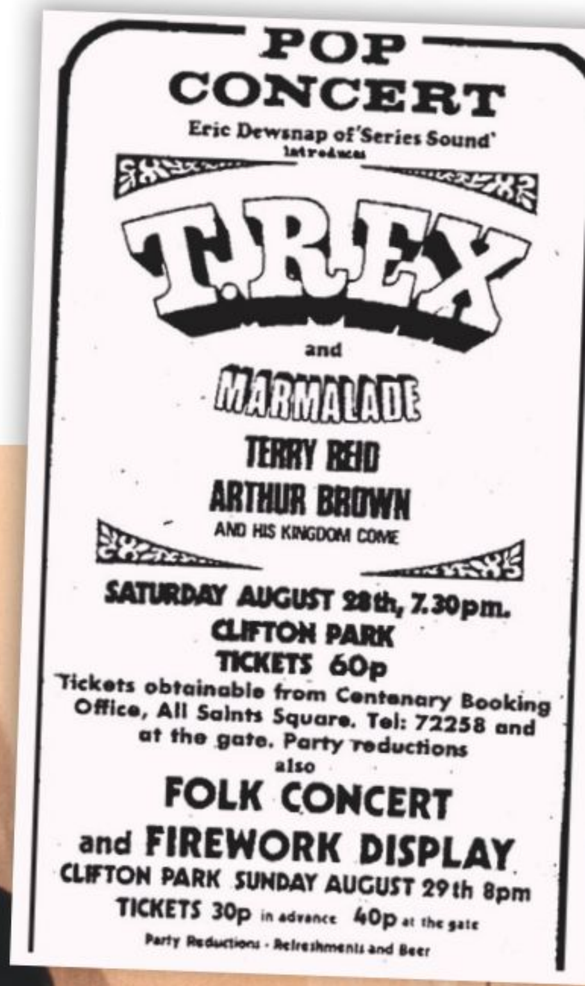
That's very amazing; it's great to be able to conjure up a picture in someone's head. A cat riding a swan blows my mind anyway, because people travel about on jets, and you could fly on birds. What greater thing to fly on than a giant condor, or a golden eagle. That's what it's about; it's just a vibe, nothing more. I don't want to write about "*Do you love me baby, eh, oh yeah*". If I can write just a bit more than what we've come to expect as pop music, I'll be happy. That "Push Bike" song could have been about something, whereas it's about nothing at all. But that's a personal thing. I'm aware you've got to have a hummable melody – but "Tambourine Man" was the most hummable melody of all time – and it was powerful.

I'm not paranoid about the pop scene; I mean there's a lot of underground bands that I just don't dig at all. There's a lot of bad sounds in the underground today – there weren't five years ago, or three years ago, when there were, say, only five bands. And they've all made it. A lot of people have jumped on that fad; like when it's worn out and we go back to calypso bands, they will all do that.

Does your mind ever take your body over? No, because there's one thread of sanity that always holds me together. That's why I'll never freak. I've been on the verge of it so many times – almost once a week. You know, I'm going to give up. I'm going to pack in music. I very often feel like not being involved with people.

Why do you feel that? Because it's such a hassle. And sometimes it's such a strong hassle.

Can you see a remedy for that? No. But maybe growth, maturity, learning to understand other people. It's always egotistical things you freak on. Like why are they doing this to ME, why are they saying this about ME. Why am I like this? If you can somehow see their problems in you, you might begin to understand them. And you'll perhaps begin to see an answer to those problems. But it does no good worrying about them, because you aren't going to change them. The only answer is suicide





T. Rex backstage at *Top Of The Pops* in 1971: (l–r) Mickey Finn, Marc Bolan, Bill Legend (top) and Steve Currie

GETTY (2)

WorldMags.net

– and that's the biggest cop-out of all time. It's the lowest. I mean you'll only die, go up there, and come down again. We are here for it; it's a lesson, if you like.

Do you believe we've been sent here by somebody, then? Do you believe in God? I believe in a cosmic force, which is partial to humanity. I won't say its God, for God is a term people call things.

Why do you think people go to church, then? Because they are insecure, it's somewhere to go. I can wake up in the morning, look in a mirror and see God – see a human being. We are all capable of great thought, and if we can channel them into one thing, then they are the godly thoughts. I'm a very religious person, but not in any set religion. I mean, how are you supposed to worship God. He's very unlikely to be HIM anyway, but if you want to visualise God as being Desperate Dan, then that's a groove.

If he comes down he's not going to look anything like you or me. He's not going to come down and say, "Hey baby, let's groove." Yet maybe he'd appear to us like that, because he knows that maybe it's the only way we can think.

Are you ego-conscious? I don't like it, but I'm very aware of what I'm thinking. And that's a cancel-out, it never allows the ego thing to go too far. I chose the music industry, or rather the image industry, because it was one way of putting my fantasies into reality without hurting anybody, or forgetting myself. I mean, you can't still look at a picture of yourself in the papers and think you are still a groove. You can't believe that you are anything above or better. It's a living, and you are still a piece of paper, or card. Whatever that thing is that people think you are – you are not. And if you think you are, you're a hung-up person.

