

**RECORD
MIRROR**

**LICKING
MS. SWEET**



**IAN DURY
POSTER**

ROCK PRESSURES
Can the
young survive?

Rachel Sweet shot: Chelise Davis

RECORD MIRROR

TOP 50 SINGLES OF THE YEAR



Boney M.

TOP 50 ALBUMS OF THE YEAR



John Travolta

| | | |
|----|--|-------------------|
| 1 | RIVERS OF BABYLON/BROWN GIRL IN THE RING, Boney M | Atlantic/Hansa |
| 2 | YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT, John Travolta/Olivia Newton-John | RSO |
| 3 | SUMMER NIGHTS, John Travolta/Olivia Newton-John | RSO |
| 4 | THREE TIMES A LADY, Commodores | Motown |
| 5 | SMURF SONG, Father Abraham | Decca |
| 6 | NIGHT FEVER, Bee Gees | RSO |
| 7 | TAKE A CHANCE ON ME, Abba | Epic |
| 8 | MATCHSTALK MEN AND MATCHSTALK CATS & DOGS, Brian & Michael | Pye |
| 9 | RAT TRAP, Boomtown Rats | Ensign |
| 10 | DREADLOCK HOLIDAY, 10cc | Mercury |
| 11 | WUTHERING HEIGHTS, Kate Bush | EMI |
| 12 | SANDY, John Travolta | Midsong |
| 13 | RASPUTIN, Boney M | Atlantic/Hansa |
| 14 | SUBSTITUTE, Clout | Carrere |
| 15 | DENIS, Blondie | Chrysalis |
| 16 | BAKER STREET, Gerry Rafferty | United Artists |
| 17 | FIGARO, Brotherhood Of Man | Pye |
| 18 | COME BACK MY LOVE, Darts | Magnet |
| 19 | LOVE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE, Rose Royce | Whitfield |
| 20 | IT'S RAINING, Darts | Magnet |
| 21 | MULL OF KINTYRE/GIRLS SCHOOL, Wings | Parlophone |
| 22 | WISHING ON A STAR, Rose Royce | Warner Brothers |
| 23 | MARY'S BOY CHILD, Boney M | Atlantic/Hansa |
| 24 | LUCKY STARS, Dean Friedman | Lifesong |
| 25 | DANCING IN THE CITY, Marshall Hain | Harvest |
| 26 | BOOGIE OOGIE OOGIE, A Taste Of Honey | Capitol |
| 27 | OH WHAT A CIRCUS, David Essex | Mercury |
| 28 | GREASE, Frankie Valli | RSO |
| 29 | JILTED JOHN, Jilted John | EMI International |
| 30 | ANNIE'S SONG, James Galway | RCA |
| 31 | STAYIN' ALIVE, Bee Gees | RSO |
| 32 | TOO MUCH TOO LITTLE TOO LATE, Johnny Mathis/Deniece Williams | CBS |
| 33 | BOY FROM NEW YORK CITY, Darts | Magnet |
| 34 | DO YOU THINK I'M SEXY, Rod Stewart | Riva |
| 35 | BLAME IT ON THE BOOGIE, Jacksons | Epic |
| 36 | NEVER LET HER SLIP AWAY, Andrew Gold | Asylum |
| 37 | IF I HAD WORDS, Scot Fitzgerald/Yvonne Keeley | Pepper |
| 38 | I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN, Eruption | Atlantic/Hansa |
| 39 | HOPELESSLY DEVOTED TO YOU, Olivia Newton-John | RSO |
| 40 | SWEET TALKIN' WOMAN, Electric Light Orchestra | Jet |
| 41 | MR. BLUE SKY, Electric Light Orchestra | Jet |
| 42 | UP TOWN TOP RANKING, Althia & Donna | Lightning |
| 43 | DARLIN', Frankie Miller | Chrysalis |
| 44 | I WONDER WHY, Showaddywaddy | United Artists |
| 45 | IF YOU CAN'T GIVE ME LOVE, Suzi Quatro | RAK |
| 46 | MACARTHUR PARK, Donna Summer | Casablanca |
| 47 | YOU MAKE ME FEEL (MIGHTY REAL), Sylvester | Fantasy |
| 48 | FOREVER AUTUMN, Justin Haywood | CBS |
| 49 | MISS YOU, Rolling Stones | EMI |
| 50 | KISS YOU ALL OVER, Ekile | RAK |

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1 | SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, Various | RSO |
| 2 | GREASE, Various | RSO |
| 3 | THE ALBUM, Abba | Epic |
| 4 | NIGHTFLIGHT TO VENUS, Boney M | Atlantic/Hansa |
| 5 | 20 GOLDEN GREATS, Nat King Cole | Capitol |
| 6 | RUMOURS, Fleetwood Mac | Warner Brothers |
| 7 | OUT OF THE BLUE, Electric Light Orchestra | Jet |
| 8 | 20 GOLDEN GREATS, Buddy Holly & The Crickets | MCA |
| 9 | THE KICK INSIDE, Kate Bush | EMI |
| 10 | IMAGES, Don Williams | K-Tel |
| 11 | WAR OF THE WORLDS, Jeff Wayne's Musical Version | CBS |
| 12 | AND THEN THERE WERE THREE, Genesis | Charisma |
| 13 | CLASSIC ROCK, London Symphony Orchestra | K-Tel |
| 14 | NEW BOOTS AND PANTIES, Ian Dury | Stiff |
| 15 | LIVE AND DANGEROUS, Thin Lizzy | Vertigo |
| 16 | REFLECTIONS, Andy Williams | CBS |
| 17 | THE SOUND OF BREAD, Bread | Elektra |
| 18 | STREET LEGAL, Bob Dylan | CBS |
| 19 | THE STUD, Various | Ronco |
| 20 | 20 GOLDEN GREATS, Hollies | EMI |
| 21 | YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE, Johnny Mathis | CBS |
| 22 | CITY TO CITY, Gerry Rafferty | United Artists |
| 23 | BAT OUT OF HELL, Meat Loaf | Epic/Cleveland Int |
| 24 | LONDON TOWN, Wings | Parlophone |
| 25 | THE BIG WHEELS OF MOTOWN, Various | Motown |
| 26 | SOME GIRLS, Rolling Stones | EMI |
| 27 | VARIATIONS, Andrew Lloyd Webber | MCA |
| 28 | TONIC FOR THE TROOPS, Boomtown Rats | Ensign |
| 29 | PASTICHE, Manhattan Transfer | Atlantic |
| 30 | GREATEST HITS, Abba | Epic |
| 31 | KAYA, Bob Marley & The Wailers | Island |
| 32 | FOOT LOOSE AND FANCY FREE, Rod Stewart | Riva |
| 33 | BLACK AND WHITE, Stranglers | United Artists |
| 34 | PLASTIC LETTERS, Blondie | Chrysalis |
| 35 | GREATEST HITS, Donna Summer | GTO |
| 36 | NATURAL HIGH, Commodores | Motown |
| 37 | 20 GIANT HITS, Nolan Sisters | Target |
| 38 | ARRIVAL, Abba | Epic |
| 39 | THIS YEAR'S MODEL, Elvis Costello & The Attractions | Radar |
| 40 | ANYTIME ANYWHERE, Rita Coolidge | A&M |
| 41 | 20 GOLDEN GREATS, Neil Diamond | MCA |
| 42 | EMOTIONS, Various | K-Tel |
| 43 | OCTAVE, Moody Blues | Decca |
| 44 | SINGLES 1974-78, Carpenters | A&M |
| 45 | PARALLEL LINES, Blondie | Chrysalis |
| 46 | BLOODY TOURISTS, 10cc | Mercury |
| 47 | A NEW WORLD RECORD, Electric Light Orchestra | Jet |
| 48 | EXODUS, Bob Marley & The Wailers | Island |
| 49 | FONZIES FAVOURITES, Various | Warwick |
| 50 | ALL 'N' ALL, Earth Wind & Fire | CBS |

These two charts are worked out on a points system for position and length of stay in charts. The period worked on is January 1 to December 16.

NEWS

Edited by JOHN SHEARLAW

EAGLES TOUR?

RUMOUR AND speculation still surrounds a UK visit by the Eagles. It's still hotly tipped that the West Coast band — until recently one of the biggest money spinners in the States — are being lined up for a series of concerts (possibly at Wembley Arena) early next year, although all the major promoters have denied any knowledge of the visit.

Morrison/Byrds for Britain

VAN MORRISON and the reformed Byrds are just two of the acts due to appear at the London Venue early next year, according to manager Darryl Edwards.

Edwards is "confident" that both acts will appear, although at press time neither Van Morrison's record company or promoter Harvey Goldsmith — who is also trying to set up a Morrison British tour — could confirm any dates. And, asked whether the Byrds would be reforming for the concert, Edwards replied: "As far as I know yes".

UFO single

UFO RELEASE a three-track single in clear vinyl to coincide with the beginning of their British tour on January 12.

Two tracks come from their forthcoming live album 'Strangers In The Night' released the following week on January 19. They are, 'Doctor Doctor' and 'On With The Action'. Also included is 'Try Me' from their studio 'Lights Out' album.

Meanwhile they have moved their Bradford St George's Hall date from January 15 to January 18 to accommodate an 'Old Grey Whistle Test' recording which will be broadcast the next day, on January 16.

And they added another date at Bracknell Sports Centre on January 13.

Gallagher EP

RORY GALLAGHER releases a single and the first EP of his career in January.

The 10-inch EP is released on January 12, and contains 'Shadow Play' and 'Brute, Force And Ignorance' from his 'Photo Finish' album, and two oldies — 'Moonchild' and 'Souped Up Ford'. It is priced at £1.29.

At 90p, the single contains the same tracks as the EP minus 'Moonchild', and will retail at 90p.

Cook defends

PETER COOK has stepped in to defend a garage attendant who lost his job for listening to 'Derek And Clive Live'.

Ron Matthews, 20, was dismissed from his £45-a-

FOOTBALL SUMMER

MAKE WAY for a football summer!

For Record Mirror understands that several promoters are considering the possibilities of using football stadiums for rock concerts in 1979, both for one-off concerts by major bands and for a 'British Rock' festival in mid-summer.

The idea isn't new, but in the past licensing and security difficulties have severely restricted the use of football stadiums, and previous "disasters" meant that 1979 had no football gigs.

Record Mirror also understands that the summer festival will take

place over several weeks, with gigs split between outdoor and indoor venues. Further details should be available early in the New Year.

The Moody Blues, recently returned from an American tour, and Status Quo, already lined up for 20 dates in Ger-

many in January and February, are just two of the major bands currently planning British tour as 1978 draws to a close. The Moody Blues are looking for sensible venues for February or March, while 1979's Quo tour is being tentatively planned for late May.



STATUS QUO: tour in the New Year

week job for playing a tape of the record when the garage was closed for a petrol tanker delivery last May.

Cook, whose new album 'Ad Nauseam' is said to be even more controversial than 'Derek and Clive Live' invited Matthews to London to offer his support. His own solicitor is now taking up the case for wrongful dismissal.

Another Clash benefit gig

THE CLASH are proposing to play a special New Year benefit for under-privileged children in London's East End. But at the time of going to press no date or venue could be confirmed, although it's expected to be early in January.

Meanwhile their recent London Sid Vicious 'benefit' concert was an apparent success with "nearly £1,000" raised for Vicious, currently in custody in Riker's Island — New York's city jail.

Caroline off again

RADIO CAROLINE, the pirate radio station, will not return to the airwaves in the near future as previously reported.

The Spanish station which shares the ship they broadcast from, 'Mi Amigo' has withdrawn its partnership, leaving Caroline without funds.

Because it is not broadcasting, there is no advertising revenue to put the station back on the air. But they are said to be negotiating new deals to return some time in the new year, probably on 389 metres instead of the present 319.

IN BRIEF

BRIAN JAMES, the ex-guitarist / songwriter with the Damned has embarked on a solo career. He will record and undertake live gigs with various musicians and friends.

His first gig will be at London's Electric Ballroom on December 29. The band that night features Stewart Copeland of The Waitresses on drums, and Mike Fewin both of the Waitresses on guitar.

SHAM 69 are currently recording their new single 'Questions And Answers' due to be released in late January.

KENNY EVERETT has a new year special broadcast on ITV on New Year's day. A prelude to 10 half-hour shows later this winter, it features Rod Stewart, Dean Friedman, Leo Sayer and dance group Hot Gossip.

THE QUESTIONS, four Edinburgh musicians have been voted the 'Banana Band of 1978' by the Southern TV show 'The Saturday Banana Show'. They appear on the last show of the series on December 30.

LIVERPOOL ARE hosting an all night Beale party on December 28. It starts at 12 noon at Romeo's & Juliet's, continuing from midnight to 7 am at the ABC where four films will be shown.

'A Hard Day's Night', 'Help!', 'Yellow Submarine' and 'Let It Be'. Tickets are £5 all in.

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS release a new single on January 10.

Entitled 'Medi, Medisasha', it comes from their new album scheduled for release in March.

They are also finalising dates for a UK tour due to start in February.

HEAVY COCHRAN: whose debut single sold out of its first pressing in four days plays the following London dates: The George Gannings January 10, The Bridge House 11, Music Machine 12, The Pegasus 13, Nashville 14, Dublin Castle 15, Greyhound 16, Two Brewers 17.

THE ROCK GARDEN: The London club re-opens after Christmas with: China Street December 27, Resistance 28, Joe Jackson 29, Matchbox 30, Jub Jub 31.

HORSLIPS WILL release a new album produced by Steve Katz early next year. They have also arranged provisional dates for a major UK tour, which are due to be confirmed shortly.

JANIE FRICKE releases her first single in Britain on January 5, entitled 'Believe In You'.

REGGAE POET Linton Kwesi Johnson has signed a long-term recording deal with Island Records.

Johnson, who has already one album this year on Virgin's Front Line label, is currently working on a new album which will be released on Island early in the New Year.

JOHN MILES, currently recording a new album and single (produced by Alan Parsons) for March release, is also lining up a series of theatre dates for a March British tour.

Stranglers warned

THE STRANGLERS have received an official caution from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police after appearing at Battersea Park in September with six strippers!

In a letter to the Stranglers manager the police stated: "While a group of musicians known as the Stranglers were performing six females appeared on the stage and danced a routine which could be construed as an outrage to public decency contrary to common law."

However no further police action will be taken in this case, although the Commissioner warned: "If a similar occurrence should be reported in the future police may well consider that proceedings should ensue."

Jones moves in

KENNY JONES, formerly with the Small Faces, has now settled in as a member of the Who as the band continue their heavy work schedule into the New Year.

And it's expected that the Who may undertake some live dates next summer, after the release of the 'Quadrophonia' film and soundtrack album, tentatively scheduled for next August, with Jones as drummer. The Who are currently re-recording several tracks from the album.

Also due out next year is the film 'The Kids Are Alright' — the story of the Who — along with a soundtrack album recorded live at Shepperton and Kilburn, London; the last gigs Keith Moon played with the Who. Both are scheduled for March release.

Diana Ross to tour

DIANA ROSS star of 'The Wiz' is set to tour Britain in the New Year. Record Mirror understands that dates are being set up for concerts in February and March.

Zulema

Her first hit single,
hot from the States:

“Change”
B/W “Hanging on to a memory”

Now available locally on **LONDON** Records

JUICY LUCY

AWARDS

WELL MY darlings what a year of ups and downs it's been. A lady's head doesn't know which way to turn when it comes to thinking about how to sum up the year that has, once again, slipped so quickly through our fingers.

But the time has arrived. It's the Juicy Lucy awards time once more — brought to you by the columnist that matters! Bigger and brighter than ever... and still number one!

ON THEN, without further ado, to that most coveted award — BUM OF THE YEAR (last year's winner, Jean Jacques Burnel of the unpredictable Strangers). Discussions have been long and fruitful on this topic in the last year, with nominations ranging from the slightly-too-full Rod Stewart (it



OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN: comeback, Worst Actress (runner-up) worst dancer (near miss)

prove that he truly is a "relevant" artist to the seventies; an honourable mention, Gary Glitter, too, for persistent rumours of a return. Generation X as well (too wet to be boring) for trying to prove they're still around, along with the Damned/Doomed (who finally decided that playing to ten people was better than standing in the dole queue), Kokomo (who only did it to pay the tax man), Osibisa (who're only on holiday from Africa) and

darlings, is always a difficult one, and to save argument I've decided to share this least-desired trophy between Guy (the Gorilla) and Victor Silvester (the band leader). Both, I'm sure you'll agree, brought pleasure to millions.

YEAR). And fittingly it's an award shared by those two superstars of rock Rod Stewart and Elton John. Rod, you may recall, for narrowly escaping "a hail of gunmen's bullets" in Argentina, during the drubbing Scotland



PHIL LYNOTT: Best actor, Eternal youthfulness

being here) and the unpleasantly bad-tempered Queen (for not being either). Jointly awarded; and no arguments... please!

