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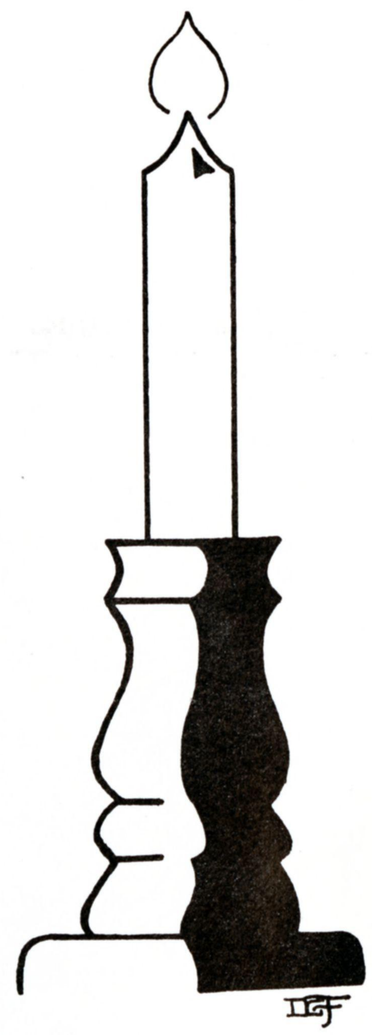

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Upstart Magazine is the arts magazine of Barnard College and Columbia University and is published tri-annually at Barnard College. As our purpose is to expose and give recognition to new artists and journalists, we welcome responses and contributions from our readers for possible publication. Send all contributions accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, if return is desired, to: Upstart Magazine, #2114 MacIntosh Center, Barnard College, 606 W. 120th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10027.
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Radio Ethiopia: The Church and the Explosion

The Patti Smith Group, safe at second

Bud Kliment

Photos: Mark Lipscher

The decision of Patti Smith, a frenetic, improvisational poet, to work within the more formal context of popular music, continues to have interesting repercussions. As Smith keeps searching for the kinds of music that are most appropriate to her poetic style, she must constantly confront the possibility that her own loose approach may be severely restricted when it's used in a form that usually consists of X number of verses, a chorus and a bridge. In order to avoid such a compromise, Smith and her band have tried a number of experiments which have had varying degrees of success. Until recently, the most successful results of Smith's experimentation have occurred when she uses musical forms that are largely improvisational (the jazz slant of "Piss Factory," the dub/reggae overtones in "Kimberly," the bluesy, acid-rockish "Birdland.") Equally successful are her "versions," in which she uses structured pop songs as starting points for her own flights of fantasy. In the best of these reworked oldies ("Land," "Free Me," "Hey Joe"), the order turns into a looseness that's unique and often visionary.

On **Radio Ethiopia**, Smith and her group's second album, the same problem is dealt with, but in a manner that represents a radical shift in style. The album's music and lyrics emphasize ritual, so that the structured and the chaotic may coexist, the latter growing out of the former. (The closest analogy to this form is the revival meeting, at which certain participants follow a ceremony to a point where they become totally lost in the ritual and wind up thrashing on the floor and speaking in tongues.) Many of the lyrics on **Radio Ethiopia** describe such rituals, those that are religious in nature ("Ain't It Strange"), sexual ("Pumping"), or emotional ("Distant Fingers" and "Pissing In A River.") Enhancing these scenes of ritual are certain phrases ("wild/wild/wild" or "total abandon" or "come/come back") that are repeated over and over again as if they were incantations. The performances emphasize this ritualistic subject matter. For this material, Smith's singing tends to start at a controlled level which builds into a frenzy of enthusiasm and emotion. Similarly, the band's playing builds gradually until it becomes an engulfing sea of overpowering sound.

Because ritual, by nature, entails a basic order, and because the band's sound has tightened with the sleek, ordered production of Jack Douglas, Smith's new work may seem to some too restrained, and her choice to work within a ritualistic context may still seem a compromise. But anarchy and improvisation are at the heart of **Radio Ethiopia**, despite its overall appearances of order, and these currents are what distinguish the record as pure Patti Smith.