I know that I would be quite happy to play if people just gave me food. If people enjoyed the music it would be a buzz. It would possibly give me a greater buzz than, say, making money. If I made money I'd rather give it away than let it fall into the hands of some cigar-smoking dude.



What do you mean by cigar-smoking dudes? You know, the promoter guys who promote Shane Earwig, who's never going to make it in a million years. I don't hate them; I just want nothing to do with them.

If the pop vehicle wasn't available, how would you use your mind? I'd write science-fiction novels, and write on my experiences, and what I feel. Not prophetic stuff. I've always assumed that people like to listen to what I say; maybe I'm wrong. It's not an ego thing. I just feel I'm giving something to people.

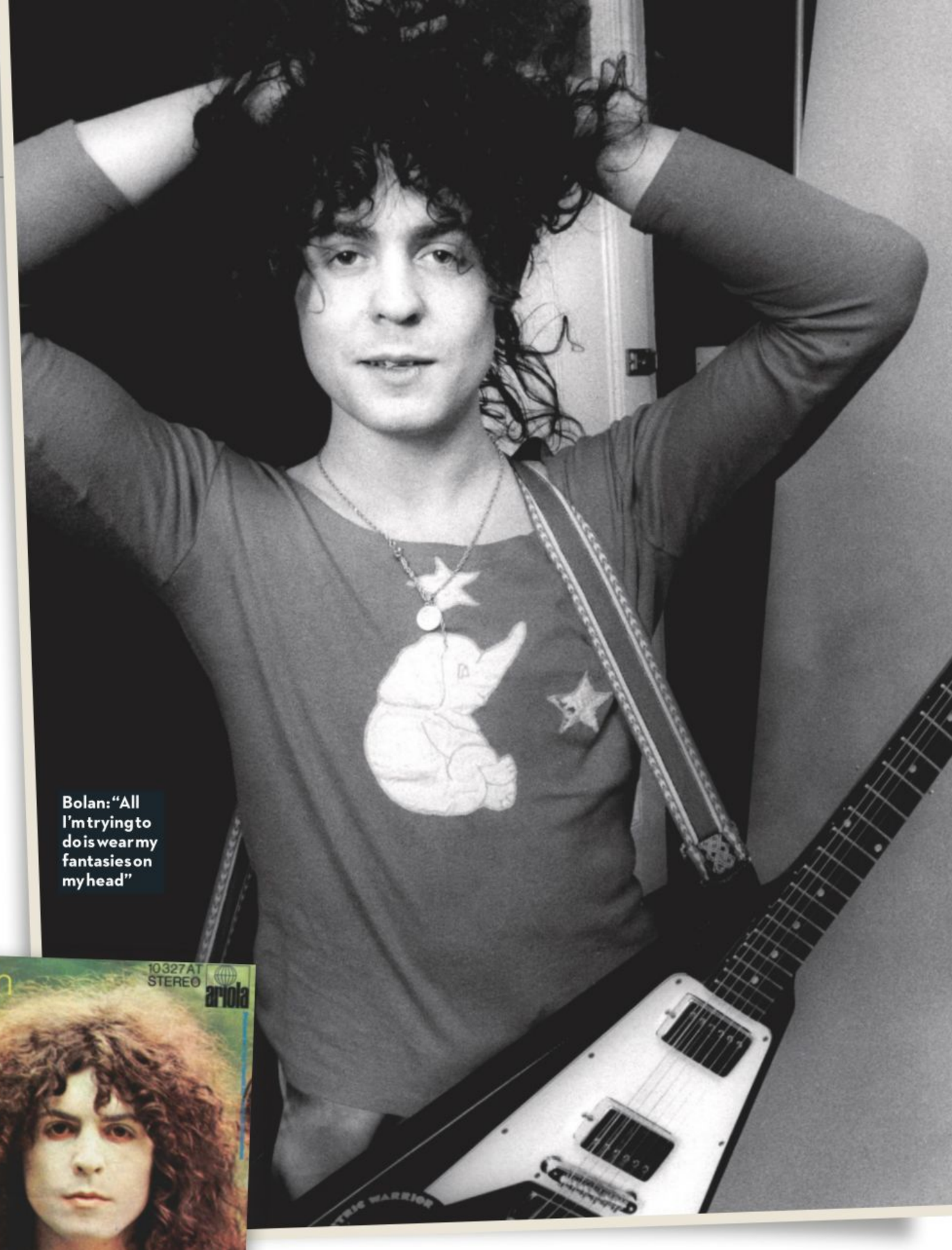
Are you as sincere as you could be? I don't really know what sincerity is. I'm always truthful. I might be – but I don't think you ever know. I'm a human. What I put down on records is always better than what I project, because it's the artistic side. If we could all wear our fantasies on our coat sleeves, we'd all be Fellini freaks. There are no normal people.