A few quick ones here, to keep you entertained, IRISHMAN OF THE YEAR: Den Hegarty, first for leaving the Darts (just when they were going to make it big, too!), and second for biting the deliciously skinny Sylvia Kristel in the leg in Cannes. Runners-up: Phil Lynott for nicking Sacha Distel's pick-up lines at the Miss World contest and coming to grief, and Pete "Paddy" Briquette of the Rats — who forgot how interested his old home town would be in his silly new name.

LEATHER TROUSERS OF THE YEAR: a toss-up between Rusty Egan of the Rich Kids (who keeps his records in them) and "glamorous" Moira Bellas (30) of Warner Brothers (who keep herself in hers) until the heat gets too much



BOB GELDOF: Non marriage, this year's Mick Jagger

must have been all that football training) to the Boomtown Rats (whose posteriors were on display for at least half of the year in the oddest places imaginable). But us ladies have decided to be traditional this year, and cuddly TV cop David Soul has won the award slitting down, only closely followed by ITV's Meivyn Bragg (over 30, town of origin North Yorkshire). Runners-up include Anna of Abba — little seen but still around in the last 12 months — and the magnificent swells of Sun Page-Three Girl-of-the-Year Karen Richardson (cunningly disguised but bigger than you think) for you men out there

Sadly though, my darlings, there has only been one nomination for APPENDAGE OF THE YEAR and, to allow the award still to stand, congratulations to CP Lee of the revolting Albertos Y Los Tríos Paranoías for "baring all" in what girls can only call a "men's magazine" Revived millionaire recluse Mike Oldfield (25) might have been in there with a chance if only he hadn't chosen — at the last minute — to cover up with a discus. Oh well, chance would be a fine thing!

Heavens, are the adverts finished already? That must mean it's time for those old favourites COMEBACKS AND BORES.

Ahhh, comebacks, they often bring a tear to my experienced eye. And none more so than the valiant attempts of Lonnie Donegan to

David Johansen (the only sane ex-member of the New York Dolls).

But the award, without a doubt, belongs to two people COMEBACK OF THE YEAR, a big hand please, to Elton John (from the dead) and Olivia Newton-John (from Malibu, and the obscurity of an English rose in a foreign desert). I hope, Livvy darling, that this makes up for your near miss in the TROUSERS OF THE YEAR award, but you've been wearing them so long we thought they'd been honoured already!

Sad news though, before you leave the stage Miss "Wooden" John. No, you're not BORE OF THE YEAR, just a minute let me open this envelope, you're... yes

WORST DANCER OF THE YEAR (holder: Rat Scabies). And long may your bunlons ache. BEST DANCER goes, uncontested, to Grant Santino (of Edgware) and Grant, you 18-year-old darling you, we all know you should have won that contest.

I expect you're all wondering when Travolta is going to make an appearance. So am I — and he isn't. Instead a big hand to Robert Stigwood (the man who pulls the strings on the Italo-American heartthrob) for WORST HOST OF THE YEAR at the 'Grease' party, when he didn't even attend, preferring seclusion of his multi-million pound yacht in Venice.

DEATH OF THE YEAR, and what an unpleasant subject that is my



POLYSTYRENE: Live Loony

Other demises, probably more newsworthy at that, fall into slightly different categories with Keith Moon scooping the DEAD LOONY award — thus leaving Poly Styrene uncontested winner of the LIVE LOONY award — and Nancy Spungen claiming the MOST POINTLESS DEATH award (runners-up: the Orkney seals). RIP, as they say.

From death, then, to violence. And what a year it's been! MOST VIOLENT EVENT is shared between Reading Festival (with "friendly" security by the so-called Sham 69 fans) and the Lurkers' unfortunate concert at the Lyceum. Other dishonourable mentions Jean Jacques Burnel's "friendly" conversations with critics, Jake Riviera's "friendly" conversations with fans, and, on a more serious note the presence of "sticks men" at reggae concerts at the Rainbow. Bwoy, them no clever y'know, we see!

And from violence... to crime. LUCKIEST MAN OF the year must be Keith Richards (35), almost off the heroin and sentenced to only one concert for the blind. PATHETIC CRIMINALS is the sole domain of the Clash's Nicky Headon and Paul Simonon, for the pigeons, and whatever else they managed to "nick", while UNFORTUNATE CRIMINAL of the year must be Peter Sarstedt, getting fined for possessing cannabis when everybody else calmly lights spliffs during interviews, closely followed by Peter Tosh, arrested and de-dreadlocked in Kingston, Jamaica after many years as the reigning Minister Of 'Erb. Truly, my dears, better mus' come!

I always love those awards that

received at the World Cup (how come Rod was asleep in his hotel at the time) in the summer. And Reg for his poignant "heart attack" (which certainly had our Robin Smith worried for a while) only a few weeks ago.

Close runners-up in this section include Noel Edmunds for bursting a tyre on a motorway (wow!), Rod for driving into a ditch on a different motorway (wow!), and the entirely lovable Reginald 'Reggie the Toupee' Bosanquet for



ELVIS COSTELLO: Flop (shared)

almost blowing his image as "tired" by actually appearing to be, ahem, "drunk" on more than one occasion. Close shaves weren't they?

How about the FLOP OF THE YEAR (and I don't mean Johnny Rotten's flat in Fulham). Take your pick from Roddy Llewelyn (Princess Margaret's friend), Public Image Limited, XTC, Thames Pop, Power Pop, Peter

and she has to change them in the ladies). DRUNK OF THE YEAR: and here I falter. Certainly not Rick



JOHN PAUL YOUNG and JON FREWIN: Drunk of the year

Wakeman (now down to two bottles of the "hard stuff" — seaweed essence in you and every Jamaican — a day), or Kris Kristofferson (in mere two bottles of "concentrated orange juice before breakfast for even James 'Magic Flute' Gibney (who only gets drunk on St. Patrick's Day). How about Wreckless Eric, I thought? Too pathetic, I rethought. How about Rod "my liver's swollen" Stewart? Publicity again! Frankie Miller! Hasnae touched a drop since yesterday forenoon! Reginald Bosanquet? He just looks "tired"! Alright, I give up. Consider this award split between John Paul Young (an Australian singer) and John "Jon" Frewin (our very own, "typographical designer" and resident cave-man... for drinking two bottles of Bourbon at a nightclub and forgetting which



ELTON and ROD: near misses of the year.

don't mean anything, don't you my darlings? Especially when you can't prove anything either! But let's give a big hand this year to a completely new award — NEAR MISS OF THE YEAR (INCORPORATING BEST PUBLICITY STUNT OF THE

Tosh as a pop star, Demis Roussos as a fan club president, Elvis Costello as a "happy husband" or Jean Jacques Burnel (remember him?) as a "friendly persuader". Not much to choose from is there? But Juicy'sboa must go to Abba (for being away), the Jam (for



BILLY IDOL: Poser (shared)

OF THE YEAR

town they were in!
And still there's still more! How about my newly instigated award for the most outstanding **INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT?** After very little thought I have no, er, hesitation in, er, giving it to, er, some big mates of mine (know what I mean?) in the persons of — the Lurkers. To be honest I can't think why!
Runners-up include Howard Devoto (master of the sublime location, the pregnant pause and precious little else), Siouxsie and the Banshees (who one could be forgiven for thinking were suspicious of anyone uttering more than a monosyllabic "Yeah" in their presence) and the entirely tedious and unrelenting Jam.

Which brings us on to the shaky ground of the **UNCONVINCING LIAR OF THE YEAR** award (patron Tony Brainsby, PR to the "stars"). Always a popular section, nominations this year have ranged from Joyce 'Girl In The Mormon



WAYNE COUNTY: Expensive surgery

and blithely uncaring Brian Gibson (Pye Records), appallingly unconcerned Ellie Smith (CBS Records), of course I mean you! — to pop stars who should know better (Jimmy Pursey, Joe Strummer

ATTACHMENTS. **GIRLFRIEND OF THE YEAR** shared between Bebe Rundgren (she's had 'em all), Paula Yates (she was only a bishop's daughter with a bit of the Irish in her . . .) and Britt Ekland, who's only ever anywhere because of her manager ("that's Don Arden, by the way," as she and Jeff 'ELO' Lynne are fond of saying). Poor Britt (though, she's shared the **PARTYGOER** of the year award with the Boomtown Rats and Blanca Jagger but sadly romped home in the **WORST ACTRESS** of the year award (closely followed by Olivia Newton-John).

Your faithful correspondent has always been conscious of the industry within which she works — the "biz" to you out there — and I can't let the year go by without mentioning a few of its most trusted servants. Sadly the annual award for **PRESS OFFICER** of the year can't be retained by Al Clark (30), now Virgin's Publicity Director (and well above such things), so congratulations to former Record Mirror employee David Brown (26), who now inherits the coveted trophy. Brown has managed to carry on his job, despite having hardly any acts to represent and this, I feel, merits some kind of recognition.

As for **SLEEPING PRESS OFFICER** (holders: Michael Gray (United Artists) and Tom Nolan (EMI), no surprises. Clear winners are the press guardians of Pye Records who, I understand, still draw wages, and the magnificently over-staffed CBS multi-national conglomerate. The latter, triumphantly, have overcome Parkinson's Law and have been able, for the whole year, to employ loads of people to do the work of one unpleasantly bad-tempered secretary. And long may they prosper!

Other business awards must go for **GIMMICK OF THE YEAR**, scooped magnificently by WEA with a single (by the Cars) that everybody bought and nobody listened to. This was, of course, the picture disc, an unpleasant phenomenon that I feel we shall have to live with throughout the coming year. **OVERPLAYED GIMMICK OF THE YEAR** (a new award) is shared by every record company currently releasing what we in the trade call "product", due to their energetic use of coloured vinyl for every single that doesn't look like it's going to sell any other way.

And while we're about it **SERVICES TO THE INDUSTRY** award to Doeflex Compounds (Swindon) Ltd, suppliers of virtually all the aforementioned

coloured vinyl!!

I don't feel I can go on without giving Elaine Page at least a little mention so how about **SMALLEST STEP FOR MANKIND** award, jointly shared with 'Evita' and all who made her great. Elaine also romps home in the **MOST TASTEFUL NUDDITY SCENE** (along with Lesley Anne Down) in 'The Life And Times Of Phyllis Dixie', in direct contrast to the Bullets' 'Girl On Page 3' and everyone who was ever persuaded to drop their drawers for the Stranglers (and Bob Geldof we don't mean you!)

You mean you want more? **POSERS:** Billy Idol (Wet of the year), Caroline Coon, Parsons and Burchill, Mike Oldfield, Harvey Goldsmith, Graham Parker, Hugh Cornwell.

NON-POSERS: (Incorporating **STARS OF THE YEAR**): Bette Midler, ALL of Boney M, Harvey Goldsmith, Mike Oldfield, Farrah Fawcett Majors (by nearly drowning she proved she was human), George Clinton.

LET-DOWNS: 'Jaws 2', Knebworth 2, the Tubes, the Jam. **PUT UPS:** Johnny Rotten's pad in Fulham.

QUOTES OF THE YEAR: "It's great to be back in England" (Everyone and anyone).

"It can't fail" (Everyone and anyone talking about the new Boney M single).

"The golden touch has run out" (Everyone and anyone talking about the new Robert Stigwood film, **ESPECIALLY** 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band').

"No free trips, no free lunches, nothing" (Parsons and Burchill).

VALDERMA AWARD FOR ETERNAL YOUTHFULNESS: The Motors, Cliff Richard, Eric Clapton (Eh?) most of the Stranglers, Phil Lynott, Lou Reed, Brian James, The Ramones.

PHILISAN AWARD FOR AGE BEYOND THEIR YEARS: Paul Weller, The Banshees, Mark Perry, Kate Bush.

LEAST SUCCESSFUL STUNT OF THE YEAR: Anyone having surgery to look like Elvis Presley.

STILL NOT THERE AWARD: boring old Bob Seger, XTC.

THIS YEAR'S ROLLING STONES: Boomtown Rats.

THIS YEAR'S AMEN CORNER: The Jam.

SPECIAL EEC AWARD FOR SERVICES TO MUSIC: Georgio Moroder, Pete Bellote and Frank Farfan.

ADDITIONAL EEC AWARD FOR BRAVERY: Jan Teiger of Norway (he got no votes in the Eurovision Song Contest).

ADDITIONAL EEC AWARDS FOR DISAPPEARING QUIETLY: Baccara.

PLEASANT FAT MEN AWARD: Meat Loaf, Jacob Miller of Inner Circle.

UNPLEASANT FAT MEN AWARD: Demis Roussos, Pere Ubu, Steve Jones.

SPECIAL RAMONES AWARD FOR SERVICES TO ART: XTC (if they're still around).

SPECIAL LENNY BRUCE AWARD FOR SERVICES TO LANGUAGE AND TRUTH: Milla Jackson.

SPECIAL AWARD FOR SERVICES TO POETRY: Wilko Johnson, Linton Kwesi Johnson.

USED CARSALES MEN AWARD FOR SMILING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK: Devo, the former Sex Pistols, Ronald Biggs.

CAUSE OF THE YEAR: Anything (and everything) against racialism — including Northern cartoonists

ENGLISH ROSE AWARD: Kate Bush . . . In a good light.

BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AWARD FOR BRITISH EXPORTS: Kate Bush . . . In a klmono.

MOST BORING TAX EXILE AWARD: Steve Harley.

MOST INTERESTING TAX EXILE AWARD: Status Quo.

FASHIONS OF THE YEAR: Red, Green and Gold woolly hats. "Bottomless" trousers (as worn by Britt Ekland), Stovepipe hats, boiler suits, braces (on the teeth), braces (on Patti Smith), flares (making a big comeback in '78 thanks to Bob Dylan and Al Clark), hats.

CLIVE JAMES AWARD FOR HAIRSTYLES OF THE YEAR: (holder: Jordan): Peter Gabriel and Mike Oldfield (for cutting themselves), Mick Jones and Brian James (for growing theirs), Howard Devoto and Abbie Donnelly (for not having any in the first place), Peter Cook and Kevin Keegan for their perms.

LEAST PUBLICISED POOR PERSON OF THE YEAR: Rod Stewart . . . If you only but knew it.



BOB MARLEY: Great Tradition Award (smoking)

MOST PUBLICISED "POOR" PERSON: Malcolm McLaren and Vivian Westwood, Bernard Rhodes (share it out please!)

SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD AWARD: Poly Styrene for services to GTO, Ronald Biggs for services as tea boy, Paul Simonon for his support of Frank Sinatra and Moss Bros and Sham 69 for their support of the Cambridge Folk Festival.

CORONATION STREET AWARD: John Cooper Clarke.

ACTOR OF THE YEAR: David Bowie 'Just A Gigolo', Phil Lynott in tight trousers and Steve Jones in Hollywood leisure wear.

UNFORTUNATE RETIREMENT: Bob Harris (over 30).

NON-MARRIAGE OF THE YEAR: Bob Geldof and Paula (almost) Geldof.

VICTORIA CROSS FOR BRAVERY: Anybody who slagged off J. J. Burnel (in print) or Jake Riviera (in person).

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL FOR ENDURANCE: Anybody who queued for Grease, Star Wars, Jaws 2, Superman, Bob Dylan concert tickets or new Boney M singles.

And that about wraps it up my dears, if you get my meaning! My alltime WALLIES of the year are without a doubt "chubby" Steve Jones and "boyish" Paul Cook although without them the great superstar "jamming" tradition of the sixties would never have lived on. I confidently expect to watch them at Wembley Arena next year along with Eric Clapton and Muddy Waters.

And if anything has got to go in 1979, I know just what it's going to be. "Inverted" commas my darlings, don't you hate 'em? I'll see you all, bright and early, next year. Till then, byeeseeee.



JOHNNY ROTTEN / JOHN LYNDON: Bore (shared) Flop (PIL), Unconvincing liar

Case' McKinney right through to former garage owner Bernard "Bernie" Rhodes, irate former manager of the Clash.

In fact, to be honest my dears (as you know I always am), not a soul



BETTE MIDLER: Best hostess (shared)

has escaped my scrutiny when we come to consider my award in this section. Babbie, bladder and bullshit has escaped the mouths of many I consider worthy of better things — everyone from "expense account" record company press officers — tall and inflated Geoff Deane (United Artists), established

and Islington's own "face in a million" Johnny Lydon himself). In fact all I can do is give an honorary award to . . . well, I don't know how to put this, but MYSELF. I'm sure you'll understand!

Before we come to the BORES (hold on, hold on), how about **BEST HOSTS:** Bette Midler (for singing at her own party), Bob Dylan (for putting his arm round Graham Parker at Blackbushe) and the incredibly spendthrift Ariola Records for taking our esteemed editor to America? No contest.