Dissension and disregard for order are dealt with at length in the lyrics of "Ask The Angels" and "Ain't It Strange," but it is on the album's two central cuts that these ideas begin to influence form. "Poppies" and its companion piece, "Radio Ethiopia/Abyssinia" are the album's examples of anarchic experimentation.

"Poppies" is clearly the more successful of the two. Smith's poetry is multi-tracked to create a work that, among other things, is about a woman's desperation and the addiction that's both its cause and cure. Though comparisons to "Land" will inevitably be made, the function of the overlapping tracks on this cut is not narrative as much as it is impressionistic. Sometimes the words are inaudible, and the tone of the piece constantly shifts. What's important is not any individual

portion of the song, but the effect of all the disparate elements taken together. The form that results is like a series of radios that are lined up, each broadcasting something different. But Smith's proficiency for reading makes the experiment a success. The different ways she uses her voice weave in and out to create a siren-like effect. The listener is lured into a world that's sensuous and deadly.

"Radio Ethiopia/Abyssinia," on the other hand, is an attempt to evoke the primitive and the cerebral in an abstract and improvised rock performance. Though there are words on "Radio E.," they are pushed to the background, frequently guttural and apparently considered secondary to what's up front. Exactly what's being played up front is difficult to describe. The track begins with a surge of energetic riffing that's played by all the band members. Over the next 12 minutes, the playing disintegrates in a series of musical fits and starts, leaving only the beautifully eerie keyboard runs of Richard Sohl, and Smith herself, coaxing sounds from a guitar.

Coming at the end of so much tight ritualization, this cut's dissonance is like an explosion in a church—startling, difficult to comprehend, an act that is bound to alienate many. This listener finds that despite its heavy conceptualization (the album comes with a elaborate series of notes), the work itself is neither as primitive or as cerebral as it could be. Without any continuous undercurrent of rhythm (which I can't believe these lovers of reggae—itself cerebral and primitive—neglected), this attempted anarchy becomes tedious about midway through.

The way that "Radio Ethiopia/Abyssinia" *does* succeed is as a calculated statement of defiance. On this album, The Group uses their improved technical abilities and the allure of the ritual as bait. As soon as you get comfortable with their new sound and approach, they shatter it in your face, warning you that you'll never know what to expect from them, that despite all ordered appearances, they'll never stop experimenting.

Six solid cuts establish **Radio Ethiopia** as a success, and despite the general failure of the title track, the daring it reveals is a lot more interesting than a lot of the perfected formula dreck that surfaces these days. The Group, for now, remains safe at second. What's consistently apparent about this band is that they know the artistic merits of risk-taking. A risk that succeeds is exhilarating, and tempts one to take more. A risk that fails, when treated intelligently, is temporary and easily overcome. After all (and Patti knows this more than anyone), in the never-ending search for balance, a risk is just a risk.

Conversations with Divine

Reavis Ward

Divine's producer recently said, "Divine is the Marilyn Monroe of the seventies, just a little kinkier." Star of several underground films, most notably *Eat Your Make-up, Roman Candles, Female Trouble* and *Pink Flamingoes*, currently starring in the number one Off-Broadway hit, *Women Behind Bars*, Divine is building a veritable cult which, although it hasn't quite attained Monroesque proportions, is nevertheless surprising for one who just a few years ago was virtually unknown.

So we at *Upstart* thought it was time to find out what this person was all about. Clad in a nice, unostentatious terra-cotta robe, with none of the make-up/wigs which characterize the (in)famous "Divine look," Divine received me in the dressing room of the Truck and Warehouse Theater, currently housing *Women Behind Bars*.

The following are excerpts from our conversation. Having seen only *Pink Flamingoes* and *Women Behind Bars*, of all of Divine's artistic endeavors, I had some questions about the personal history, aims and artistic philosophy of this performer who may—who knows?—become one of the mascots of the 1970's.

Van Smith created my whole look and the costumes six to seven years ago. I had done the movies *Eat Your Make-up* and *Roman Candles*. It was all just done for fun, making movies and stuff. We couldn't believe there was audience for these things. So we pushed it. We had to find out—were we funny?—and the answer was yes!!