All I'm trying to do is wear my fantasies on my head. There is no norm. I'll say it again, there is no reality, there is no security, and we are all dying.

Do you believe in reincarnation? Yes, I certainly do. I can remember things from my past lives. "The Children Of Rarn" is from my past. Things just occur that are inexplicable in normal life.

But what if you were born again as a totally unimaginative person? It's got to happen. It's part of a person's evolution. I'm sure once that I was a Celtic bard; that would certainly account for my knowledge of poetry, for I wasn't very well educated and there's no real reason for me being like this.

You talk of your education; what do you think of today's standards? I'd never send a kid of mine to a school now. I'd rather not have him learn anything. Too much of nothing is being pumped into kids. I don't know what I'd do with him, though. It's quite possible that in 30 years all the young people, the groovy people, will up and buy a continent. No politics, no leaders. We don't need them, you see. Why do we need them? *Roy Hollingworth*


Bolan: "All I'm trying to do is wear my fantasies on my head"

— MELODY MAKER MARCH 6 —

MARC BOLAN, LEADER of T. Rex and the original British underground hero, hit back this week at fans who have accused him of "selling out". His latest "cosmic rock" single, "Hot Love", hit this week's chart at 21 and "Ride A White Swan" is still in the Pop 30. He told the *MM*: "My only aim is to communicate in music, and as long as the result of the communication is not detrimental to the music, I am happy. I sincerely believe in our music, which has grown into major recognition to become a major pop band or underground band or whatever.

"The few people who are saying we have sold out – their outlook is so narrow and they are denying us and other groups the right to grow naturally with our music. My sentiment to the music is not changed and I am certainly a better musician than I was, and a better songwriter. I am pleased T. Rex are no longer an obscure band. The people who said 'sell-out' to Dylan didn't do him any harm at all."

In the first week of its release "Hot Love" sold 40,000 copies – more than "Ride A White Swan" sold in the first six weeks of its release. In some West End record shops this week "Hot Love" was nearly reaching the incredible sales figures of George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord". John Peel, who has been campaigning for T. Rex for years, told the *MM* this week, "I didn't think people could ignore something as good as T. Rex indefinitely. I always assumed T. Rex would make it, from 'Deborah' onwards."

T. Rex leave for their first American tour at the end of this month. They will be away for five weeks and play a coast-to-coast series of concerts, including the two Fillmores. Talking about the trip, Marc said, "Over there people look upon us as an avant-garde English pop group. So far the vibes have been very intellectual, so they are going to be very surprised." •

WorldMags.net



November 20/21, 1971: Led Zeppelin at the Wembley Empire Pool, playing one of two "Electric Magic" shows featuring circus acts and performing pigs dressed as policemen

ALBUMS REVIEW 1971

"The next stage..."

MM NOV 13 Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham returns from tour to address Zep split rumours – and give the lowdown on the group's new fourth LP. "My personal view," he says, "is that it's the best thing we've ever done."

"**LED ZEPPELIN? NEVER** 'eard of yer!" And John Bonham chuckles heartily. "Oh, you still get it," he says, downing a tankard, still fresh from his travels to Japan and America.

Jim Public may be a little vague on the subject of the world's ace rock band, but the heads are with them – all the way from Hiroshima to the Empire Pool, Wembley. Led Zeppelin have created quite a mystery in recent months. No tours, no gigs, no albums. What was happening?

John their power-house drummer, one of the finest in rock, explained it all as he thundered into London this week. First he described his impressions of Japan, where John, Robert, Jimmy and John Paul made their first visit recently. "It was a fantastic place to play. Rock music has only just started to happen there in the last two years, but it is now the second-biggest market in the world for rock records. The people were so friendly and we had the best rock promoter in the world there looking after us.

"It turned out that 'Immigrant Song' is one of our biggest songs in Japan and it's the number with which we always open the act. So the audiences went potty! It's a strange scene there. A lot of big groups are going in now, but they don't have a rock station on the radio. There's only the US Forces stuff.

"The American tour we did was good, in actual fact. It was quite strange because we hadn't been to America for almost a year. To be perfectly honest – I was really scared. But we played really well and had some great things happen.

> **"They said I was leaving to join George Harrison. I never met the guy"**

"The Los Angeles Forum sold out in one day, so we did another concert there, and we really didn't expect such a demand. I think I enjoyed it more than any other tour of America.