But BORES are something else altogether. Do I hear nominations for Al Clark (for living up to his image), Johnny Lydon (for not living up to his) and the Jam (for living in Woking). Or how about



BLANCA JAGGER: worst actress

'Grease', 'Jaws 2', 'Emmanuelle Meets Burning Piranhas At Airport 78'? Disco dancing competitions? Discos? Gay discos? Jazz-funk disco records? Chart disco records?

Outright winner must be all of those.

Next? Oh, yes, bodily re-alterations. Wayne County wins the **EXPENSIVE SURGERY** award by a short nose (and god knows what else), with Elton a poor second with an interrupted **VERY EXPENSIVE SURGERY** award for his diminishing barnet. Somebody did suggest that Sid 'n' Nancy should be in here somewhere, but I do feel that is a bit distasteful. And with bodily alterations comes **BODILY**



JAM: Flop (shared) Bore (shared)



ELAINE PAIGE: Smallest step for mankind

CAN THE YOUNG SURVIVE

Or will the machine kill?

TO A band that's been struggling along for months on next to no equipment, dole money and not telling the Security office about their gigs), signing a record deal is like being given the key to Eldorado.

But is it? The big cash advance on royalties (and that depends on how clever the manager is) might seem impressive on paper, but it usually breaks down to about £25 a week for each of the band to live on while they make an album, sometimes has to cover the studio time and other costs, and the running of a tour. It does NOT mean having the readies to slap down on a new car.

The days are (hopefully) gone when bands would sign contracts without getting them checked by someone who understands them. One band which was big in the sixties was so overwhelmed at being told they could have clothes accounts in Carnaby Street and buy any car they wanted, they didn't pay too much attention to the small print and ended up with very little to show for a string of hit singles. Fortunately that doesn't often happen now (who'd want to go to Carnaby Street anyway?).

The hidden danger isn't sneaking around in the contract these days, but it's there. And it's showing. It's after the contract is signed that bands are finding themselves under pressure to work within the record company framework: to produce HITS, make MONEY and let the company see a return on their INVESTMENT. The advance doesn't come free. . . .

Bands don't bargain for paying back in terms of a nervous breakdown . . . and that's not too dramatic an example. Many of the bands signed in the last 18 months won't make it through the next year. As musicians get disillusioned and disabused of their dreams about a record deal, the hassles with the company will get too much and they'll just drop out. And if they can't come up with hit records, the company will drop them like a hot potato.

Edited by ROSALIND RUSSELL
Assisted by SHEILA PROPHET,
TIM LOTT and RONNIE GURR



REZILLOS

IN MONEY terms, the Rezillos' split simply couldn't have happened at a worse time. With only six out of a scheduled 37 dates of a tour completed, and with a single, 'Destination Venus' just hitting the charts, they announced their decision to break up — in the process bringing rise of the single to a swift halt, and losing the money they, and the people around them, had already invested in the tour.

But as Eugene Reynolds says, "We'd rather finish on good terms. If you keep on under these circumstances, the things that are splitting you up become exaggerated until we might have ended up hating each other."

While the rest of the group seemed much more prepared to toe the line and tolerate it. This eventually led to Fay and Eugene splitting, with the others electing to stay where they were.

As Fay points out, they didn't have any illusions about the biz — they expected it to be rotten. But it turned out to be even worse than they'd expected.

"When you're working in a record company," says Fay, "you get to meet the people at the top — much more easily than you would if you were say, in the factory, so you can see the whole rotten business from a closer viewpoint — the truth comes home a lot more quickly."

"Basically, the people at the top seem to have a complete inability to distinguish what's good from what's bad. That's why they all got in a rut before the new wave came along."

The same people at the top, they claim, put 'invisible pressures' on them to change their original ideas and conform to their ideas until "It got to the point where everything was so watered down through people not understanding, and not being prepared to understand, that it just wasn't worthwhile. What we were coming up with simply wasn't giving us any pleasure."

So, after the release of 'Venus' — a record they reckon they were forced into recording in the wrong studio, under the wrong conditions — they decided to get out. Rightly or wrongly, it's a brave move. From a reasonably safe future, they're going back north to what they expect will be at least a year of uncertainty while they sort out the remaining debts, contract problems, etc.

Financially, it's pretty unsafe. But on a personal level, they say their finances can hardly be worse than they were while they were with Sire — on a wage of £25 a week, often with hardly enough to keep them in food.

"We'd walk into the record company, not having eaten in two days, and instead of them giving us the 10 quid we needed to keep us going over the next few days, they'd take us out to a posh restaurant for an £80 meal — which was the last thing we needed."

"It seems they just don't know how to spend their money. You get all these good groups, living on a pittance because they love their music, and they hope that someday they'll make it," says Eugene. "But how many of them ever do?"

Back in Edinburgh, once they have got their future sorted out and they're legally free to start again, Fay and Eugene plan to form a new group, which will record on their own, independent label. Naturally, this will bring its own very different pressures — chiefly financial ones — but they reckon it'll be worth it, because this time, they'll be in charge. And after what they've been through with a big company, that's what's important to them.



JOE STRUMMER

SOME OF the quarrels The Clash have had with CBS have been over minor issues — like why they didn't get as good Christmas presents as former stablemate David Essex. But others go deeper.

"It always seems to work out that what they want us to do is the opposite to what we want to do. The adverts they print in the papers, the promotion, anything. But even when it starts to get on top of you, we say 'if you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen' We always think we're lucky to be signed with a big label after so long."

"In a couple of weeks, CBS is gonna release two more tracks from the album as a single, even though we've just finished recording two new songs that could be the single. It's because they want to sell the album. We told them 'we're the same group that made the album remember' but we're powerless to stop them putting it out. It makes me feel sick. It's just a waste of everybody's time."

"When we signed I was told we had total artistic control. So we have, over what we record, but not what the record company choose to do with it afterwards. Maybe I've been too naive."

"And without Bernie (Rhodes, their ex manager) we're having to take over what he did and having to decide what to do, that's another pressure we can do without. We're hopeless at business."

"We got a £50,000 advance one year and £50,000 the next but that's all gone. We spent it on tours and recording mostly. We don't get tour support like some bands do, when the record company helps out with touring costs — because the tour helps sell the album and the company benefits. We've never had that and we've had to borrow. We're all in debt. I wouldn't like to say how much, but it's debt with a capital D."

"We're all on £25 a week, as we've always been. Topper and me are looking for somewhere to live. Topper's dosing just now and I'm in a squat. But I try to think of the gigs first. If I do a really good gig, then I feel like solving all my problems."

"But CBS would never dare to tell us what to do onstage, or what to record. We only give them an album's worth, no more, so they have to use all the songs. We're always pushing it to the limit."

"I wouldn't like to make any predictions about the future of the Clash in case it backfires."



NICK MOBBS

NICK MOBBS, ex EMI A&R, now Automatic Records.

"One of the problems is that the bands get signed too early. It's not because they're too young but they're not emotionally ready for it. That can be the fault of the manager who wants to get them signed, the band themselves for the big advance, or the record company who wants to get them before someone else does. I've done that myself, and it's a dangerous thing."

"The group represents a phenomenal investment so the company always get panicky after

nine months or so, wanting to see something happen. So under the pressure comes on the band to produce hits. There's this pressure about hit records, but you have to do it the right way. You have to allow the band to develop naturally. If they are in a business and if they expect a high advance (as they do), the company has to be covered. They are emotional, unstable people, musicians, as all creative people are. The pressure just builds up."

"If everybody agreed to have a truce (though it'll never happen) and said 'let's be sensible about this and work it out over five years' there wouldn't be people running about paranoid. But I think it's wrong to say to a band 'don't worry' because they should be aware of what's happening, but it should be put in such a way that it doesn't seem like a panic. Of course they want hits, they all do."

"I've dealt with lots of groups that said they didn't want to sign to a big company, then they do. But they must have personal attention. Managers still rip off some bands, though it's not as bad as it was five years ago. But you only get the band's story. Sometimes the manager may have been supporting them for months, to stop them starving, then they might turn round and tell the manager to piss off. It's difficult if you're in a group to understand the business."

"As to survival, you have to look to America. If they can survive there, maybe they'll be around for 10 years. Very few (weighing everything up) just now will have the chance to do it in America. Tom Robinson has probably got it. And the Boomtown Rats is a classic case of how to do it the right way."

"There are few British acts that can make it in America — these would be the ones I'd sign."



CHRIS BAILEY

AFTER BEING flown here from Australia by EMI, the Saints arrived to a ready-made following, thanks to their single '(I'm) Stranded'. Three albums and several singles later, the band was dumped by EMI a couple of months ago — their manager had high tailied it back to Oz several weeks before they got the elbow, leaving them to get through it on their own.

"I had no illusions when I signed to EMI because they became interested in the Saints after they already had some success with 'Stranded'. I've never suffered from delusions about major record companies being benevolent societies."

"To give them their due, EMI didn't interfere artistically at all and that was a good thing because it seemed at the time that a requirement of a job in A&R was being tone deaf."

"Obviously if you sign to a major record company you expect a certain amount of promotion and backing. However what happened to most groups who were signed in '77 was that EMI couldn't cope with them, and as the corporate law of the jungle reigns at Manchester Square, those who immediately did well were promoted further and those who didn't were dropped completely."

"Although the logic that made EMI stop pressing 'Perfect Day' which at the time was rising in the charts, escapes me. I think that my inability to understand this simple tactical brilliance behind the play was the major factor behind the breakdown of our lovely relationship. I guess it must have been important for them to be loved and understood by their artists."

"Since then I've learnt the importance of being a psychonaut in the music business and how not to win friends and influence people."

"I can't remember exactly how much the advance was, but I'd say such of £) honey. It cost

The group represents a phenomenal investment so the company always get panicky after nine months or so, wanting to see something happen. So undue pressure comes on the band to produce hits.

Nick Mobbs, Automatic Records

fairly substantial. I'm deeply sorry if this in any way was responsible for the rise in price of admission to bingo halls in Blackpool or the cost of nuclear bombs. But there's not a lot I can do about it."



JIMMY PURSEY

RIGHT FROM the beginning, Jimmy Pursey has used his position on-stage with Sham to put over his own forceful ideas... trying to unite his fans and get them to keep out of trouble. He's unfortunately attracted a contingent of boot boys — and sometimes the opposition comes along too — and it's not only me who's wary of going to his gigs in case I get a bottle on the back of the head.

It has been suggested to Jimmy by the record company that he try to lose this image, but Jimmy doesn't want to abandon any part of his legion of fans. It could be this that's caused the pressure that's led to a virtual nervous breakdown. He feels responsible for the behaviour of his fans.

He told us that he'd locked himself in his hotel room after a gig in Manchester and refused to come out. When the door was broken down, he was rushed to hospital suffering from nervous collapse.

"At the gig I had a bad cold, my head was killing me and I was thinking about how I felt and what I was. I stopped and thought 'I am a human being and you want me to be a robot.' When I worked for £2 a day in a Wimpy people didn't ask me about the state of the country."

"I'm more at home in the studio now because, to tell you the truth, touring, getting in vans and staying in hotels screws me up..."



POLY STYRENE

POLY STYRENE, the girl who made the teeth brace fashionable, almost got overtaken by her own image. Swung from the small time of gigs at the Hope & Anchor to a couple of hit singles, a contract with EMI and appearances on Top Of The Pops, she found people expected her to live up to her image. She started out singing about the plastic trash of the day's society and almost ended up as a figurehead to it.

She now denies that she's under any pressure or strain, but that wasn't the story in September, when she took herself off to the country to get away from it all.

"I had to get away, so I went to the country for a few weeks. I saw a psychiatrist once. Mostly I just

rested. It's not true that I went bonkers. It just got too much. There were plenty of pressures on me. But they were OK, as long as you could take them with a sense of humour. But then I went to New York. It really turned my head. All that attention they treat you like you're really different. It got to me.

"I was worn out and I was doing drugs. Nothing hard — I wouldn't ever touch anything hard — but I was smoking a lot. People were all around telling me how wonderful I was. I didn't exactly start to believe it, but I started to get very insecure. If there weren't four or five people around me, I started worrying I was doing something wrong.

"I overdosed on ligging. The rest of the band were sensible — they would finish a gig and go straight home to bed. I'd go out and have 'fun'."

Poly sorted herself out with a self imposed stay in a mental home, where the sight of the real crazies sobered her up, but fast.

She says now that she's under no pressure and that she doesn't have anything to do with the business side of the band's affairs. But she's allegedly been missing out on band soundchecks and only turning up at gigs minutes before they're due to go onstage. However, they've just finished a successful tour and they have their album 'Germ Free Adolescents' out and doing well. Maybe Poly saw the light in time.



ALAN SIZER

ALAN SIZER General Manager of A&R Polydor

"Yes, I think young bands do expect too much when they sign to a record company. For many of them, their records are really terrific and important to them, they've spent months writing their music and it's their whole life. A record company takes a more functional view. If you have 47 artists on your label, including The Who and Bryan Ferry obviously you have to think of them too and that creates problems. It's also likely a record company might just sit back and wait for the big record to come up. It's all hard to explain to young guys who don't have much money and who have to live to play their music. It's all a bit of a jungle.

"You direct them as much as it's necessary, try to improve what they've got. You have to look at everything on its merit, find out what the band lacks, if anything. Perhaps we might suggest a particular studio, say in the country so that they can live with their single for two weeks without interruptions.

"It happens all the time, that a band doesn't want to take direction. But you try to build up a relationship with a band. Really the music business is a contradiction in terms — music and business. But sometimes you have to persuade a band to make a change that they might think is compromising their music, as they see it.

"One band that knows exactly what it's doing, what it wants and has a clear view of the future is Sloussie and the Banshees. They know what's coming next. But bands like that are a rarity.

"At all times there are bands who are likely to go under. The other week there were 182 singles released

and the Beeb only put five on the playlist and three of them were by established artists. We've got a track by The Jam at the moment, and that's got a four letter word on it that will have to be changed if they want it to come out as a single or the Beeb won't play it. It's not a case of putting pressure on the band, but if it's not changed it's not going to be a single because it won't get played.

"Obviously I'm concerned about the money they get. If they can't pay the rent and don't have enough to eat a band's going to break up. While a small record company might be able to devote more time to them or understand them better they can't give them the big advance.

"Most of the contracts we have are five years, on a one yearly option. That gives the band a chance to get out if they feel things aren't happening for them. The most difficult problem we come up against from my point of view is if they want to specify the money spent on promotion. We strive to get the records as good as possible then they won't need that much promotion. The trouble is that artists are usually not well versed in business. But a good manager will understand the contract and will be able to explain it to the band.

"As far as live gigs, if we think they're doing the wrong thing on stage we would suggest that they change something. We couldn't compel them to play something and there's rarely a contractual influence. Most of it would be by persuasion; you have to convince them it's the best for them. But they have their own identity to preserve too. If you can't persuade them that it's right, then you've failed with building up a relationship with the band.



SKIDS

THE SKIDS, a bunch of wide-eyed teenagers from Dunfermline, who recently signed to Virgin informed us that, over a record company lunch, they were told that someone at Virgin had insisted that the band drop certain numbers from the set, replacing them with more "commercially viable" stuff.

Referring to the hand that feeds, Stuart Adamson states: "We were listening to the voice of experience. But we've got different opinions now. We'd never get into that situation again. So far, we haven't been saying THIS IS WHAT WE WANT, even in the studio. But from now on it's got to be like that."

Stuart Adamson: "When someone says something like that you take it seriously and really start to question your own judgement, question the songs."

Richard Johnson, lead vocalist: "We've got lots of songs which are lost, good songs. Songs we don't even play on stage and which should be great choices for LPs."

On stage one of the songs dropped was called 'London'.

Richard: "The man — a head A&R man at Virgin — just didn't like our opinion of 'London'."

Stuart: "It didn't fit with his rules."

The plan seems to be that the currently shelved material will be used on The Skids debut album, and will, hopefully become more popular with audiences and, as a result, will make a return to the set.

It seems that this is the only aspect of the Virgin deal that has really pissed off the band. The new album and subsequent tour should be forthcoming around March/April of next year.

Although the Skids show no signs of big business "pressure", they show signs of being irritable rather than disillusioned.



RICH KIDS

AROUND THE music biz this time last year, there were two words on everyone's lips — Rich Kids. A new band formed by an ex-Pistol and the former singer with Silk: a group being given a hero's welcome by their record company — EMI — and the music press alike.

In retrospect, all that attention, though understandable under the circumstances, was over-enthusiastic and definitely premature.

"We were a bit green," admits Glen Matlock, "and we didn't know any different. I thought that was how every band did it — after all, the only other band I'd been in was the Pistols, who got thrown in at the deep end as well, so it was hard for me to get a proper perspective on it."