I don't know whether I prefer film or stage. I guess I like them both. I have done seven films and other short stage shows but this is my first run. I do like it now, though I hated it for a while. In films there's always something new and exciting. You do a new shot or scene every day. But with this it's the same night after night. At one point I started to freak out. I was forgetting things and messing up. I think it's a stage I went through. I was breaking my heels often and it was horrible. Then one night I fell down from the stage and it released me. I think it was the shock. Since then, though, I've realized that something new happens every night and that's exciting. I just turned down a film for this, in fact. Doing the show twice a night is exhausting. One time is ok. Your energy is up so you can go out afterwards and have a good time, but twice drains you.

I have had some problems, though, for example, my voice. I hated it until I lost it during this show. It was gone for three weeks! That really freaked me out. After extensive (expensive!) medical treatment, I got it back. Now I appreciate and use it. An actor needs a voice.

I am an actor. I hate all this labelling and show. 'I am an artiste/la-de-da.' When I think of artists, I think of painters. I am an

"It's an incredible rush to appear in front of 22,000 people. I came down in a hydraulic lift and ran down the steps wearing a silver sequin dress. I couldn't stop. Everyone was out of their minds . . . "

actor and I think I'm a good one. There's always room to get better no matter how good you are.

I enjoy playing both men's and women's parts. I don't prefer either. I think I play women's parts well. I don't think there should be restrictions—it should be whoever plays a part the best. We should get over all those hang-ups. They're petty and ridiculous. I am an actor, not a transvestite. The point of acting is to convince people that you are some one else. All the men's roles I've played have been very unlike me. They've either been mean, aggressive, tacky, hard-core hardhats or sleazy types like Earl in *Female Trouble*. But Pauline isn't me either. I'd like eventually to do tv and other stage shows. I can sing and love to do musicals. I might turn out a record soon. We've been working on it. I'll certainly do the movie of this and go on the road with it.

One thing that helps is that I really enjoy working with this cast. All the girls are wonderful to work with. Working night after night for six to seven months with the same people, you get very fond of people. I've established some very close ties with them.

Elton John is fun to work with too, as well as being a friend of mine. I performed in his last show at Madison Square Garden. What energy! It's an incredible rush to appear in front of 22,000 people. I came down in a hydraulic lift and ran down the steps wearing a silver sequin dress. I couldn't stop. Everyone was out of their minds, jumping and screaming—it felt like an earthquake. I thought the whole building was going to fall in. When I first got in the lift I was scared to death, but what can you do? You can't stand there, so I went down and danced and threw bananas at all the people and sang back-up for Elton. We formed a kick-line and were throwing bananas back and forth with the people. It was a lot of fun. The next night, Elton's manager was dressed as a banana, the Vice President of Rocket Records was a carrot, a girl named Connie was a strawberry, and a guy Michael was an ice cream cone. We were all dancing around the stage. It was an experience I won't forget soon.

It's funny. That night, Elton and I the door wouldn't let us in because, he said, it wasn't Halloween. So we ended up going to 12-West instead. We laughed it off, because there was nothing else to do.

Laughter is very important. That's one reason why I like *Women Behind Bars*. It is purely for entertainment and laugh value. It's not really a social statement or a strike against Lesbians or women or anything like that. It's strictly for fun. And it's unusual. It's very unlike any play I've ever seen. I think it's probably the only one of its kind in New York, or anywhere, for that matter. It is similar to musicals (it's been called one, funnily enough) because it runs smoothly. It flows along without an intermission and that helps both the speed and the actors. Sometimes it gets going so fast we can hardly keep up. It's weird how that works.

Anyway, the play started in a workshop with Tom Eyen and Ron Link. They added Billy (Sweet

William, who plays Louise) and created the part especially for him. Pat Ast played the first matron (Pauline) when it opened at the Astor Place Theater. It's been here since I've played in it, though.

I don't identify with Pauline. She can justify everything she does and she believes it too. I do put different things of me in her. Every character I play is different and I approach each one differently. Lots of your self comes through anyway. I enjoy performing her, though she's not my best role. I think that was Young Dawn Davenport in *Female Trouble*.