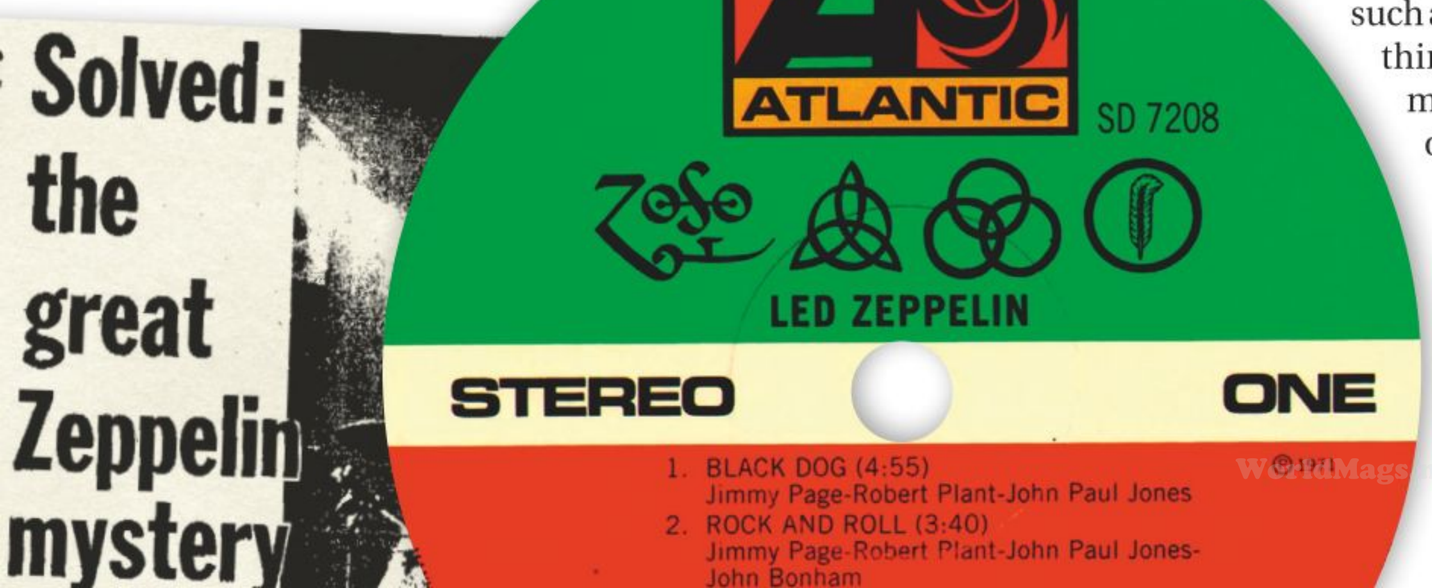
"You see – we had a lot of time at home to think, and we grew a lot closer together. We kept seeing stories 'Zeppelin are breaking up'. But really, we have never been closer together! We all came out of ourselves and everybody played well, and we are really happy!"

He warmed to his theme: "These 'breaking up' rumours are always cropping up. I don't know their source, but they are forever saying that so-and-so is leaving. There was an unbelievable one about a year ago. They said I was leaving to join George Harrison. Well, I've never even met the guy. That's how much I know him. I'd like to meet him.

But what caused that massive lay-off that lead to the fears of a split? "We did three tours last year and finished off feeling, 'We've just about had enough'. We had done so much in such a short space of time, we were drained. We had offers to go everywhere – France, America – and we could have done them. But what would be the point? We were tired. We had worked hard and Peter had probably worked harder than any of us.

"We enjoyed working, but we needed the break before we got stale. We spent the time – six months – at home and writing songs. Then we said, 'Right, we're ready to go.' During the break, we did a lot of recording and wrote a lot

REX



WorldMags.net

and improved. We didn't do any gigs, but there was absolutely no inclination to split up, and I'm not bullshitting. We've all got ideas and things we want to do.

"John Paul Jones is incredible. He comes along to the studio and he's always got a new instrument he wants to play. I don't do much writing myself, but I appreciate what they write and I can enjoy playing it. I'm not governed by them in what I play. They ask me how a drum thing should be played, and that's the way we all work."

How was John's playing these days? "I've never tried consciously to be one of the best drummers and I don't think I want to be. A lot of kids come up to me and say, 'There are a lot better drummers than you,' or something. But I enjoy playing, to the best of my ability, and that's why I'm here doing it. I don't claim to be 'more exciting than Buddy Rich'. But I don't play what I don't like. I'm a simple, straight-ahead drummer and I don't try to pretend to be anything better than I am. I love playing the drums and I practise a bit. There is always something another drummer can play that will knock me out. I watch all the drummers in groups and I always learn from them."

How did he dig the new LP? "A-ha! The new LP, he scribbles. The cover [it's wordless] means whatever people want to read into it. For me it means 'I'd rather live in an old house than a block of flats.' My personal view is that the album is the best thing we've ever done. But that's strictly my personal view. I love it. It's the fourth album and it's the next stage we were in at the time of recording. All the albums have been different, and to my mind this is the best we have done and Jimmy is like… mint!"

What was the meaning of the runes on the inner sleeve? There is no information on the cover at all. "The runes are symbols that simply apply to each of us – I wouldn't like to state what they mean. We each picked one…"

I tried to guess which symbol represented which member of the group. And according to Bonzo – got them right. Three strong circles represent Bonham, a feather in a circle for Robert, linked ovals for John Paul and artistic lettering for Jimmy. Guest artist Sandy Denny was symbolised with three inverted pyramids.