There seems to be a much quicker turnaround in bands these days. In the old days, a group would play the clubs for five years before they made it. Now you're judged on the first thing you do, so everyone's listening to immature ideas I mean, if the first thing you did was your best, there'd be no room for improvement, would there?

"I think it's a shame it has to be like that, but that's the way things are in 1978. People are like sponges, soaking things up."

The Rich Kids' own first efforts met with varying success. Their first single 'Rich Kids' was a hit, but both the follow ups 'The Sound Of Marching Men' and 'Ghosts Of Princes In Towers' failed to make the charts. Their album, also called 'Ghosts Of Princes In Towers' got mixed reviews (most of which were justifiably dubious about Mick Ronson's muddy production, which failed to bring out the best in their songs) and only got to the lower reaches of the album charts.

On live gigs too, the band got a hostile reaction, particularly from northern audiences, because their initial statements — which they admit were partly planned to get publicity — that they were one step on from punk.

"We forgot that, though down in London we were already bored with punk, up north they were only just getting into it," says Glen. "So they felt hostile, because they felt we were taking away something that was theirs."

In a situation like that, they reckon there are two alternative answers — you can change your tune to suit the audience, or you can simply slog away, hoping that people will come round to your point of view. The Rich Kids took the latter course — again with varying amounts of success.

Despite these initial setbacks and problems, however, the group seem fairly pleased with their first year together, as they do with EMI.

Their deal with the company is to make four albums in three years, or one every nine months. Although, as

manager Peter Walsley explains, "That's only for paperwork — if we do one album in 10 months, and another in three, that's OK."

A record company advance, Peter explains, is a loan which is recoupable, but not returnable. (Eh?) For those of you who know as much about money as me, he explains it in simple terms: "Say you lend a bloke a fender for a week to set up a business selling bicycles. If, after a week, he's managed to sell some bikes, you r loan is then recoupable. But if he never sells anything in the first place, your money is then non-returnable. It's the same with a record company's advance to a group."

The Rich Kids' initial advance has been spent on every day costs (wages, on the road expenses, management etc) and they're not due to get any more money from EMI for a year. Nor are they due any royalties.

"It all depends on your contract," says Pete. "Sometimes you can work it out so you get 50 per cent of your royalties. But in our case, the deal is that we don't get any until our initial advance has been recouped."

So at the moment, the band are self-sufficient?

"One hopes so," says Pete. "But we can't dawdle. They've got to deliver an album — a good album — soon."

Which, I point out, is exactly the sort of pressure which might affect a group — knowing that they have to come up with something as good as, if not better than, what's gone before. But in this case it seems that, if there is any pressure (which I imagine there must be) it doesn't reach the band. "I think there are some things musicians shouldn't be told," says Pete.

And Glen agrees: "Management shouldn't tell bands things out of duty. Being on the spot too much only makes you worried. Like you were saying about Poly Styrene being affected by the pressure, somebody obviously didn't realise how delicate she was."

"You have to trust your manager to a certain degree — if you can't trust your manager, it's your own fault for making a bad assessment in the first place. We tried half-a-dozen different sharks before we ended up with this one."

So overall, the group seem to be doing OK on a day to day level, as Steve New says: "We wouldn't have done anything differently. Anyway, we don't want to look backwards — we want to go forward from here."

And, looking forward, the group's first aim is to recoup their new album — and get it out on time. 'Ghosts', it seems, was ready four months before its initial release date, though the question of who was to blame seems hazy.

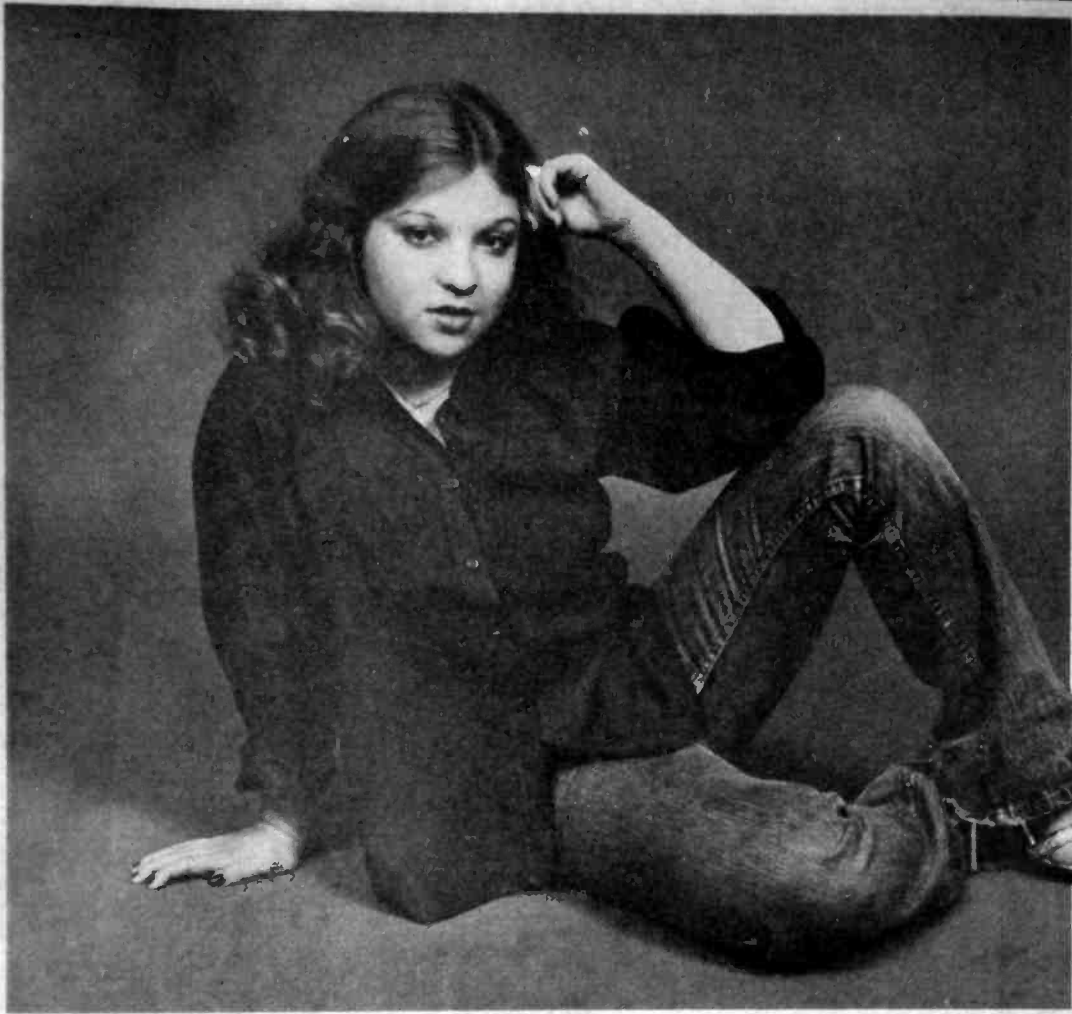
"It isn't EMI, Manchester Square's fault," says Pete. "They've got no control over what goes on at the pressing plant at Hayes. A machine breaking down there, or a strike, can hold up a whole line of albums in that situation. It's public opinion which decides what you press — if there's only one machine, and you have a choice of pressing Kate Bush, or the Saints, what do you do? More people want Kate Bush, so you press Kate Bush."

"Really, it's down to human failure, and in a big firm, you have a greater number of people, so the failure rate is higher." (Incidentally, as he points out, signing to a small, independent label doesn't help, either, since they still have to go to Hayes to get their records pressed.)

The band are agreed that, while technical problems like these are unavoidable, they're in a stronger position with EMI, now, simply because they're more knowledgeable.

"By now we know who's in charge, we know to go straight to the label manager," says Pete. "Last year we were all a bit new to it, and we didn't know where to go to. But now we know who to go to and get things done."

The little girl with a lot on top



The body of a 16 year old. The brain of a 35 year old. That's Rachel Sweet.

ROSALIND RUSSELL did the interviewing

PICTURE, IF you will, a room full of ambitious mothers, each flapping round their small offspring and throwing out daggers-drawn looks to everyone. It's the waiting room, just prior to auditions for TV adverts.

The nervous kids are in hysterics and the seasoned troupers are winding them up by telling them they'll never get the part anyway because the director prefers blondes. Little Mary-Ellen has wet her knickers and her mother's having a fit, to match her blue hair.

(You've imagined all that? Good. Dramatic, isn't it?)

You might also imagine that such an introduction to fame and fortune at the tender age of six would make some of these kids pretty hardbitten (the ones that didn't actually end up on Vallum by the time they were eight, that is).

Well, I'm not saying Rachel Sweet is hard bitten, but she's certainly got all her marbles when it comes to her career plans. She's four foot 11 inches of blistering voice and astute business acumen. Even from the giddy heights of five foot three, I felt quite intimidated. Not that she was at all unpleasant... quite the opposite. And she's not precocious like that horrible brat Tatum

O'Neal. I was just taken back being confronted with a tiny 16 year old body with a 35 year old brain. And I have to add that her voice comes in about the mid-twenties somewhere.

All of this does tie up with the neurotic mothers and prematurely narcissistic kids. Because Rachel was working in TV advertising from the age of six, though she says her parents weren't the horrific sort at all and she really quite enjoyed doing it.

"To say I wasn't pushed into it would be lying," said Rachel. "I was brought up in a practical atmosphere and my parents saw I had talent at an early age. I went around the house singing all the ads, imitating them perfectly. So I don't resent my parents at all. I used to be flown down to New York from Akron and do three auditions and then fly home. Then maybe we'd get a call that I'd got one, so I'd fly back the next week and record it.

"I just hated the auditions, because it would be in a room with 50 other girls like me. It's a very artificial world... like mothers who dye their kids' hair for the day. There were some horrendous mothers. I got hardened and I didn't like that. I saw through a lot of stuff."

S'funny how you never think of that when you watch the ad for Birds Eye beefburgers (you know the one, where the kids are on a trip to France, and Ben insists on Birds Eye. It's my favourite just now), although there's a few TV kids that could do with a clout.

ANYWAY, long before Rachel was giving it laidly on the rock circuit, she was helping to sell hair driers, toothpaste and candy bars.

"In the candy bar ad, I had to give the bar to this little boy who had to take a bite of it. We filmed that scene 104 times and he had to keep going off to throw up. But I wouldn't mind doing ads now, as long as I didn't have to audition."

With such an early start in TV, I was surprised she hadn't gone in for films. After all, it's quite an advantage to look younger than you are for the movies.

"I did try out for 'The Exorcist' when I was 11 — the part Linda Blair got," Rachel admitted. "I went into the audition room and they gave me the script to read. But I didn't like it, y'know, all that bad language. It wasn't like selling toothpaste, I just couldn't see myself doing it. My parents didn't really know anything about it, but when the film came out and they saw it, they were pleased I hadn't done it.

"Besides, just because I can sell a product doesn't mean I can act."

Rather than head towards the silver screen, Rachel decided to sing, and signed with a small Texas based record company.

"The owner saw me in Nashville — I used to go there a lot when I was singing country music. I had one country single get into the charts, called 'We Live In Two Different Worlds'."

It's obvious from listening to a couple of the tracks on her 'Fool Around' album that she's a good mimic. Her copy of Dolly Parton and Brenda Lee are excellent. There are other comparisons to Brenda Lee, who was also a small lady with an explosive voice and she too started in music very young.

"At the time, I thought I'd be a country singer for the rest of my

life," said Rachel. "I was 12 years old. It's hard enough getting anywhere in rock at 16, so it was impossible at 12. I did get an offer from a record company, but they wanted me to wait two years. I didn't want to do that. In country, it doesn't matter if you're 12 or 80."

But country is a different pan of grits to the wonderful world of Stiff Records. And Rachel has found herself hitting the UK at the tall end of new wave (or at least, old new wave).

"I squirm," she said, duly squirming. "I don't like the term new wave. I don't want to become old wave, I want to hang around. I don't want to fade out or have labels put on me. In the long term," she added, as if we were at a board meeting, "I see myself in rock."

"'Fool Around' is a compilation of what I wanted to do. It's more like a showcase really. The next album isn't going to be anything like that. I'm afraid of getting a label I might not be able to shake off."

She took another swig of her ginger ale (her sister Lia is on diet Pepsi — and they both admit to having put on too much weight, eating their way across Britain).

SHE decided definitely on her rock career last year, encouraged by her parents who had already given her the chance to back out and lead a "normal" life. Her mother died five months ago, but her father insists she keeps up her education.

She's had a tutor travelling on the road with her, making sure she keeps up to exam standard.

"I haven't had any lessons since I came off the tour two weeks ago and it's been heaven," said Rachel. "I don't have the energy to pick up a geometry book."

I guessed she must be a pretty famous person back home in Akron, specially at school.

"I'm famous for being in the Firestone High gymnastics team," she replied. "And I'm famous for being here, in England. But home in the States, they know me better for my balance beam technique. I do all right, but I'm not great."

I like sports and I like being in shape — though I'm not too much in shape at the moment," she added, looking at her stomach.

She says she's ready to go home now — she's been in the UK since the middle of September — and is looking forward to seeing her family again.

"My dad calls quite often, because he worries about my health. I'm anaemic and I haven't been eating the right things. He also worries about business. He's very shrewd. With me being a minor, it's very hard to get people to take me seriously."

Oh, I dunno. I take her seriously. And I believe her when she says she'll have a Rolls by the time she's 18.

"Well, that's the quote the Press seem to use most," Rachel remarked with the tired ease of a much interviewed lady.

"I'm very into commercialism, and I've always wanted to become famous. But when I put my first million, I won't really be getting it on cars. I'll invest it into the re-promotion of Rachel Sweet. Gulp."

HELP

GETTING TO THE CLINIC

I'M 15 years old and have been out with two girls. This was when I was about 12, and I didn't really have much of a relationship with either of them, as I only saw them at school. Out of school, I never kissed either of them - so I finished with them. I put this down to immaturity.

There is one girl who wants to go out with me at the moment, who I

already know. Although I see her at discos, I feel too embarrassed to ask her out and I think she knows it. Have I been put off because of my earlier experiences of girls? Am I a late developer? My parents disapprove of me

going out with girls. They even disapprove of my older brother, who is now 22 and engaged, going with his girlfriend.

It's difficult to talk to them about the modern way of life and girlfriends - let alone taking them home.

Dave, Preston
From what you say, your parents seem to be the biggest inhibiting factor in your attitude towards girls. Many parents do find it hard to accept that their children are growing up faster than they ever could have believed. And while you're living at home and still being supported by them naturally expect you to conform to their beliefs. Yet, despite your parents' somewhat restrictive views on the subject of girlfriends, your older brother has already broken down a few of the barriers. Talk things over with him. He's been through it all before you and should have something constructive to say.

You're certainly old enough to have your own circle of friends now, both boys and girls. It's up to you to show your mum and dad that you're responsible enough to make compromises with them, but even so, control your own social life. They'd rather know who you're going around with at night, so they surely won't object if you want to bring friends home once in a while. They worry about you. Try to show them that they don't have to.

The girl at the disco likes you. You like her. You're not a late developer - your relationships with girls at school, in the past, were simple exploratory friendships, giving you a basis on which to develop other relationships. Have the guts to ask her out, or ask her to dance with you.

Don't expect her to be the one who makes the first move in front of all her friends. If you don't take the initiative, neither of you will get to know each other better.

You shouldn't expect everything to come right in one blinding flash. Be patient and let yourself adjust slowly to any new developments with your parents or with this girl. Sooner or later your family will accept that you're no longer a child, and so will you. It's unavoidable.

Now I know I'm gay it's hell

I HAVE an incurable disease I'm gay. And the past few years have been absolute hell for me, as I'm becoming more aware of this all the time. Everybody seems to put down homosexuals, and this just makes matters worse. I have been out with girls, but these relationships are always short as I am not capable of satisfying a girl sexually. And, though I have many admirers, I haven't been out with a girl for a year.

Earlier this year, I was becoming so frustrated that I went to Piccadilly Circus for a day and allowed myself to be picked up for £8. Within the first hour, I had been through the ordeal with one client and I felt sick for days after as it really disgusted me. I could never build up a relationship that way.

I have often thought of killing myself but I hate hurting anybody, especially my own family and friends. My parents are going through a bad stage too, and my mother is currently seeking a divorce.

What I really want is a boy of my own age to form a lasting relationship, but I don't know how to go about it. I cannot tell who is gay and who is not, although I do try to suss people out. I know that if I found someone else this would make me a happy and new person. The only alternative is suicide.

Chris, West Essex

Some people are heterosexual, sexually or emotionally drawn to the opposite sex? Some are homosexual - statistics tell us that one in every 20 people you meet are likely to be gay. Others, often rejected by homosexuals and heterosexuals alike, are bisexual, equally attracted to either boys or girls, men or women. You don't have to feel abnormal. You're not. These convenient labels simply refer to contrasting ways of relating to people. They cover sexual and social differences - not diseases.