The reason that most people like Pauline is that she is funny. I run around and make faces and people laugh. They laugh more at expressions and faces than at lines. Next show I do I think I won't use lines. I'll just make faces and run around the stage.

I'd do it, too. I believe in doing what you want as long as it doesn't hurt anyone. Peace and love and getting through life as easily as possible. Having a good time is very important. I think that's one of the most important things.

Photo: Tom Ross

All Those Swains

Felice Rosser

Swains on the block, god it seemed like millions. When we would drive over to Grandmother's in the car long and lean with the radio on, the Swains would be out in the front yard sidewalk and the kids would look at us with big and wonderous eyes and the older ones Gin and Butch and Fats and Linn had too curved smiles on their faces. They had never seen our house as just cause mama had a good job with the county in the shinny glass building downtown everyone on the block thought we were rich. The Gurry's thought so and sometimes kids chased the car as we drove down the block and laughed and shouted when we got out of the car, many of them had never been off the block 'cept to a church somewhere on sundays. We walked into Grandmother's house. We didn't give a damn about the Swain's. But in years in whispers everyone said Gin was pregnant and only fourteen and isn't it a shame and any mother like Miz Swain havin' fifteen (yes, fifteen) children and workin' never being home no time no 'ttention to them kids couldn't 'spect no better have you see that nigga who done it black as he could be, ugly, Gin liked that big car he got yeah liked it too much ha if she start off like this she be catchin' up wit' her mama who didn't have to have all them kids anyway. Pregnant, yes it was verified I had memories of Gin.