And the reason for the delay in release? "Oh, we had problems, or rather the printer had problems. But it's an album we can honestly say we are proud of. All the guys are looking forward to the tour. A lot of kids have called us an American group or even a Japanese group. But we are going to do four gigs a week here until the end of January. I hate it when they start slagging us!"

How would Zeppelin music sound in the future? "Oh, he's come out with a gem! I knew it! Bloody hard to say. I can't say what we are going to sound like in the future and I don't really want to know. If I could tell you what we're going to sound like in two years' time, it would ruin it anyway. We might be on top next year. Or I might be back on the buildings." *Chris Welch*



September 27, 1971: Zeppelin with manager Peter Grant (left) at the Hiroshima shrine during a short tour of Japan

Led Zeppelin
Led Zeppelin IV
ATLANTIC

Take a deep breath. Robert Plant does this just before "Going To California". It is their fourth and not their "best" or their "worst". It is a fine new album by a group who can now take a step outside the environment of controversy that expands like a conurbation around the newly successful.

Heated discussion in terms of comparison can end here. Page, Plant, Bonham and Jones are the band, and they have deliberately left their work untitled. It is not a denial of the past but a springboard to better things. Not all tracks are brilliant.

"Four Sticks" is not a riff that knocks me out overmuch. So it is not a perfect album, but there is a thread of consistency that winds through all the music and there is a bond between the players that reveals strength and a sense of direction not so apparent on their last album.

"There's a sense of direction not so apparent on their last album"

The sound of Zeppelin in full cry is most satisfying, and "Black Dog", the opener, is a beefy stomp, with Robert throwing his head back at some point midway between speakers and the Page guitar and Bonham drums marching on triumphant.

"Rock And Roll" is just that, and winds up the tempo to feature Jimmy in a looping, exultant solo while John Paul's piano clinks in the time-honoured fashion. Sandy Denny makes a welcome guest appearance on the attractive "Battle Of Evermore", and sings a pretty but lusty duet with Bob over a choir of mandolin and acoustic guitars. To complete the goodies on Side One is "Stairway To Heaven", one of the band's best songs, and another splendid performance by Robert.

It's back to the best on "Misty Mountain Hop", and it is here the strange contrast between songs becomes most apparent. There is a cliff-hanging sensation from the soft moods of "Stairway" to the drive of "Hop", which jumps in all directions with good country cheer.

"Four Sticks" is a powerful piece and features Bonham using four drumsticks. But the repetitive riff Jimmy employs here is not particularly inventive. "Going To California" gives Robert another opportunity to sing in his lower register, which he does so well.

"When The Levee Breaks", their final statement, is a good example of the full band in action. Taken at mid-tempo, it has a hypnotic effect as Bonham's bass drum drops bombs into the cellar. *Chris Welch*

GETTY

WorldMags.net

The Kinks on home turf, North London, 1971: (l–r) John Dalton, Mick Avory, Dave Davies, John Gosling and Ray Davies



“The songs were meant to be funny”

Ray Davies continues to lead THE KINKS in unexpected directions. Live, they play the hits. Meanwhile their new album *Muswell Hillbillies* probes life’s complexities, “worrying about paying the electricity bill, the petty things...”

— MELODY MAKER DECEMBER 25 —

SUPERSTARS MAY COME and go but The Kinks keep marching on. They don’t change as much as musical styles change around them; not for them going heavy, selling out or making solo albums as the current heroes on the rock biz do/don’t according to what’s in vogue. They still play those early hit singles on stage, and when they next do a British tour we may see them wearing red hunting jackets and frilly white shirts. »

GETTY

WorldMags.net

Remember that? – when they caused a storm through in-fighting among themselves on stage, and when Dave Davies seemed to have the longest hair around, except for The Pretty Things.

Ray Davies remains a busy man. While his group may have appeared to have been taking things easy for the past year, their loveable leader who blows kisses from the stage is working all day and all of the night. Whether it be writing, which takes up most of the time, thinking, recording or performing, Ray Davies keeps himself occupied.

We may well be on the verge of The Kinks' biggest breakthrough since the early days. They've just signed a new recording contract with RCA, and The Kinks are the frontline in RCA's attack on their contemporary record companies. The first album for the label, *Muswell Hillbillies*, already with us, is good. Another is expected in the early new year, and RCA are spending left, right and centre in promoting their new signing. A month ago they went to extremes by hosting a launching party in New York which cost them over $10,000.

Ray Davies was bewildered by it all, and he still is. There's a vague air about him as he talks, as if his mind is on something else. He doodles on a pad when he talks, pausing before he answers questions and often answering along completely different lines.

Why haven't The Kinks played much in Britain this year? "We have been looking for places," he replied.

For a year? Well, we may play the Rainbow next year before it goes out of fashion. There's a place in the Midlands called the Belfry and we usually play there the weekend before we go to America, but that's once a year. It's quite a nice place to play.

Did you know The Band have only played 15 concerts since they were formed? I wanted to play the minute I stepped off the plane in New York, but I couldn't because of the press party. I really wanted to play that night.