It's true that any minority group is subjected to its own share of jokes and abuse, but you must accept that this is because minority groups, whether black, Jewish, Buddhist, Irish or gay make the status quo feel a little uneasy. We're not living in an ideal world - put - downs are as much an expression of fear as of any other emotion, and where understanding and basic human caring is concerned, the 'average' man in the street, has a long way to go. Reaching self-awareness has been a painful experience, but at least you know and care about where you're at.

Taking your own life has to be the coward's way out. No matter which category you think you fall under, you're still left with the not inconsiderable task of finding another person or other people who you can honestly relate to.

You need a bridge between your present isolation and the harder world of gay bars and discos, which, if you tackled them head on, might leave you as sickened as your experience in Piccadilly. Try taking it on a strictly social, even a cosy basis. For details of nearby social groups who will understand your shyness and nervousness about meeting and talking to gay people, where you can meet others of a similar age, most of whom have been through the same soul-searching time, ring Gay Switchboard on 01-837 7324. You'll find friends who'll help you bridge the gap that seems to stretch so wide.

Also write to parents Enquiry, 16 Holey Road, London SE8, or ring them on 01-958 1515 for info and advice. They run regular social meetings for young gays.

MAILMAN

Write to Mailman, Record Mirror, 40 Long Acre, London, WC2E 9JT.



Our pic is neither a Mecca nor EMI dancehall, but a shot from the movie 'Mecca' by Wechsler.

RE The World Disco Dancing Championship report by James Parade. I think you should be told that EMI Dancing Ltd, apart from the fact that the majority of its dancehall managers are former Mecca employees. I repeat EMI Dancing

has f + + + all to do with Mecca. E. Morley, Chorley.

Ah the seasonal wit hits the knuckle dragging morons who spend all day composing communiques to Mailman. More seasonal greetings coming up...

Have a nice maniac

WISHING you a Christmas Day / That you'll enjoy in every way... / And then, for someone nice as you / May all the year be happy too! Have a nice Christmas (even if you did call me a maniac). Ann On E. Mouse, Unaddressed.

Some people will not take a telling. A maniac once, and hey, yup, still one.

Disputin' 'Rasputin'

AFTER reading Ronnie Gurr's review of the Boney M concert, I felt inspired enough to write the following song to the tune of 'Rasputin'.

There is a certain group; They are always in the Charts; Oh they make me sick; They are such a bunch of farts. The women's mouths Should be sealed with Sellotape; And the only bloke is Like a constipated ape.

CHORUS
Yuk Yuk Boney M,
How I really do hate them;
It is a shame that they're Number One

Yuk Yuk Boney M,
How I really do hate them.
I wish that they were all dead and gone.

Thin Lizzy, no address
Oh, Phil you little devil you. Seriously these last couple of letters were unaddressed and were not made up by an intoxicated writer. Next week a lyrical interpretation of Beethoven's Fifth with words inspired by a Robin Smith Jethro Tull feature.

Don't knock Livvy!

WHO THE hell does James Parade think he is knocking, Olivia Newton-John... (letter then goes on to say that ONJ is fab gear and Totally Hot! etc, etc, it then climaxes with 'Piss Off you lousy Morons. (His PS really twists the dagger with a You have pigs' arse minds.)

And you have 'Pools' (where or whatever that is).
Ouch! Erki! Squeech! Groat! - James Parade... and now... A 'Who the bloody hell' letter...

Rats to reviewer

WHO THE bloody hell does that frog think he is? We think his opinion of the Boomtown Rats is f + + + +ing crap.

Two avid Rats Fans in Coventry.
Worth the price of a stamp? I think not. Still I suppose someone has to come from Coventry... and now an even stronger 'Who the wosname' brief.

No flies on Kiss (but lots on Lott)

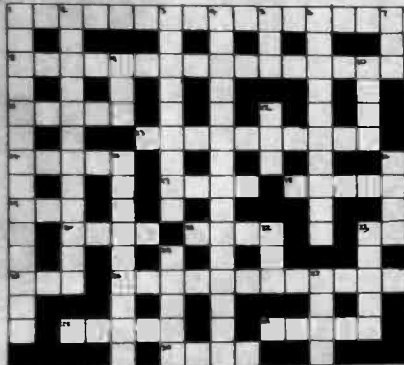
WHO THE f + + + +ing hell (This language must stop, I have spoken to MM) does Tim Lott think he is? Saying Kiss are vulgar, boring and crap. So let me remind the c + + + (Must stop) that Kiss are the best group around and can never be beat (DUUUUH), so up yours Tim Lott.

A Kiss Freak, address unknown to earthpeople.
Oh so it's not just Kiss who are vulgar, boring and crap... and then came a 'How dare you' letter.

Hot Gossip hot pics

WHY, OH why couldn't you show us what the stars at ONJ's do I am talking about the uncensored pictures of Hot Gossip's cabaret routine. Being 'sans' female at this moment in time (now), I'm really getting my rocks off on some of the finest moving female forms I've seen in all of my 24 decades of age. Please if you can't print pictures of them at the ONJ do, then send them to me and I'll gladly pay the postage, printing and developing cos I can't get a decent poster of them anywhere.
Dave Barton, address withheld.
Allo Allo Allo, Dave me boy. Being a fellow red - blood I too regularly drool and other things...
Hot know warra mean? - over Hot Gossip pics. You say you can't find a decent photo or poster of H.G. That's because there are no decent, or indecent pics of the lithe young things.

XWORD



ACROSS

- 1 You may find them in a Bicycle Race (3,8,5)
- 8 1972, Mott The Hoople single (4,4,3,5)
- 11 They wanted to Kiss You All Over (5)
- 13 Jackson Five assuring us that they will turn up (3,2,5)
- 14 1972, Rod Stewart single (5)
- 17 Tops or Seasons (4)
- 18 David Bowie live album (8)
- 19 What Bobbie Gentry sent to Billie Joe (3)
- 20 Andy Fairweather Low's corner (4)
- 21 The Clash had a White... (4)
- 23 & 24 Across, latest Disco hit from Chic (2,5)
- 25 Tornado eaters (3)
- 26 Patrick Juvet's passion for the USA (1,4,7)
- 28 Bee 21 Across
- 29 White or Blue (6)
- 30 Samantha told us about her Emotions (4)

DOWN

- 1 Single Approved by The Motors (6,5,3)
- 2 They have recorded more songs about Buildings (7,5)
- 3 Sham 69 album (5,4)
- 4 Bob Dylan song that is supposed to have started Folk / Rock (2,10,3)
- 5 Killd or Dave (3)
- 6 Marvin Gaye and Kim Weston hit... (2,5,3)
- 7 The Who could for miles (3)
- 9 Kiss guitarist (3)
- 10 There was No More for Mr... Guy (4)
- 12 They wanted to Roll On Down The Highway (1,1,1)
- 15 A warning from the Buzzcocks (4,5)
- 16 Ms Lovich (4)
- 22 Petty or Robinson (3)
- 23 Dean Friedman's stars (5)
- 24 ELP album (5)
- 27 Mr Gallagher (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

- 1 The Man With The Child In His Eyes 10 If You Gotta Go, Go Now 14 Nearnith 17 It Takes Two To Tango 18 Stiff 20 Glad 22 Denis 23 Jackson 24 Honey I Need 25 Lear 26 Peter Frampton 29 Eillon 31 Schools 32 Sasamiras 34 Dog 36 Sire 37 Air 40 Preenley 42 Roe 43 Eddie 44 Leo 46 Move 48 RSO 50 Sir 51 Works 53 Tell Us The Truth 54 Eno 55 Roxy Music 59 Milkie 60 80 Life On The Line 63 Cortina 65 Ape 67 Gaye 68 Goldie 69 Idol 70 Adam 72 Star 74 Aja 79 Storm 81 Sweet Talkin Woman 82 SOS 83 Peel

DOWN

- 1 This Is The Modern World 2 Egyptian Reggae 3 Night 4 Heaven 5 Crocodile Rock 6 Low 7 Ian 8 Strips 9 Sex And Drugs And Rock And Roll 11 Teacher 12 On The Beach 13 Oboe 15 Hollies 16 Kaya 17 If 19 Mono 21 Simon 23 Jar 27 File 28 Taste 30 Street Life 32 Supertramp 33 Adler 35 Crease 36 Syd 38 Clout 39 Lou Reed 41 Yes 45 Out 47 Denis Wilson 49 Shot 52 Riff 53 Tools 56 XTC 57 Stick To Me 58 Angie 61 Odyssey 62 Lola 64 Ram 65 AJ 66 Easter 67 Glaze 71 Cars 72 Pete 75 Rat 76 The 78 Bad 80 Rag

PICKED TO CLICK ... PICKED TO CLICK ... PICKED TO CLICK ...

STILL HUMPING THEIR OWN GEAR

ROSALIND RUSSELL talks to the Straits. Four girls who feel sorry for groupies

DI HARDE — the baby of the group at 17 — rolled up her sleeves.

"Look at this!" she said, flexing a healthy muscle.

You don't get a build like that just hooking a bass guitar around. Neither did Di. It's all been part of her education in the rock biz. Like any other band on the lower rungs of the ladder, the Straits are still humping their own gear and driving their own truck — well, strictly speaking, a hire truck. As they're not making enough money to pay roadies, they have to play their gigs, knowing that at the end of them, they have to load the van, drive home to Leeds and then unpack the thing again.

"When we started a year ago," said guitarist Judi Rock, "we practised in a church hall on the other side of Leeds and had to take the drum kit over on the bus."

After a couple of line up changes, the band steered to: Judi (guitar and vocals), Di (bass), Shirley Newman (drums) and Suzi Roll (rhythm guitar). They all live in Leeds because it's central for getting to gigs up and down the M1.

"Besides, I don't think

the group needs to move to London," said Judi. "If we'd started here I think we would have got submerged by everything else that was happening. As there are less bands up there, we're a big fish in a small pool."

It's also likely they would have got caught up in the female punks syndrome too, but as their music doesn't fit into that category, it would have been a mistake.

They were reared on the glam rock era, Gary Glitter, Bolan and Sweet and they're quite happy to admit that their influences lie there. Their own songs don't hark back, but are a continuation of basic pop — but not on the mindless level of too luv.

One of their songs that's caused a lot of interest is Shirley Newman's 'Sacha Shoes': briefly it's about girls buying new shoes to wear to the disco where they hope they'll get pulled by the man of their future.

"It was really about girls of 17 who go down the disco in the evenings, to find a man and then get married to him. It's all a rut. And it happens all the time."

"We're not on a burning crusade about it," added Judi. "I think they deserve it if they haven't got the guts to do anything about it. I

don't feel sorry for them at all.

"The ones I feel sorry for are the potential groupies. I think that's sad. They think pulling someone in a band is the next best thing to going out and getting a group together themselves. I wrote a song called 'You Don't Mind' about a couple of groupies in Leeds. All they think about is getting to be famous by having one of the band, but they haven't thought it out properly."

"We had to go back to a hotel in Leeds to talk some business with the Yachts one night — we're not groupies though! Let me see you write that down! Anyway, these two girls were there and one was doing all right, but nobody would talk to the other girl, even though she was wearing a see-through blouse and had her breasts all hanging out. Well, every time her nipples went flaccid, she kept pinching them to make them stand out. It was really sad."

The Straits don't have that problem. Most of the lads that come backstage to talk to them are tongue tied by the time they get there.

"Most people take us at face value," said Judi. "I do get annoyed when blokes standing at the back keep shouting 'get 'em off'. They've just got to prove to their mates how big they are, but it doesn't take any guts to stand at the back

in a dark hall and shout that."

Obnoxious men aren't a problem to the group — it's the ones that look as if they're OK then end up walking off with their gear, or shoving a fist through it.

Shirley had a guitar stolen recently at one gig, and at another, some speakers belonging to friends were ruined when somebody kicked them in. That comes into the disaster scale for the band, who can't afford to replace them right now. They've all given up their day jobs to concentrate on the band, and though they don't have a recording contract right now, they're hoping it won't be long.

"It's within smelling distance," laughed Shirley. "Now that we've got enough songs. When we started we only played for 15 minutes, then began the set again. Once we played the same set through three times. If anybody clapped at all, we'd take that as the encore."

If the Straits do get a contract, and if they do make any money, Judi's already worked out how she's going to spend it.

"I'm going to Switzerland to have my back put right," she told me. "All that loading and unloading the van has put my back out!"



JOE JACKSON: made an album himself

WILL THIS JOE BE A STAR?

The man with a Diploma is Joe Jackson. The man with pad and pencil is TIM LOTT

IN BROAD daylight, Joe Jackson looks very little like anyone's idea of rock 'n' roll star. Pale and double chinmed in a blue pinstripe (wide lapel!) suit, only a flashy tie with two embossed semiquavers betray that he might be a closet superstar.

Of course he isn't a superstar, closet or otherwise. He is a talented nonentity who has so far had one single released 'Is She Really Going Out With Him', a pop song — or a rock song as Joe would prefer it defined — with massive 'untit shifting potential' that has hardly sold a copy.

Joe, who looks unusually normal (or is it normally unusual?), has anything but a classic rock singer past. He spent three years at the Royal Academy of Music specialising in the study of percussion before passing out to form a band, though he rarely touches a drum now. Joe Jackson is a singer and a pianist, no rhythmic beast of burden, if you please.

"They tried to teach me music," he says through a mouthful of vegetable pancake (Joe is a vegetarian). "It was a waste of time, but when I left school it was the only thing I could think of doing."

I did orchestra, choir and chamber music as well as percussion. I used to be not bad on vibes."

The only exposure he was given at the academy to anything remotely resembling modern music was a jazz workshop. Even now he includes a classic jazz song in the set, Fats Waller's 'Ain't Misbehavin'.

After leaving the academy with a Diploma in Percussion — very useful — Joe, who had been composing most of the time, formed his own band, Arms And Legs.

It was the usual thing. A great band, with great material who got a recording deal (with MAM) and waited for things to really start happening. They never did, so I pissed off.

Disgruntled, but not disillusioned, Joe set out to use his qualifications to make himself some money. Only then could his masterplan for stardom be put into action.

Gritting his teeth and gripping his libido, he went to work in a palace of pink flesh and cotton tails — the Penthouse Club in Portsmouth. Joe himself was rejected as a Bunny so he took the job of musical director, playing background music for cabaret acts.

It was in some ways very frustrating (I bet — smutty Ed) but it was good money. It did get to a point, though, where I was

shouting to get out."

But still his grand designs — or at least his limited finances — weren't ripe yet, so he carried on his cabaret career, directing a New Faces winning duo called Coffee 'n' Cream.

"It could be boring, but it wasn't soul destroying. Your soul must be pretty suspect in the first place for it to be destroyed by work. I became less naive, got to learn a little about the industry."

As Coffee 'n' Cream were signed to A&M, Joe also made a few useful contacts, and it was A&M that eventually released his debut single. But when he finally secured that contract it was by typically nonconformist methods.

After leaving the cabaret duo, which he was sick to the teeth with, he finally had enough money to bring into fruition the seed of an idea that had been germinating in his mind for a long time.

"Most artists get a few songs together on a crappy sounding cassette and trail round the record companies who never get a fair idea of what they sound like."

"I decided I wasn't going to do it like that, wasn't going to go around beating my brains against the wall for nothing."

"So I hired my own studio and made an entire album, which I fully intended to press and distribute myself."

The album, recorded at Telecoms in Portsmouth at a cost of about £500 ("I got studio time cheap because I knew the engineers") was heard by the Albion Agency, who handle the Strangers. Soon he had a publishing and management deal.

The tape was sent to top American A&M producer David Kershenaum, who was impressed enough to want to involve himself with Joe. The album was later re-recorded under Kershenaum's professional eye, but, says Joe, the end product sounds more or less the same as it did with the £500 job.

Now the Joe Jackson Band debut album will be released on A&M shortly after Christmas. If it captures their onstage panache it cannot fail.

Joe, who has been described as a cross between Max Bygraves and Peter Skellern onstage (by me, come to think of it) is probably at his best live, with his widows peak bulging veins and his voice — croon at full stretch, like 'Fools In Love' which would make a worthy follow up to 'Is She Really Going Out With Him'.

"Pop is facile, but I'm trying to communicate something with what I do. That doesn't mean it has to be arty. You can produce songs that mean something to you without being pretentious."

"People think that showbiz is a dirty word. But entertaining people is what's important."



STRAITS: big fish in a small pond

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ALBUMS

Freda's just a Payne

FREDA PAYNE: 'Supernatural High' (Capitol Tower EST 11884)

FREDA PAYNE might be dogged with the label of a one-hit wonder, thanks to 'Band Of Gold' but she's a lady with plenty of past and, I hope, plenty of future. If she can find the right niche, that is for 'Supernatural High', while it's very respectable has a distinct overtone for me of an LP that was made to fulfill a commitment. The distance between the disco treatment of that

infernal 'Happy Days Are Here Again', and the otherwise predominant idea of a mature, smooch-soul collection isn't straddled very well.