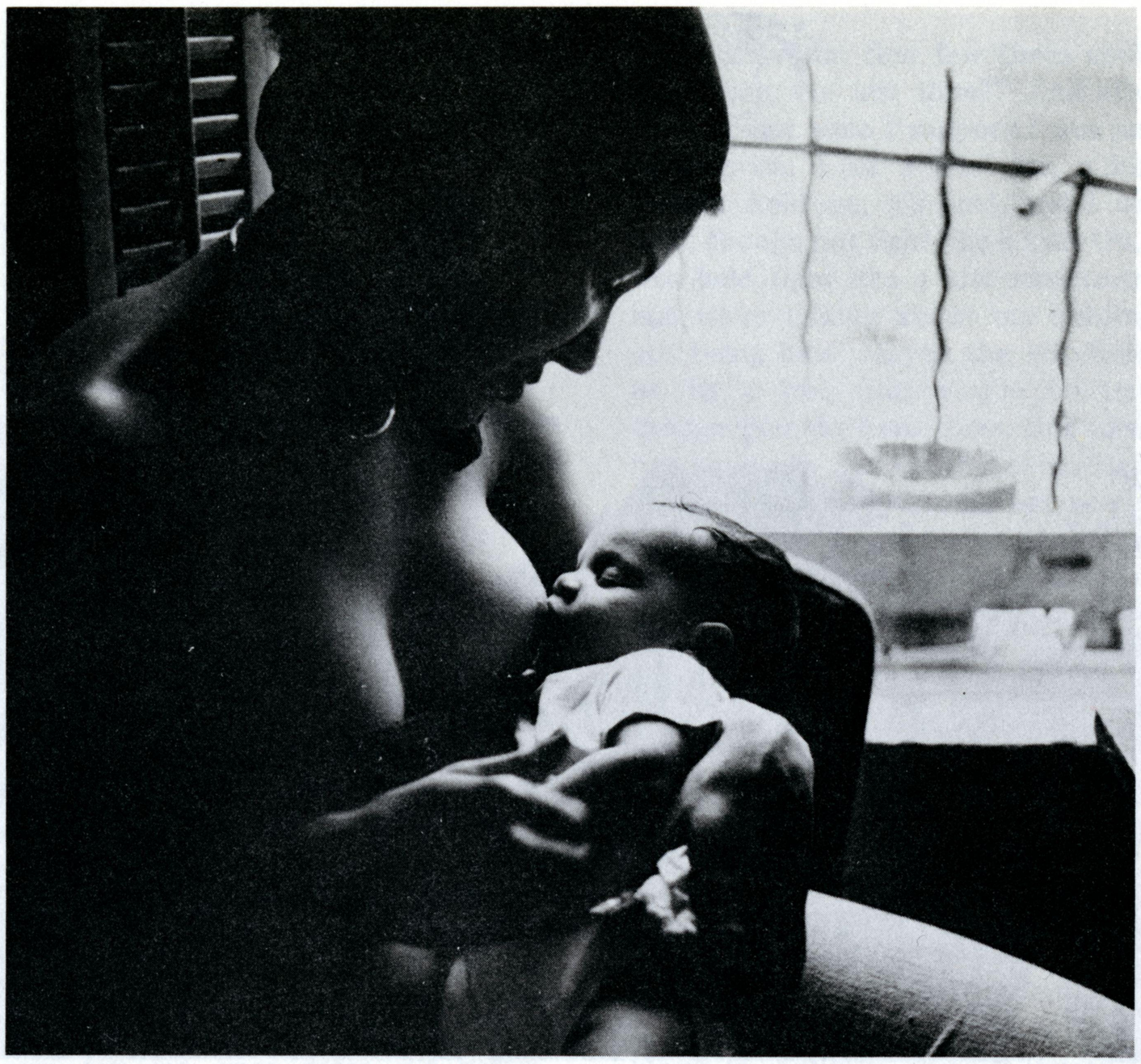
Her real name was Virginia Marie Swain and I cannot imagine her seemin like she was under twelve years why, because she always looked the same way, beautiful. Like at five she started getting breasts and her long hair streamed down her naked copper tanned back in the summertime. Imagine seein her when she was fourteen, the year I believe was her beauty peak. At fourteen, she was so fuckin beautiful and knew it. I said about her skin color well she always usta wear something red to set her on fire in the sun and catch every ray as she walked the block. She wore tight shorts that seemed liquid with her every move. No bra on her skin constantly erected, and high platform shoes red, black, blue or white that always thrust her forward painfully so close to you when she was talkin and lookin with oval brown eyes and soft black strands on her face and neck when she wore her hair up. She knew her beauty but did not understand it in some ways she was so young and this made her even more beautiful like when she rode one of the kid's tricycles or joined in the circle, when my little sister and about five or six Swains had outside dance contests, dancing so perfectly like an innocent and sweating green jungle ballerina. For me it was so fine to see such beauty on the block transporting me to far other places but the men often looked long and with narrowing eyes after her the married men she passed would clear their throats and remark how the little Swain girl was sure growing up fast. There was a house full of boys across and down the street and after the spring we could see her over there sitting on the porch her eyes flickering as one by one they would come up to her and whisper softly. When it got dark, the streetlights came on and Mr. and Miz Swain went inside the house, on the porch they would pass low cigarettes with thin smoke at the tip rising slowly. We hear her laughing when a boy comes up to her, sayin "no.stop.don't" like it was so much fun the boy talkin short urgent phrases spurred on by the wisdom weed. One of the friends, the blackest one from the east side with a blue Mark IV was comin over more and then he was the only one to talk to her standin real close.

We saw her change stayin on the boys porch late so late sometimes till the door would lock and she sleep on her porch and once or twice not come at all and then she began to get whippings and not be able to come out. But it was comin, everyone could see it, in the day time when folk'd gone to work she was skeakin through the door into the blue car and they'd speed swish down the street to return less than a centimeter ahead of folk in the night.

I have good and validated visions of what happened in the car or in the wet grass at Belle Isle park. Open space in front of the car driving, she spread her eyes so wide as if to try and suck it all in. Over the city down hot street with the wind rushin through the windows at her face racin with big Mack diesel trucks the freeway the noise is a full

howl through each underpass music on the radio songs follow each other in divine linkage right words the station is jamming back turning it out. He is powerful at the wheel and she lays her head on his shirt and thats when everyone is at work they can be alone in some park he is full and aching. Hot whispers and her heat swells her body she complies and lies moving when he finds her. I cannot say what goes through her mind totally but I do know that she looks often at the short polyester dresses he has brought her underneath him she can see the full upholstery of the seats and drifting to all the things he has said are hers that belong to her that he will provide.