But how about Britain? Well, we have got some lined up for the middle of January. We are planning a show in places like Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and probably the Rainbow. But we're going back to the States in February, and there are another two American tours next year.

Are the rest of the group upset by this apparent lack of British activity? No, they don't mind. A lot of the time we are rehearsing or recording. We are fairly occupied.

> "I still think people don't really understand us in the UK"

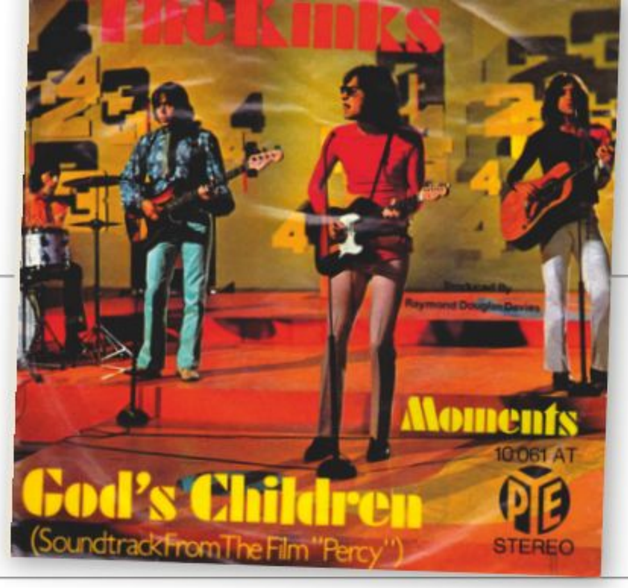
Conversation turned to the group's new album, and its lyrics, which appear to point an accusing finger towards all that is wrong with today's instant society. Was it Ray's intention to preach in this way? The album is actually a condensed version of what was going to be a double LP, but it wasn't practical to make it that way. At the same time I wanted to do a TV show along the same lines, but I couldn't make it happen. The album doesn't go in for hard songs at all, which may go against us, and I had written two or three others with similar themes.

GETTY



The Kinks perform "Apeman" on *Top Of The Pops* in January 9171

WorldMags.net



The trouble with records is that you only have a certain amount of time on one side and a whole album is only 45 minutes long. In the end I was happy with it. I was attacking things that lack quality and I suppose I do feel strongly about this, but some of the songs were meant to be funny as well. The songs were also about trying to live, getting up every day and problems like writing letters and paying bills. These are real problems to me, actually getting them done. I just don't know how other people get with these problems, but that's what I was trying to get across on the album. Complicated life isn't about big business deals or having lunch with Rothschilds bankers; it's worrying about the electricity bill and petty things that are always there.

Are there any activities outside The Kinks that Ray is currently working on? Yes, Granada asked me to do another programme for them and I had lots of ideas. It's going to be a story about a person who is always told what he is. Everybody keeps telling him what he is and what he looks like. It's just a play with music, which I am writing. I'm writing the story, but I couldn't write the script because it would take too long. It's got to be out next July, but I am hoping to have it finished by April.

The next album will be about this story. It will contain the music from it, but in the meantime we will put out an album of just songs without a running theme. I'm also working on a musical film which is allegedly coming out this year, and it's taking up a lot of time. I suppose I am very busy in a way, but if I were a businessman I would say that I haven't got much of a turnover at the moment. I like writing and playing, but I think I write to play rather than write and play.



How was the last American tour? It was excellent. We had bad nights when we were all off together, but the rest of the time was very good. On this tour we concentrated on the new album, playing tracks from it, and we put "Shangri-La" in the act as well. We get requests for the old numbers, but I think a lot of the people haven't heard things like "Waterloo Sunset", which came out in the period when we weren't allowed into America. We have built up a following in the States, but I would like to build up a bigger following over here as well. I still think people don't really understand us in this country.

Wouldn't another hit single help? Yes, but I am not looking forward to going through the mechanism necessary to get another hit single. We haven't had a single out for eight months but when we played that gig in Birmingham I discovered that there wasn't one song that people really wanted to hear. They wanted to hear everything, but there wasn't any one to finish the act with, like a current hit song. I think the people who have seen us play once or twice understand us more. We wouldn't have made it in the first place if we hadn't gone literally all around England for a year. We played every week in a residency in Manchester and built up a great following there. It's still an honour for me to play live. It was an honour for us to play the Carnegie Hall when we were in New York, and if I play badly somewhere I feel ashamed afterwards.

What about the new generation of rock fans who have arrived since The Kinks' early days, or the changes that your original followers will have gone through since then? I don't think they have changed basically. They have been around longer and they have been through everything that is going on with worries and problems to cope with, but I think the basic following is still there. As far as "You Really Got Me" is concerned, it's a new song every night for us. We play it differently every time we play it.