Even with Skip Scarborough in the background, Freda's vocal talents aren't often taxed enough to bring out any true distinction and a number of the songs are below par, especially in the lyrics department.

Two tracks that do stand out, though, are 'Storybook Romance' and 'Tell Me Please'. It's a tough world ++SUSAN KLUTH



NICOLETTE LARSON: 'Nicolette' (Warner Bros K56568)

FRANCHETTE, Hairnettel and Nicolette What poetry we can conjure up when we are wont. Well, maybe not, but the record's not bad. It's Linda Ronstadt, but not watered down, not laid-back or laid-up but nice, nice, to listen to under the blankets at two am.

Nicolette needs a hairnettel because her hair is down to her bum and that must take up so much Vaseline that she must have some kind of concession or something. She wails nice, and I'm not going to get onto her for that as she's probably been MANIPULATED (there are so many people on this record she must have a rich daddy) to perform the way she does and sing the songs she does and not have the personality she doesn't etc.

Nicolette's niceness doesn't drive me up the wall and the production is nice enough to eat almost, but then they do say 'I'll eat anything so she sings a good version of Sam Cooke's 'Send Me' and a 14 year old Burt Bacharach song called 'Mexican Divorce' and Holland, Dozier and Holland's 'Baby, Don't You Do It and there's nothing you or I can say against them or against Neg Richardson or any seminal Nice person except Uncle Tommy Robinson who's just a bit too nice for his own Ribena.

Nicolette might have a hit here, who can say? (then she'd at least have enough money for a hairnettel). But LA softness must be going out of fashion soon, it must be. Look, if we all get

together p'haps we can get it out of the way. We must unite. C'mon kids and all you others, let's unite and take over. You see, now even I'm sounding like Tom. Give me a typewriter in heaven. Don't let me get near no bridges. ++JAMES PARADE

MAGNA CARTA: 'Prisoners On The Line' (PHILIPS 9109 229)

WITH A name like Magna Carta, I should've realised what this album would be like. It is dated, flowing music from a band in an unhappy time war.

Side one consists of their feeble attempts at a concept 'Soliloquy', with its pretentious waffle, sets the sad scene. The lyrics try to be profound but are no more than puerile pieces of literature. The band seem to be obsessed with exploring the many facets of time: mind-blowing stuff.

The accompanying music isn't quite so bad, though bad enough. There are plenty of gently acoustic guitars, soft layered vocals and even a recorder thrown in. Side two follows the same pattern of bland, airy fairy melodies. None of the songs are worth mentioning.

This is the sort of album which do gooders try to sell to you in the street. All proceeds to Save The Stoned Hippie Fund PHILIP HALL

SHALAMAR: 'Disco Gardens' (RCA FL212895)

SO! A disco album that actually admits it's a disco album! In fact a lot of the album isn't disco at all. You might remember Shalamar's 'Uptown



FREDA PAYNE: looking for her niche

'Festival' hit of last year, a medley of about 10 old Motown classics segued together into one continuous piece of dance music. Their new album will obviously be hoping to relieve them of their one-hit-wonder stigma, and with 'Take That To

show billed with such stunning acts as featured on this album. They are: the Gaylads, Prince Mohammed, Love Brothers United, Errol Scorcher, Earl Cunningham, and Winston Jarrett & the Righteous Flames. The result would be sensational. Well, this album is sensational, seeing it's got a fine mixture of different formulas of reggae - 'Lovers Rock', 'Steppers / Rockers', and 'Rebel' or 'Righteous' songs.



The Bank' I think they'll do it. It's an infectious, boppy piece, catchy chorus in all, and it should chart in the New Year or maybe even sooner. Some of the other material here is surprisingly strong, especially 'Shalamar Disco Gardens', a really good, mean slice of funky soul.

Shalamar is two guys, Jeffrey Daniels and Gerald Brown, and one chick, Jody Watley, and they've got quite a good vocal sound between them. It's supported by some rumbling, twangy bass on 'Tossing Turning And Swinging'.

Side two is generally calmer, especially 'Stay Close To Love'. Cindy Cindy is a useful mover with a surprise ending but by the end most of the ideas have gone.

It's very hard to write soul songs with new things to say and new sounds. Shalamar, especially on the first half of 'Disco Gardens', are not that far away from succeeding. +++JOHN WILLIAMS.

POCO: 'Legend' (ABC ABCL 5284)

POCO? 'Rose Of Cimarron' I hear you say, and not much else. I'm in much the same position, so it's worth taking a check on the personnel of the band just now. It's Rusty Young, as ever was, plus Paul Cotton, Steve Charman and Charlie Harrison.

The opening electric chords of 'Boomerang' imply a certain aggressiveness and it does go on to be one of the more powerful tracks, but generally the feeling is greatly restrained. Songwriting credits are shared between Cotton and Young and Cotton's contributions, which include 'Boomerang', are always more metallic and forceful. His 'Barbados' and 'Heart Of The Night' have a sort of bustling, marauding backing. In contrast Rusty's completely laid back, even laid out, on 'Crazy Love', which is a very soft, acoustic little melody, endearing in its simplicity. The vocal on 'Little Darlin' isn't the most original title of the year) is distinctly Leo Sayer-ish. It's even his sort of song, but the difference is this is really American; Sayer just pretends. In the strange/old restrictions of this points system four stars is a bit kind-hearted but it is a

NICOL AND MARSH: 'Nicol And Marsh' (Polydor Deluxe, POLD 5012)

WELCOME to the new world of MOR and I think it's a wonderful place to be. Already we have Andrew Gold, Helen Reddy, Abba (they've been staying here some time), Stephen Bishop (came in with his last album) and the Boomtown Rats (popped in for tea yesterday) and we're all pleased to welcome Nicol and Marsh (didn't even ask membership fee here as they already qualify being on Polydor Deluxe and living in LA - don't want to be rude!).

This is the best blandish album I've heard in ages,



VARIOUS ARTISTS: 'Ballistic Assault' (Ballistic SAM101)

HOW REFRESHING It tends to be, when one comes to meet up with an album mixed with spicy talents from JA.

Try to picture a scene of a spectacular reggae

if 'bland' means 'sounding nice' and 'surprisingly it r, r, rocks. The old chansons aren't that original (that is of no consequence) and the words aren't exactly 'Porteresque' but I never listen to them anyway. Also 'Holding On To You' rips off Barry White like he died 30 years ago but still remains a wonderfully romantic pean set off by a simple piano motif running smoothly through it. 'Backs Out Of Love' might be a monster smooch single if the honest ain't too much for sincerity - mongers Noel and Tony and too real for Radio 1 altogether. These two are the best songs, side one is the best side and the sleeve is oh so deluxe - luxe - luxe (I even sat down on it) If you're seeking an alternative to the screeching Siouxiste and simple Sham, buy it.

Nicol and Marsh will be huge in America though they might take some time over here without a hit single, try to listen to this before you feel you can't because they're too famous, (you mustn't feel guilty about playing those Travolta records either) and just remember that MOR can be a nice place for a holiday. +++JAMES PARADE



C L E T E STALLBAUMER: 'My House Is Your House' (Open Door Records 001 A)

INOFFENSIVE, sterile rock and roll, competently expounded, unexcitedly recorded, privately shipped to add to its charm, generally predictable throughout - as is the intention? - and totally devoid of energy, enthusiasm, imagination or individuality.

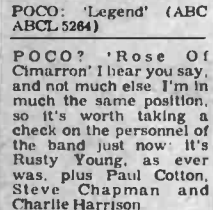
Is this album ahead of its time?

Probably not. A good riff occasionally surfaces on 'Speedway' but is absent for the most part. 'Motoring' proves that the ideas are there, even if the lyrics - cumbersome as hell - are just one more pean to 'Juv Rods automobile' - 'Hot Rods automobile', 'Hot Rods automobile', 'Song For Rachel' - 'I love you / That's all I'm gonna say / Take it or leave it, I'll never change my ways' - is terribly limp slop. Clete Stallbaumer's lightweight, vacant vocals allowing the song to slide into a sugary blancmange - swamp until almost rescued by a singularly unimaginative instrumentaI track.

This is no hype, being a budget, modest operation. There is no room for hype. Therefore, this is the best Clete thingy can manage?

The man's concern with all things youthful, luv tra la, motorbikes tra la, smoking behind the school wall tra la appears to be pretty well redundant, ultimately flimsy, cliched and tedious. The lyrics, the music, splinter and collapse inwards. Spiat!

I love the idea of independent labels, but usually it helps if the music can stand up, without the use of crutches. ++CHRIS WESTWOOD

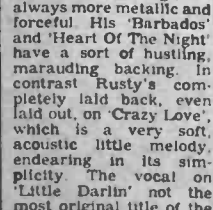


LES McCANN: 'The Man' (A&M AMLH 64718)

LES McCANN first stepped out as a soul-jazz pianist in the sixties (one of his good deeds was discovering Roberta Flack); he was one of the first guys to become commercially involved with synthesizers; he's written dozens of songs; and if nothing else, he'll go down in history for the ghetto invective he did with Eddie Harris, 'Compared To What'.

Compared to that, The Man might seem a little too well-dressed, but then it's a very different kind of album. The opening number is a funky up version of 'Just The Way You Are', which compares pretty well to the original. One of the best tracks is Zane Grey's guffly hunky, gospellish 'How Can You Live Without Love', which the two instrumentalists play somewhat under par.

All in all, 'The Man' ain't no stunner, but it's the kind of late night goodie with a touch of black and blue that should stay around for a long while. +++SUSAN KLUTH



VARIOUS ARTISTS: 'Westbound Disco Sizzlers' (Westbound K50546)

AH YES my weekly disco compilation review, this one's hardy in the 'Midnight Hustle' or 'Boogie Fever' class in

GREGG DIAMOND'S STARCRISE: 'Gregg Diamond's Starcruiser' (TK TKR 82548)

IT'S QUITE possible that if you're in the disco gang you'll have been boogying to some tracks by Gregg Diamond's Starcruiser over the last few weeks, 'cos the album's been pretty big



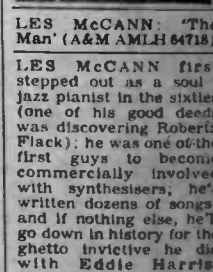
news on import for quite a while now.

The combination of high-pitched female vocals plus disco beat promising and as it started I felt sure I was going to find this all too American, too sweet. But no, the vocals are allied to some really catchy pop books and good old funky music.

terms of commercial potential, but it's probably all Westwood could find in the disco drawer and there are one or two worthwhile moments on it. You'll know the Detroit Emeralds' 'Feel The Need', a top 20 hit twice in four years. It's here in its unexpurgated, hustling version and it gradually dawns on you that this one of the most beautiful pieces of dance/disco music since the genre really established itself. A goodie.

Another piece of palatable all-American disco is 'Devil's Gun' by J and Co (they didn't go where they are today without having a hit with 'Devil's Gun'). But where are they today? Nowhere in sight, like so many ephemeral disco bands. All the same this full version of their theme from last year is quite appealing, especially with its 'Pie-it-to-fum' bass line. The Bull by the Mike Theodore Orchestra veers towards that bland Eurodisco style I guess it is supposed to sound Spanish, though Dennis Coffey's 'Wings Of Fire' is an interesting in a 4/4 groove. I conglomerate of guitar, synths and horns but hardly a 'disco stizzler'. The same's true of the medley by the Fantastic Four, 'Night People / Lies Divided By Five', but it's worth hearing at least.

It's a bits-and-pieces album but certainly not just a 'mindless disco' collection. +++1/4 PAUL SEXTON



DIAMONDS ARE TRUMPS

Gregg Diamond's the mastermind. It seems, although he doesn't sing at all. He plays keyboards, acoustic piano, Fender Rhodes and 'co-produces' and writes the whole project. But the vocals give this more of a frantic, urgent appeal. Disco's the trump suit here and they've got a good hand. +++ PAUL SEXTON

ALBUMS

+++++ Unbeatable
 ++++ Buy it
 +++ Give it a spin
 ++ Give it a miss
 + Unbearable

It can't have been that bad!



NEIL DIAMOND: giving it his all (all what?)



DONALD BYRD: 'Thank You... For F.U.M.L. (Funking up My Life)' (Elektra K52007)

THANK YOU for 'fing up my life! Not the best of titles, especially as we're reminded by the front cover that Donald Byrd's music goes way back to the early 50's. One wonders what John Coltrane — a man he shared many a happy album with — would make of today's disco music, had he lived. With Coltrane's iron minded determination I would imagine him following a different path. On the other hand, survival in today's music world is not easy and Donald Byrd survives. (He is an excellent player).

This solo album is aimed at the disco world, but there are quite a few moments tucked away amongst the army of players that surround him. The title track has nice horn: 'Loves Shine' starts with him talking (drivel) "seeing you across the room... etc (most of the lyrics are of the functional disco kind). His talking voice reminded me of Mingus and his singing doesn't match his trumpet at all. But 'Close Your Eyes' shows a strong feel for this kind of music.

There is something here, but I doubt if he inspires the young players now as he did in the 50's. (Miles does!) +++
WILLIAM SAND



THE BRIDES OF FUNKENSTEIN: 'Funk Or Walk' (Atlantic K50645)

FUNKY BUT not so chic, but not so funky either. Not knowing much about places like Funkylvania or whereveritis, I was told last week by one of my aides that George Clinton, the Brides' "best man" parades some sort of robotic fashions on stage and flies off on top of a flying saucer as a finale. As I don't get to see many of these groups, I can only take his word for it (too busy parading my parade) but it does sound fascinating. George's songs don't. He is also the mastermind (generous) behind those other funky funkies Parliament, and Funkadelic, whose extravagant Funk religion's have been the talk of the western hemisphere for a few weeks now, ever since they infiltrated our shores to play live. (Brief synopsis — they're great on stage, they don't write good tunes).

I played the second side first, being in a mellow mood and I must report that the three songs on this somnambulant side start off with a sort of Gene Page string thing and Rose Royce singing and plenty of obnoxious bass playing. The melody winds along like some of Stevie Wonder's until the strings turn out to be synthetic and then obnoxious and then the same happens with the newly introduced waw-waw moogs and it's all a bit monotonous.

This super smooch-slooch lasts awhile then leads onto uninspired pre-Barry White seventies-soulfulness, and that never turns me on so I just turn it over. The first side leads to danger because it is the loud side. Anyway, 'War Ship Touchante' has a lot of those eeyow-eeyow type noises in it that were on the Star Wars single and I've had enough of it now because the third song 'Nappy' is pretty wet and they even get into some New Orleans jazz-horn thing and NOJ is where I stop I'm afraid.

The 'Brides' are OK but in my younger days when I was a philanderer on the floors of London I reckon I wouldn't have been too excited about prancing around to this would? And the general idea is to dance to it isn't it? Answer me someone... ++
JAMES PARADE

HAMILTON BOHANNON: 'Bohannon's Best' (London SHU 8522)

THIS IS A retrospective of producer/writer/drummer Hamilton Bohannon — obviously enough. But what isn't so obvious until you get down to those 10 tracks in detail, is just what he was achieving all those years back (well about four years) in terms of what disco music is doing today. At their best, the long-distance funk/Latin/Afro fusions were simply revolutionary, and even though it was one of his best creations it seems a pity that 'South African Man' should have become the major Bohannon tag.

Some of the tracks do have a certain potboiler air around them, 'Getting To The Other Side' for example. Others, like 'Foot Stompin' Music' feel rather experimental and don't really achieve success. But with such generous as 'The Disco And Go', and 'Disco Stomp' and of course 'SA Man', this is an album still with plenty of relevance and freshness today. +++ 1/2
SUSAN KLUTH



JIMMY CLIFF: 'Give Thank' (Warner Bros K56658)

SITTING in cosy, rainy London, it's difficult to

NEIL DIAMOND: 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers' (CBS 86077)

"THE AMERICAN Popular Song goes on and on... and on... ad nauseam. The sleeve note is a pretty good summary of the new Diamond disc. You know how it is when you don't like something and you can't say why? Well you see doctor, I have this problem. In my dreams everyone around me is freaking out to Neil Diamond and I'm just standing their looking vacant. Problem is, it ain't no dream. So I'll lie on the couch and try to analyse this.

It's fair to say, as someone did on the radio the other day, that if you've liked Neil's previous albums you're not going to find much wrong with this. Ten songs, six of them written or co-written by the gaffer, and the odd interpretation (very odd) of someone else's material. But I shuddered when I say 'You've Got Your Troubles' — that's right, the old Fortunes' hit — on the sleeve and I shuddered even more when I heard it. He will insist on these thoroughly

"get the vibe" as they say for Jimmy Cliff's jungle bongos and the beating beat of Jamaica or Egypt, or wherever it is they gad about at the moment, but God I'm going to try because this record's got a very good cover and as I appreciate the art of covers more than what's in them usually.