Then suddenly, he came no more and she disappeared into the house at night we could hear the hollering and shouting and her tears. When she came out her stomach marched more and more in front when she sat she sank lowly into the chair on the porch, not caring if anyone saw her, and watched enviously the cars that drove by, up the street to the stop sign, and then turned left or right, out of her vision.



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Which got me to thinking
Do they really mean it
As in "Gloria Gonzales walks her guard dog"
How genuine?
From the gut
From the heart
A mailbox ripped out
Elaine's welfare check
Gone and shreds of blanket
Reddened after
She was raped on Avenue C
Or even Doreen
Doing Scriabin
Doing ballet
Tinkling and aging
Olibayo
Her afro drenched
In a torrent of abuse
from the fire hydrant.
Do they need a girl
With real long legs
Slim and cool
From walking up stairs
When the elevator's broke?
She's "tough but kind"
With a mind
Like Toledo steel
A mercury wit
With big soft breasts
That get leaned on
Again and Again.
How about her dreams
She believes in college
She's Jewish,
Italian or Chinese
She doesn't own stocks till she's 43
Big with hope
She demonstrates
Against the war
Or for new laws
Gets called a castrating bitch on T.V.

Now you decide
Mr. Casting Director
We thank you again
For auditioning the working class
It has mutual advantages
So be prepared
Most of us
Are raving beauties
And we are all qualified.

Photo: Louis Foy

Street Art

Leah V. Haygood

Watching the 7th Avenue trains flash by and noticing that each car has been unofficially repainted, it is clear that there is an impulse loose in the city that can be creative, destructive, or both.

Four years ago this impulse cost the National Park Service $11,000 in an unsuccessful attempt to win the battle against the graffiti that kept appearing on the walls of Grant's Tomb. When asked why the tomb was a favorite target, neighborhood kids replied that the walls were gray and ugly, and they wanted to make them beautiful. Rather than try to work against such a spirit, Park officials decided to seek a more permanent peace with the graffiti artists. $20,000 was allocated to build new benches around the Tomb with community participation. Practicing artists were hired to supervise and closet artists were recruited through signs in store windows.

The result of their efforts is a delight to the eye and the spirit. Inspired by Antonio Gaudi's benches in the Parque Guell in Barcelona, the single connected form writhes, wriggles, squirms, and leaps around the perimeter of Grant's Tomb. On every available surface are brightly colored scenes made of bits of glass and tile. The designs range from flamenco dancers to polar bears, from Volkswagons to alligators, from elaborate scenes to single flowers. Through all the creations, which vary in sophistication as well as content, the unifying feeling is one of delight in being able to make a fantasy come real.

Reactions to the project varied from enthusiastic acceptance to outrage. Shortly after its completion a man wrote in a letter to the *New York Times*, "One can only find comfort in the fact that this trendy project is as shoddily constructed as it is decorated and will soon enough be reduced to rubble by its erstwhile builders." Today, three years later, the benches are completely intact and untouched by graffiti. The park around the tomb is a favorite spot of families and young lovers. The benches are endlessly interesting because they are best appreciated by gradual exploration, finding something new with each visit.

Grant's Tomb, however, is still an occasional target of graffiti. Although the project provided a creative outlet during its construction, it could not change those things about the tomb which originally inspired the graffiti. In fact, the major shortcoming of the benches is that once a person sits down, there is nothing to look at but the blank gray walls of the tomb. It is the great contrast in styles between the colorful, humanly scaled benches and the massive gray monument which offends some people's dignity and prompts others to suggest that the tomb be replaced by a playground.

People happening upon the benches in the course of a ramble are probably unaware of their origin, but it is intuitively clear that they represent Street Art at its best—creative, lively, touching, accessible, and anonymous. If the energy that the benches represent were more often tapped, cities could be more visually exciting and more vital places in which to live.