> "I throw away a lot of ideas if the rest of the group don't like them"

Does this mean The Kinks will go on for ever? We could break up next week, but I don't think we will. We are developing all the time. We are going on to new things and keeping the old songs as well. We do it to live and I get a certain feeling from the songs I write. I like to think that other people get a feeling from the songs I write, and those are the people who really understand The Kinks.

The fact that a guy in Cincinnati really knows me because of the songs I write is amazing. I met someone in San Francisco once whom I'd never met before and he knew all about me. He knew little things like what I liked and what I didn't like and he's worked it all out from the songs I'd written. It was a great feeling.

Undeniably The Kinks tend to be a vehicle for Ray Davies' writing and consequently his thought. Do the rest of the group feel held back by this? Mick Avory is working on something of his own at the moment, but I do want the group to become more creative. On the next album I want to do more group arrangements instead of my own. We are planning to work a lot next year and I want it to be group work instead of my own ideas. I throw away a lot of ideas if the rest don't like them. There was a song I wrote this year that I wanted to record and I thought would be our biggest song ever. It took me a long time to write it, but the rest of the group didn't like it at all. I had to leave them for a time because I really thought they would be knocked out by it.

I started to write songs for The Kinks because the standard of the stuff the recording company was bringing us to record was very bad. They brought us songs that everybody else was doing. I am a vehicle for The Kinks and The Kinks are a vehicle for me. We have created a working relationship with each other and we help each other along. Over the next three years I am going to make six LPs with The Kinks, and there are still things I want to do. I would like Shel Talmy to produce for us, because I really enjoy working with him.

Are the days of the great Kinks' singles over then? No, but I really feel that the stuff I am writing at the moment is album material. It's not material for a single. I just don't like all the problems involved with singles, promoting them and things, because people think that's all you are doing, just the single. I don't think there are any singles on *Hillbillies*. It's a comedy album. "Complicated Life", "Alcohol" and "Acute Schizophrenia" are comedy songs. They are not serious social comment, but I think I have made a more definite statement on this LP than ever before. That life is complicated is what I am really trying to say. *Chris Charlesworth* •




SUPERSTARS may come and go but the Kinks keep marching on.

They don't change as much as musical styles change around them; not for them going heavy, selling out or making solo albums as the current heroes on the rock biz do/don't according to what's in vogue.

They still play those early hit singles on stage, and when they next do a British tour we may see them wearing red hunting jackets and frilly white shirts. Remember that?—when they caused a storm through infighting among themselves on stage, and when Dave Davies seemed to have the longest hair around, except for the Pretty Things.

Ray Davies remains a busy man. While his group may have appeared to have been taking things easy for the past year, their invable leader who blows kisses from the stage is working all day and all of the night. Whether it be writing, which takes

MUSWELL HILLBILLY

THE HISTORY OF ROCK

Missed any of our previous issues?

Get them at www.uncut.co.uk/store













ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.UNCUT.CO.UK/STORE

Readers' letters

MM DEC 4 John Lennon sends a very public missive to Paul McCartney and co...

From me to you

Dear Paul, Linda et all the wee McCartneys,

Thanks for your letter.

1. We give YOU money for your bits of Apple.

2. We give you MORE money in the form of royalties which legally belong to Apple (I know we're Apple), but on the other hand we're not.

Maybe there's an answer there somewhere, but for the millionth time in these past few years I repeat, "What about the TAX?" It's all very well, playing "simple honest ole human Paul" in *Melody Maker* but you know damn well we can't just sign a bit of paper.

You say, "John won't do it." I will if you indemnify us against the tax man! Anyway, you know that after we have OUR meeting, the f––––––lawyers will have to implement whatever we agree on, right?

If they have some form of agreement between THEM before WE meet, it might make it even easier. It's up to you, as we've said many times, we'll meet whenever you like. Just make up your mind! Eg, two weeks ago I asked you on the phone, "Please let's meet without advisors, etc, and decide what we want,' and I emphasised especially "Maclen" [Lennon and McCartney's songwriting company], which is mainly our concern, but you refused, right?



You said under NO CONDITION would you sell to us if we didn't do what you wanted, you'd sue us again and that Ringo and George are going to break you, John, etc, etc.

Now I was quite straight with you that day, and you tried to shoot me down with your emotional "logic". If YOU'RE not the aggressor (as you claim) who the hell took us to court and shat all over us in public?

As I've said before – have you ever thought that you might POSSIBLY be wrong about something? Your conceit about us and Klein is incredible. You say you "made the mistake of trying to advise them against Klein and that pissed them off" and we secretly feel that you're right! Good God! You must know WE'RE right about Eastman.

One other little lie in your "It's only Paulie" *MM* bit: *Let It Be* was not the first bit of hype on a Beatle album. Remember Tony Barrow? And his wonderful writing on "Please Please Me", etc, etc. The early Beatle Xmas records!

And you gotta admit it was a "new phase" Beatle album, incidentally written in the style of the great Barrow himself! By the way, what happened to my idea of putting the parody of our first album cover on the *Let It Be* cover?