As ever, there are a lot of funny names on this record of "real reggae", there's Stecky and Gibby for a start and then there's all these people like Jim Keltner and Jay Winding who obviously don't get to watch much telly as they're so busy recording with all these funny, sunny superstars, I bet they don't even know

bland, MOR cover versions, like 'God Only Knows' on his last album.

His own songs create problems too: I fully recognise that he writes strong, well-constructed material, it just doesn't sound right. His voice sounds tired and strangely superior, as if he's trotting out a few more numbers for a few dollars more. I don't like classifying it, but 'You Don't Bring Me Flowers', 'Remember Me' and the like are mums- and-dads-rock. 'The Dancing Bumble Bee / Bumble Boogie' (God, even the titles are awful) is a sort of 'Disco Flight Of The Bumble Bee', honest. 'Say Maybe' is the ultimately crass song — a melody of Legu Set simplicity and zilch originality.

The best moment is the string arrangement at the beginning and end of 'The American Popular Song' but he sings and ruins it all. Of course you're not going to take any notice of all this, you'll buy it anyway. Diamond may be forever but this one could end today and I wouldn't complain. ++
PAUL SEXTON

what 'Crossroads' is. Anyway, Jimmy's got a record here and I don't really know if it's supposed to be an important one or not. I mean, I don't care anyway because I like a disc with a bit of character and if I hear this, I soon won't be worth talking to. Actually, I'm probably not anyway and a lot of people will bear this out.

James might be a good singer, but if that is what he's supposed to be why has he written all the boring songs here. I know it's got something to do with expressing his art or something but I've had just about enough of that rubbish and I wanna hear something with a bit of

life in it. All this moaning about Africa and Jah just doesn't wash anymore and here we go again with the old bomb-bomb drums and chug-chug guitar and frankly I have to turn on the telly again.

One song here is alright, 'She Is A Woman' but it sounds a bit souly like Bobby Marley and all I can really say is that the remainder is probably really good to whip cream to or something. Wait a minute though, there is one interesting thing here. Jimmy Cliff's manager is Kathie Kerr, and her address on the cover is Canned Goods Inc, 213 East 49th St, New York, she's gonna love me, yeah yeah ++
JAE JAMES PARADE

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ROADSHOWS

ELVIS - THE RED DEVIL ...

ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE ATTRACTIONS
Dominion Theatre, London

I WISH Elvis Costello would smile. Just to show he's enjoying it as much as us. Okay, so at first we didn't stand up and create a riot as he wanted. But that wasn't our fault. Every time someone as much as twitched they were asked not to move or to get back to their seats - but it's the grimace on Elvis' face just a pose that he thinks he should live up to?

The image, the pose, the straight suit. No flashy extras. Good songs, good music and a good show is definitely what you get. The only thing he'd treated himself to since his earlier days is an excellent lighting system. It's one of the best I've seen without using enormous effects or laser beams. The lighting engineer was spot on (oops) all the time.

The only complaint I have is that I was stuck right up the very back, way into the gods, and Elvis' vocals got lost on some of the numbers. But the Attractions have never been better. America has knocked off the rough edges.

Don't go to one of Elvis' gigs expecting anything else but music, because all you'll get are the songs and a few introductions. 'Accidents Will Happen', 'Red Shoes', 'Watching The Detective', 'I Don't Want To Go To Chelsea', 'Pump It Up' and a few from his new album. 'Armed Forces'. No fits, no stops, no busts. The red spotlight lights up his face throughout the set, dragging out the devil in him. Spitting out the words as though they were the last he's going to utter. Bitter but sweet.

He did one encore, 'Radio Radio' he could have done more. I hope he wasn't disappointed in us. I smiled at the end, because Elvis didn't. It's what I expected of him. Miserable bleeder.

Supports were Richard Hell And The Voidoids, who went straight underneath me. They were the pits.

John Cooper Clarke opened the evening. He's cut his set to about 20 minutes, left in the good stuff and he got the applause he deserved, even got an encore. I could have done with more of him and less (a lot less) of Richard Hell. ALF MARTIN

PETER GABRIEL, Hammersmith Odeon, London

SEVEN YEARS ago I saw Peter Gabriel, lank haired and massacred at a 200 capacity dive that was only half full. He delivered short, dry monologues, sang clever and peculiar music, and struck me as a weirdo. I thought he - and his band, Genesis - were good, but they bored me for reasons I found hard to explain. At Hammersmith Odeon, on December 20, 1978, I saw him again, this time with short hair and teddy bear. He still struck me as a weirdo. He still delivered short, dry monologues. And he still bored me in much the same way as he had in 1971.

As it was, it still is - smartass music, full of ideas, but cold and uncommunicative. Which is quite untrue, at least as far as the wildly enthusiastic crowd at the Odeon were concerned. They worshipped Gabriel, bathed in his light ecstatically, mobbed him as he moved amongst them with his radio mike and wide eyes. It's quite likely that Gabriel's music has to be learnt to be enjoyed, like chess. I am ignorant of his albums and thus wrong footed from the start.

But what he does seems

such as an uneasy synthesis of so many foreign parts. A balladeering voice over melodic synthesiser (not used rhythmically as in modern music) and outright rock 'n' roll guitar blasts. With skill these pieces could fit, but they don't, and leave a sense of vacuousness that is very unsatisfying.

When he concentrated on one approach at one time - as on 'Fear Is The Mother Of Violence', a soft and direct ballad that impressed, simply because Gabriel's voice fits that approach better. He seems at sea when he tries to do his 'get down' bit, like the very tedious encore.

I admire his intelligence. I admire his keyboard player's hairdo. But I don't admire his soul, which seems to have got lost somewhere between the hardware. It's his perennial problem, and inevitable downfall. TIM LOTT

CLIFF RICHARD, Royal Albert Hall, London

WHENEVER I see artists like Cliff Richard I'm reminded just how pointless it is to like hip music for the sake of being a la mode. He's picked up a lot of respect over the last three years or so, but Cliff's still scorned by some, maybe because they think he's



ELVIS COSTELLO: miserable bleeder.

too old. Well here's news: he's 38 and that don't matter either. At the Albert Hall he managed to give a really atmospheric pop-rock concert without resorting to the MOR theme that usually cuts it in halls like that.

His show was in two parts. The first half was a retrospective, courtesy of the '40 Golden Greats' album and the fact that he's recently reached 20 years on the scene. 'Livin' Doll', 'Move It', 'Do You Wanna Dance', they were all there; so too, pleasant surprise, was 'D In Love', an old B side, and his very 1978 interpretation of 'Please Don't Tease' (which was on the back of 'Please Remember Me'). Hank Marvin's 'Day I Met Marie' had to be included, and it's still Cliff's second fave song.

Part one was a pleasant reminder of how things were before we grew up, but everyone really wanted to see how things are now. So to part two, based on the new album. The title track 'Green Light' was an obvious cue for some effective lighting and Cliff expertly ran through some goodies from the elpee: 'She's A Gipsy', 'Under Lock And Key' and 'Start All Over Again'. By the way it's about time the geezer had a hit - 'Please Remember Me' deserved it, and 'Can't Take The Hurt Anymore' deserves it, so perhaps in early '79 it'll happen.

'Miss You Nights' his own favourite was as dreamy as ever, and 'Devil Woman' was the obvious climax. Great effects here - green spotlight on the man, echoed voice and a really tight rock 'n' roll song. He just couldn't lose - by the end the kids were bopping down at the front, and he spent the whole time jumping around on stage like a teenager himself.

Ah yes, the young ones, darlin', we're the young ones... PAUL SEXTON

GENERATION X, Electric Ballroom, London

BEING A mere five days before Christmas, I'm sure that Gen X expected

a warmer reception than the totally negative audience at the Electric Ballroom was prepared to give.

Their material, a selection of old favourites intermingled with several new songs from the forthcoming album, was fine and was executed competently enough - so why was the response so limited? certainly the freezing cold weather didn't exactly help, but basically I think Gen X have still to attract the sort of crowd to which they are best suited. The posers and punks were in attendance naturally enough, but where the hell was any kind of HM contingent?

With a guitarist like Derwood, who constantly delivers live wire axe, and bassist Tony James, a self confessed Motorhead and Sabbath follower, this band is currently one of the heaviest young British outfits on the rock scene. Listening to such items as 'Day by Day' and 'One Hundred Punks' was sufficient proof. Billy Idol, meanwhile was in fine voice, and is becoming better and better as a frontman every gig.

Admittedly this one wasn't my favourite Generation X concert, but I still enjoyed it, especially new songs like 'English Dreams' and 'King Rocker'. Come on headbangers, don't rely on America to satisfy your needs - make a point of seeing this English act soon. STEVE GETT

MARSEILLES, Marquee, London

HAVING NOT yet managed to catch up with Marseilles in concert, despite the fact that they supported UFO last summer, I decided to wander along to the Marquee.

What I finally discovered was an outfit of four talented and energetic young musicians, who provided as enjoyable a set as was possible in the presence of a lead vocalist, whose stage antics were absolutely deplorable. His voice wasn't

exactly pleasant to the ears and to watch him strutting about like a peacock, clad in red satin trousers was an affront to the eyes. Even the likes of David Lee Roth, a poser if ever there was one, have at least got style, but Marseilles, frontman had as much charisma and attraction as a stale loaf of processed bread.

Yet the music itself was good, in a heavy vein, with the focus on their lead guitarist. He consistently delivered entertaining soloing, as well as slick riffing; all three other musicians worked equally hard.

Nearly all the ingredients of a successful hard rocking group (British thank heavens), with sound material and playing, are present, but such a status will be hard to reach with that singer - need I say more?

IAN DURY, Lewisham Odeon, London

WAKE UP! And everybody did. Hundreds rushed down to the front as little Norman Watt - Roy strutted round with his bass pushing the rest of the band into gear.

Ian Dury is a performer. He mixes crudeness with sophistication, rock with old time musical and downright showmanship with modesty.

Somehow he gets everything right. There's always something to look at, a solo to get off on or just plain good ol' stomping rhythms. Straight away, the unassuming star was delving into the piece of newspaper he keeps by his microphone, picking out a scarf or piece of tinsel to play with.

On into 'Abacadabra', Dury the magician this time, desperately trying to raise his microphone with the aforementioned neckpiece. Spotlighted in green, button boy jacket glinting, he won the audience over with his muted husky voice, giving the odd nod or wink to the band, assuring them about their faultless performance.

It was a good taster for his new songs too. Just as original and diverse as the numbers which have become household names - 'Clever Trevor' et al. First came a rock 'n' roller, 'Silver Dollar', then cockney

Sort things out fellas and '79 could be a hot year. STEVE GETT.

THE TROGGS, Fulham Greyhound

WELL, what with the sentimental season approaching, it's time to cop a bit of nostalgia, right? And how better to go about it than by catching an eyeful of The Troggs, those infamous rogues who had a whole string of potential hits banned by the Beeb before Johnny Rotten - sorry Lydon - even knew the meaning of the word.

Not that I'm trying to make any outlandish claims on their behalf about them being the original godfathers of punk or anything, but... in a sense they were once the English equivalent of middle-American outfits like The Turtles and Guess Who?

And so to The Troggs. Do you remember the hamfisted gyrations of Reg Presley and his boys as he blurted out shock "Ya slacks so low that ya hips are showing"? Well recollecting them as having been a fortunate alternative to the likes of the Tremeloes and Cliff Richard on good old Top of the Pops, it was without misgivings that I trooped off down to Fulham to catch them at the half-empty Greyhound.

They were already half-way through the glorious 'Love Is All Around' by the time I got there (busy week, y'know) but it was obvious that they have not changed very much. Ol' Reg might have gained the odd stone or two, but he looked surprisingly unwrinkled after the best part of one-and-a-half decades.

And the songs were just as they used to be. Hits like 'With A Girl Like You' rubbing noses with a fistful of r'n'b chestnuts like 'Memphis', 'Walkin' The Dog' and 'No Particular Place To Go'.

Of course, the numbers everybody was waiting for were 'Wild Thing' and 'Can't Control Myself'.

By the time they were played the dance floor was seething, Reg was sweating and there was talk of a possible contract

with CBS. I wish them luck. MIKE NICHOLLS

THE JAM, Music Machine, London

TAKE no notice of Juice Lucy, she doesn't know what she's talking about. (see pages four and five for her comment on the band).

The Jam, at present, are Britain's best song band.

You can go to plenty of gigs and see your fav bands but you always get calls for their earlier songs. With The Jam it's different. They've progressed, they're writing better songs. The Kids know it so they shout for 'A Bomb In Wardour Street', 'Mr Clean', 'David Watts'. All off the band's current album 'All Mod Cons'.

The very first time I saw them was at a poky little cinema in Brighton. Fights broke out and we were scared shitless. Bottles were flying, the cops came but no-one could stop the fists going in.

The Jam took to the stage, it was shit or bust. As soon as the music started, no problems. This night was the same. A few fights, tempers building up, then The Jam appear and all the kids are into the music. Alright, so there was a lot of swaying and shoving and the floor was used as a trampoline but all they were interested in was the music.

And everyone got what they wanted. 'A Bomb' as an encore - they did two - 'David Watts', 'Here Comes The Weekend', 'London Girls', 'Down In The Tube Station At Midnight', 'This Is The Modern World'. Come on, name me a duff one in that lot.

'All Mod Cons' is the best album this year. This was one of the best gigs. What better way could you finish it?

I didn't catch all the support bands but I caught all of Gang Of Four, Chris Westwood has been raving about them, and he's got every right. One number, 'Love Like Anthrax' is great. As for Jab Jab, if they changed those silly clothes they wear and didn't do a boring drum solo, I might have been interested. ALF MARTIN

... and Dury the green god

music hall with 'This is What We Find' - a strange one this, as it fits in a bit of reggae as well.

Our man still has a taste for the crude though. Not obscene, more a childlike interest, rather like 'If I Was With A Woman' (that went down a storm). 'You Want It Fair' is Dury's move into reggae, with rather more er, Anglo-Saxon lyrics - 'You got a gorgeous bum, why not come round to meet my mum?'

The inevitable 'Blockheads' provided the end of the set. And what an ending, the band playing faster and faster, more and more frantic as they were covered in multi coloured plastic tubing, rather like never ending toothpaste weaving across the band and stage.

An encore was inevitable - Dury couldn't resist the crowd's demands. Back he came for 'My Old Man' and another new song, 'Cryer' probably the best for my money, a sort of funky number this time, giving the whole band well deserved solos.

Then 'SEX ... and DRUGS ... and ROCK ... and ROLL'. A perfect ending. Dury gave everything, and it was the perfect culmination of a nearly two-hour long set.

'See ya next year Lewisham' said the performer... This show will run and run... SIMON HILLS

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DISCOS

By JAMES HAMILTON

THE HAMMY AWARDS

EVERYONE ELSE seems to be giving out mock awards for the past year's disco achievements, so who am I not to do so too? Herewith, then, are my own personal Hammy Awards for 1978.

LABEL OF THE YEAR: Atlantic (look at the number of hits)

RUNNERS UP: Mercury (for taking the 12in plunge successfully), Island (for creating consistent excitement with a few releases), Fantasy (or at least the US parent label, for so many hot 12in import hits)

ONLY IN IT FOR THE MONEY: CBS (for putting on 12in only what they want us to have, not what we want)

IMPORT OF THE YEAR: Samuel Jonathan Johnson 'You' (CBS LP / 12in remix)

12in OF THE YEAR: Crown Heights Affair 'Galaxy Of Love' (Mercury)



CROWN HEIGHTS AFFAIR:
12in of the year

BEST CHOP MIXER: Hamilton Bohannon 'Let's Start The Dance' (Mercury)

ONE THAT GOT AWAY: Cameo 'It's Serious' (Casablanca 12in)

WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO: Sweet Thunder 'Everybody's Singing Love Songs' (US Fantasy 12in, reportedly due on UK 33 1/3rpm 7in)

LP CUT OF THE YEAR: Roy Ayers 'Can't You See Me' (Polydor)

7in OF THE YEAR: Er... who plays anything on 7in, anyway (unless it's on CBS)?

MARKETING PLOY OF THE YEAR: WEA's London - only limited LV 12in launch

RUNNER UP: RCA keeping Evelyn 'Champagne' King on unlimited 12in without telling anyone until it had sold 80,000 copies

DISCO PROMOTION PERSON OF THE YEAR: Fred Dove of WEA (for his courage in formulating a successful promotion pattern and then not worrying that it left out lots of thoroughly annoyed jocks - whose turn will come next year; also, for making available so many US promotional 12in remixes to those who are on his list)

RUNNERS UP: John Waller of Phonogram, Greg Lynn of CBS, Theo Loyla of Polydor, Steve Turner & Raymondo of EMI LRD, Pete Dyo of EMI Sally Ormsby (when at RCA), Nicky Sands (when at Power Exchange),



ROY AYERS: LP cut of the year

Orville Sweeney of Anchor, Tony Berry (when at Arista), David Brooks (when at Creole), Andy Stinton (when at DJM), Erskine Thompson of Island, Garrell Redfarm of MIF, Pete Waterman & Tilly of Magnet, Les Spaine of Motown - in no particular order - have all bought me drinks or meals and are jolly nice too!

TREND OF THE YEAR: Jazz - Funk

EVENTS OF THE YEAR: Jazz - Funk All-dayers

JOCK OF THE YEAR: Chris Hill (for proving that disco jocks can command bigger fees for personal appearances than radio DJs)

SUMMING UP: John Travolta and the Bee Gees may have got all the media attention during 1978, but despite this a more complex kind of jazz - funk dance music spread through many of the discos as a large portion of the public were trying to escape from anything that smacked of 'Saturday Night Fever'. DJs consequently became more aware than ever before of imports, and as the year progressed so the disco chart became ever more import orientated. 12in became the most played record size, whether as an LP track or 12in disco single, so that now a UK release is likely to fail in the discos unless it's issue at least promotionally on a 12in too. At year's end it looks as if the notation of a record's BPM (Beats Per Minute) is going to become increasingly important in the near future as DJs are now beginning to get the US mixing bug - however, mixing by BPM alone and not by using your ears can lead to mechanised disaster. 1979 should see a boom for manufacturers who include variable - speed decks in their disco consoles.

'78 CHART TOPPERS



DONNA SUMMER:
started the year

NEW YEAR'S Eve gigs traditionally seem to find many jocks doing a retrospective countdown on the past year's chart-toppers, so here to make the job easier are the number one disco hits for 1978...

- LOVE'S UNKIND, Donna Summer Dec 31
- DANCE DANCE DANCE, Chic Jan 14
- NATIVE NEW YORKER, Odyssey Feb 4
- UP TOWN TOP RANKING, Althia & Donna Feb 11
- WHICH WAY IS UP, Stargard Feb 18
- I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN, Eruption Mar 18
- LET'S ALL CHANT, Michael Zager Band Apr 1
- NIGHT FEVER, Bee Gees Apr 29
- HI-TENSION, Hi-Tension Jun 3
- BOOGIE OOGIE OOGIE, A Taste Of Honey Jul 8
- GALAXY OF LOVE, Crown Heights Affair Sept 9
- YOU MAKE ME FEEL (MIGHTY REAL), Sylvester Sept 30
- INSTANT REPLAY, Dan Hartman Nov 11
- LE FREAK, Chic Dec 18

It's probably safe to bet that the number one this week would have been YMCA, Village People!

1978 DISCO TOP 60

ROGER SHELTON of the Phil 'D' Roadshow (Hörsham 62049) has kindly compiled a year-end round-up of 1978's disco hits, using just the positions and weeks from the actual UK Disco Top 20 between Jan 7 and Dec 9 - so that this does not reflect time and positions reached in the longer Disco Top 50, and subsequently 90. However, doing the job from just the 20 is hard enough work, so many thanks indeed, Roger!



HI-TENSION: top of the list

- 1 HI-TENSION, Hi-Tension Island/12in
- 2 BOOGIE OOGIE OOGIE, A Taste Of Honey Capitol/12in
- 3 YOU MAKE ME FEEL (MIGHTY REAL), Sylvester Fantasy/12in
- 4 NIGHT FEVER, Bee Gees RSO/US 12in promo
- 5 LET'S ALL CHANT, Michael Zager Band Private Stock/12in
- 6 GALAXY OF LOVE, Crown Heights Affair Mercury 12in
- I CAN'T STAND THE RAIN, Eruption Atlantic
- 8 SHAME, Evelyn 'Champagne' King RCA 12in
- 9 YOU & I, Rick James Motown/12in
- 10 WHICH WAY IS UP, Stargard MCA/12in
- 11 BROWN GIRL IN THE RING/RIVERS OF BABYLON, Boney M Atlantic/12in
- 12 FROM EAST TO WEST, Voyage GTO/12in
- 13 STAYIN' ALIVE, Bee Gees RSO/US 12in promo
- 14 NATIVE NEW YORKER, Odyssey RCA/12in
- 15 BRITISH HUSTLE, Hi-Tension Island/12in
- 16 INSTANT REPLAY, Dan Hartman Blue Sky/US 12in
- 17 YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT, Travolta/Newton-John RSO
- 18 NOW THAT WE FOUND LOVE, Third World Island/12in
- 19 HOT SHOT, Karen Young Atlantic/US West End 12in
- DANCE DANCE DANCE, Chic Atlantic/US 12in
- 21 GALAXY, War MCA/12in
- 22 I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU, Herbie Hancock CBS 12in
- 23 EVERYBODY DANCE, Chic Atlantic/US 12in
- 24 THREE TIMES A LADY, Commodores Motown
- 25 BIG BLOW, Manu Dibango Decca/12in
- 26 LOVE'S UNKIND, Donna Summer GTO/12in
- 27 UPTOWN TOP RANKING, Althia & Donna Lightning GTO/US Epic 12in
- THE GROOVE LINE, Heatwave Atlantic/12in
- 29 RASPUTIN, Boney M Island/12in
- 30 JAMMING, Bob Marley CBS/LP/12in
- 31 COME ON DANCE DANCE, Saturday Night Band AGM/12in
- 32 STUFF LIKE THAT, Quincy Jones Island
- 33 IS THIS LOVE, Bob Marley Chrysalis
- 34 DENISE, Blondie Salsoul/US 12in
- 35 AND THE BEAT GOES ON, Ripple Carrere/12in
- SINGING IN THE RAIN, Sheila B Devotion Whiffnifig
- LOVE DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE, Rose Royce Epic/12in
- 39 LET'S START THE DANCE, Hamilton Bohannon Mercury 12in
- 40 DANCE (DISCO HEAT), Sylvester Fantasy/US 12in
- 41 PRANCE ON, Eddie Henderson Tower 12in
- 42 USE TA BE MY GIRL, O'Jays Phil Int
- 43 MAC ARTHUR PARK, Donna Summer Casablanca/12in promo
- 44 SUPERNATURE, Cartrone Atlantic/12in
- 45 TAKE A CHANCE ON ME, Abba Epic
- 46 JUST LET ME DO MY THING, Sine CBS/12in
- LET THE MUSIC PLAY, Charles Earlard Mercury 12in
- 48 LET'S GET FUNKIFIED, Boiling Point! Bang/12in
- 49 GIVING IT BACK, Phil Hurtt Fantasy 12in
- 50 FANTASY, Earth Wind & Fire CBS
- 51 I DON'T COST YOU NOTHING, Ashford & Simpson Warner Bros 12in
- 52 WHATEVER IT TAKES, Olympic Runners RCA 12in
- COCOMOTION, El Cazo Pys/US AVI 12in
- 54 DELIRIUM, Frankie McGee RCA 12in
- 55 COME BACK MY LOVE, Darts Magnet
- 56 RUMOUR HAS IT, Donna Summer Casablanca/LP
- 57 GET ON UP GET ON DOWN, Roy Ayers Polydor/12in
- 58 IF I CAN'T HAVE YOU, Yvonne Elliman RSO/US 12in promo
- 59 WISHING ON A STAR, Rose Royce Whiffnifig
- 60 AIN'T WE FUNKIN' NOW, Brothers Johnson Funk A&M/12in

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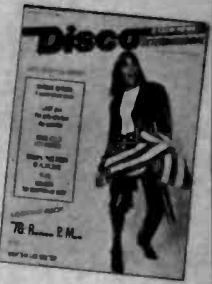
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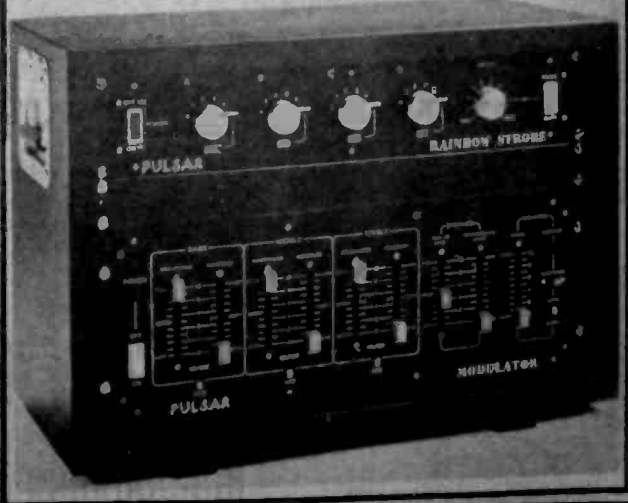


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GEORGE CLINTON — the meisterfunker himself, Dr Funkenstein, father of the Children

of Production, creator of the Clones. With Parliament and Funkadelic, just the first two manifestations of the vast funkateering empire who have been doing it in 3D in the UK recently, not to mention a new album apiece, we at Record Mirror ask: can this man have his funking feet on the ground? SUSAN KLUTH met George Clinton and found he was someone you'd probably ignore on a bus. Or is he? Hit me, sucker, and read on...



Where are you George? He's in there somewhere

IF YOU found yourself sitting opposite him on a bus, quite possibly you wouldn't give him a second thought. Almost certainly you wouldn't suss who he was. After the slightly para-military air, a red beret covered in badges, the only give-away is a brace of red and glitter boots with four inch thick heels. Another Bootsy Collins copyist?

But he's George Clinton, and his counter-camouflage is an essential part of the life of his whole ParliFunkadelic Thang creation. Off stage that is.

You'll probably know his alternate (official) image by now on the 'Motor Booty Affair' poster. Stetson downwards, an outrage cowboy, huge transistor close to one ear, riding the bubbling waves on a brace of dolphins. Nice bit of montage there, lads.

But away from the ocean, the self-styled Chocolate-Coated Freak In Habit Form is an ordinary guy — if an extraordinary hustler. Someone who can get one bunch of musicians signed simultaneously to two different record labels, and then have the companies promote them jointly (and US record companies are notoriously reluctant to be chummy with one another), has to know which way he likes his eggs done. Someone who's had a dictionary of his own language issued by popular demand as well.

Parliament/Funkadelic had a run of Continental dates before coming to Britain for their six sell-out concerts — the first appearance here since 1971. (That was when Sly Stone was the guy, remember?) Since then there's been such landmarks as the all-black outrage celebration, 'Chocolate City' (they still call it the White House, but that's a temporary measure...) and space marks like 'Motherhood Connection' which started off the whole multi-episode opera of space/fantasy mythology. Star Child, Maggot Brains, The Placebo Concept, Sir Nose D'Voidoffunk.

That was Parliament; meanwhile, Funkadelic (motto: 'let's take it to the

stage") was sounding something like the Last Poets married to Frank Zappa and blasting holes into the expansive white rock arena. So then there were the ultimate flash stage shows, leopard skin jockstraps through to flying saucers, costing out at around \$250,000 apiece with crews of 40 strong. Eat your hair out, Genesis.

So what can we expect to see this time? George Clinton wasn't giving away too many secrets.

"Lots of fun, spaceships, funk'n', party'n'. A lot of nuclear things. I'll be refereeing."

In fact, he was far more keen to rap on the serious side of life than touting his own ego. Jim Jones, Richard Nixon, 1984.

"Nixon was divinely stupid." Which led very swiftly to that reference on the opulent sleeve of 'One Nation Under A Groove' — the latest LP and a half from Funkadelic — to 'Rhythm And Business'. The latter, with respect, is a little more profound than the Pinocchio Theory.

"It started like this," explained George. "A lot of musicians used to say, 'I don't wanna hear about no business, I just wanna hear about the music'. I think some PR guy from some record company thought up that statement originally, and laid it on the artists, and the artists said it back, till it became a hip phrase.

"And if you take that phrase seriously, your career will be over before you realise what has happened."

"Well," said George, "there are a lot of myths about rock 'n' roll, and they're getting deeper every day. Like you have to be seriously crazy."

But I can't imagine a crazier lot than the Clones of Dr Funkenstein.

"OK, but when we leave the stage, we leave our craziness up there unless we need it for a specific purpose. It takes a lot of energy to be crazy and if you try and do it all the time, you'll keep your appointment with self-destruction.

"So," he continued, sounding thoroughly non-radical as probably you only can when you've been in the biz for 22 years and seen faded Motown stars blowing their brains out... oh dear, this is getting a bit melodramatic... "so we've tried to make it obvious that we're taking care of

business. That's why we don't go for none of those things that have been laid out, of how rock stars, any stars, are supposed to be.

"Cos all of that is bullshit. If you do that you'll be so tired out that you'll never be able to make no music. You've got to know how much sleep to get, which drugs to avoid. Otherwise you'll never breed your music and let it grow. Because you're nothing but a lifestyle."

Ah, sobering words. I now begin to understand the anguished voice on 'Motor Booty Affair' (which believe it or not, is about the undersea city of Atlantis — in Dr Funkenstein's usual vein of throwing in a little of something you know about) shrieking "Which one's George Clinton???" A Chocolate City guru.

"Taking care of rhythm and business," he confirmed. "That way we end up having more contracts, more groups, a lot of planning and a lot of fun. A real lot of fun."

Planning coming to fruition shortly includes a solo album from keyboard man Bernie Worrell — joining Bootsy Collins, the Brides et al in the ranks of ParliFunkadelic spinoffs — and a full-length movie treatment of the Atlantis story. A real lot of fun. Which brings us back to that stage act.

"I never know what's gonna happen myself," said George cheerfully. "It's pretty much improvised, starts out straight and then someone gets happy. If you have a pre-arranged sequence, well, you know that pattern already, almost with groups you've never even seen. For the group it becomes too easy, you get bored, you're afraid to take any chances, and getting out of time becomes the worst thing in the world. You feel it, and the audience feels it.

"But this way round, you can surprise your audience. Even if they hate you, you've still led them to the point when they've thought about it.

"We say, hey, you can leave your junior psychiatrist's cap at home, because you can't analyse us. We don't fit. We don't even know what we're doing!"

And there's only one answer to that. Supergroovalisticprosinfunatication. And hit me!

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CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR GROSS-OUT SPECIAL



Hi there! Sigmund b. Fraud here, how's yer christmas, I've got the Shits, happens very year, too much booze. Well Kids Seeing as its nearly 1979 Mark and Zapdog asked me to introduce their Slummingly original concept, that's right, a retrospective look at 1978 lemme think :burp: what happened in '78. Oh Yeah we saw the re-emergence of those lovable little retards, Skinheads... heh heh Cute aren't they?



1978 Saw the Ramones run out of Ideas



Everyone thought the Sex pistols had gone totally over the top when they recorded an outrageous (snicker) song about Nazi War Criminals and child murderers...



and then Sidney hit the headlines...



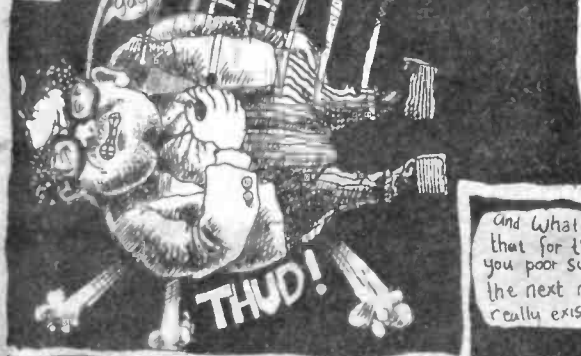
The hideous John Travolta made it big in '78 and the disco's were plagued by hordes of white-suited travolta clones bumping into each other and spraining there ankles as they tried to set the dance floors alight.



Keith Moon died.



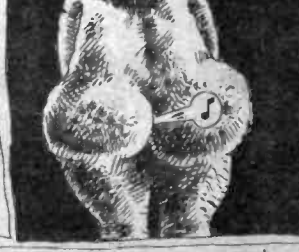
and Elton John nearly did



Anti-racism became quite fashionable for a while Gimme de wallit



Queen released a single about fat asses



The Clashes' clothes passed the stage of just looking silly and they started to look quaintly old fashioned



And what about the future I hear you ask, Well, I have it on very good authority that for the next fifteen thousand years, Grease is still gonna be the word in the you poor suckers, John travolta and his toady little co-star on top of the pops for the next milenium, boy Im sure glad Im just a cartoon character and I dont really exist :cluckie:

Fashion hint for 1979, the Homosexual Nazi Look.

Reggae records, thank to the numerous Journalists and d.'s (Hello peely) who still hadn't got over their roots hangups became increasingly popular even though it was totally undecipherable

Yeah, y'know, Natty dread inna babylon, marcus garvey rastafari Ian F. Yeah, y'know, wot de hell am I going on about?