Also, we were intending to parody Barrow originally, so it was hype. But what is your *LIFE* article? Tony Barrow couldn't have done it better.

(And your writing inside of the Wings album [*Wild Life*] isn't exactly the realist is it?) Anyway, enough of this petty bourgeois fun.

You were right about New York! I do love it; it's the ONLY PLACE TO BE. (Apart from anything else, they leave you alone too!) I see you prefer Scotland! (*MM*) – I'll bet you your piece of Apple you'll be living in New York by 1974 (two years is the usual time it takes you – right?)

Another thing, whadya mean BIG THING in Toronto? It was completely spontaneous. They rang on the Friday, we flew there, and we played on Saturday. I was sick because I was stone pissed. Listen to the album – with no rehearsal too. Come on, Macka! Own up! We'd never played together before! Half a dozen live shows with no big fuss. In fact we've BEEN DOING what you've said the Beatles should do.

Yoko and I have been doing it for three years! (I said it was daft for the Beatles to do it. I still think it's daft.) So go on and do it! Do it! Do it! Eg, Cambridge 1969, completely unadvertised! A very small hall. Lyceum Ballroom, 1969, no fuss, great show – 30-piece rock band! "Live Jam" out soon! Fillmore East, 1971, unannounced. Another good time had by all – out soon!! We even played in the streets here in the Village (our spiritual home!?) with the great David Peel!! We were moved on by the cops even!! It's best just to DO IT.

I know you'll dig it, and they don't even expect the Beatles now anyway!

So you think *Imagine* ain't political? It's "Working Class Hero" with sugar on it for conservatives like yourself!! You obviously didn't dig the words. Imagine! You took "How Do You Sleep" so literally (read my own review of the album in *Crawdaddy*). Your politics are very similar to Mary Whitehouse's – "Saying nothing is as loud as saying something."

Listen, my obsessive old pal, it was George's press conference – not "dat ole debbil Klein". He said what you said: "I'd love to come but…" Anyway, we basically did it for the same reasons – the Beatle bit – they still called it a Beatle show, with just two of them!

Join the Rock Liberation Front before it gets you.

Wanna put your photo on the label like uncool John and Yoko, do ya? (Ain't ya got no shame!) If we're not cool, WHAT DOES THAT MAKE YOU?

No hard feelings to you either. I know basically we want the same, and as I said on the phone and in this letter, whenever you want to meet, all you have to do is call.

All you need is love
Power to the people
Free all prisoners
Jail the judges
Love and peace
Get it on and rip 'em off

John Lennon

PS The bit that really puzzled us was asking to meet WITHOUT LINDA AND YOKO. I thought you'd have understood BY NOW that I'm JOHNANDYOKO.

PPS Even your own lawyers know you can't "just sign a bit of paper" (or don't they tell you?)



REX







1971

MONTH BY MONTH



Coming next... in 1972!

SO THAT WAS 1971. Hope you felt natural. But that's far from it from our reporters on the 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, 1972!

DAVID BOWIE

AT THE START of the year, Bowie has one album, *Hunky Dory*, in the shops and another "about a fictitious band" in the can and on the way. The artist puts his big boots up on the table and discusses the road ahead.

THE WHO

ROUND TO KEITH Moon's house… for an informal discussion of his band, and to bask in the company of this unique looner. "People often say to me, 'Keith, you're crazy.' Well, maybe I am, but I live my life and I live out all my fantasies, thereby getting them all out of my system."

THE FACES

LIFE AT THE top of the tree. We catch up with the stars of '71 at shows in LA. "You know Marc Bolan's goin' tonight," says Rod Stewart. "We'll show the lad a few tricks, eh?"

PLUS

WINGS!

MOTT THE HOOPLE!

JOHN LENNON!

WorldMags.net

WorldMags.net

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

THE HISTORY OF ROCK 1971

Every month, we revisit long-lost *NME* and *Melody Maker* interviews and piece together *The History Of Rock*. This month: 1971.

"Get on your feet/And out on the street!"



Relive the year...

WHEN JOHN AND YOKO TALKED REVOLUTION

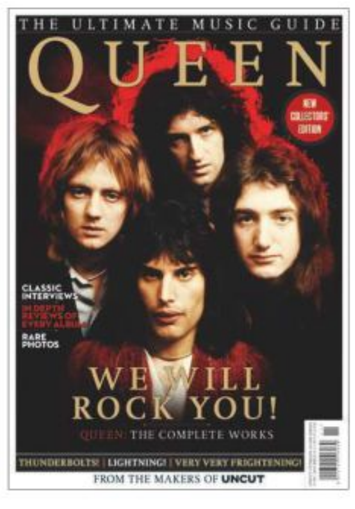
T. REX WALKED THE EARTH

THE ROLLING STONES WENT INTO EXILE

...and **ROD STEWART, PAUL McCARTNEY, DAVID BOWIE, JOHN PEEL, ELTON JOHN** and many more shared everything with *NME* and *MELODY MAKER*

More from **UNCUT**...











WWW.UNCUT.CO.UK