Man of Letters

Stephen Dixon

Em—

I don't want to see you anymore. There's a lot else that can be said about this decision of mine, but I don't want to go into it. So that's it then. Don't come by. And I won't be coming up there again. Much love, Newt

Em—

I think we need a nice long rest from each other. You're aware yourself that things haven't been going well with us for a while. Thing that most elicited my decision was that I just didn't like the way you set the relationship for us. The "week" together this summer. On a "beach." Perhaps you have to act like this. What you are, want to become, your history. But it's now too much for me. I won't be coming up. I don't want you coming by. I want no communication between us of any kind. I can't say "Maybe some other time perhaps." I just don't feel like that. I'm sorry. Love, Newt

Dear Em:

I won't be coming to Stonehill anymore. I don't want you to come to my flat again. I just don't want to go on with our relationship anymore. It's not going to change: the relationship or my decision. At least it doesn't seem so to me. Most of all, I'm tired of you setting our pace. That "week" in the summer. On a "beach." It's usually your way. It's a shame you can't just let things happen between us without always analyzing it, trying to control it, putting me to tests, being worried that everything will pass you by and too many things will never be tried out by you if you stay only with one mate.

I do think about you sweetly. Fooling around. Holding you close. Talking. All that. But the other disturbing things that have happened between us, if they're not already embedded in my head, don't just creep in anymore, they rush.

I don't feel responsible for this break. For a little, all right. But it does seem it has to go the way you want it, without any give and take, and I find I can't exist in an atmosphere like that. Especially when it's coupled with your repeatedly turning me on and off and I think your serious remarks about how you look forward to the day when you'll be able to manage two and maybe three successful love affairs at one time, so I just don't want to see you anymore.

I don't say that what you're proposing for yourself is impossible or wrong. Maybe I am "rigid," "superannuated," as you said—whatever, but it just isn't my way. And I do love you very much, but for the first time in my life that doesn't seem to be enough to make me want to stay. So, cheers then—En

Dear Mary—

I won't be coming to Stonehill anymore. I don't want you to come by my place. I just don't want to go on with our relationship anymore. I'm tired of you always setting the pace. The "week" this summer. On a "beach." And I don't think it's because I'm "indecisive" or don't like to make "any decision" that this is the case. You take over because you want to, have to, whatever's the force. If you tell me once more it's partly astrological, I'll have to yell at you again "That's asinine."

I went along like a "dud" because I don't like to direct a relationship based on love. It's a pity you can't let it happen without dashing it to dust everytime it goes well. We've gone on for hours about the reasons for all that: the history. But to me there really aren't any explanations.

I also can't get the bad things out of my head. I think about you sweetly. Fooling around. Joking. Holding you close. Talking. Walking. Working. All that. But the other disturbing things just don't creep in, they rush. And a lot else about what's happened between us just hasn't been etched out of my head yet. Your turning me on and off. Blowing me up. Indifferently letting me go. Separating "for the time being" because you thought it was the "wrong time for us" or it was just "bad timing when we met" and soon after that your returning and for a while staying and being open and loving and then re-going when you thought it was the wrong time for us again or just thought that for yourself it was best. I always felt when you returned "Well, that's the last time for that, folks," but it never was. Now I think "How in hell could I have thought any of those times after the first few times could have been the last time?" And after the last last time I suppose I was just holding on. Like a kite. No, a kite doesn't hold on, it's held, and I was held, though not tight like a kite. Oh, I was held tight like a kite sometimes, but we're talking about my holding, not being held. Maybe the kite holds on to a tree. But you're no tree, though you do have roots. But so do turnips, weirs and attributes that lead to actions and decisions, but as you can see I'm the worst at analogues, metaphors and similes. Yes, you can so be a tree. But no, I wasn't a kite that way except maybe in my becoming entangled in you and not being able to fly freely or sail away or something because of the string. But a kite becomes entangled around something, not in it, except if it maybe got blown into a window or cave. But even there it would probably only get entangled around a table or chair or rock in the window or cave, and not entangled around the window or cave it got blown in. Anyway, now I'm letting go.

I don't feel responsible for causing this break. Oh, maybe a little. But I'm not going to rationalize it away by saying, as you hinted the last time we drove in, that what we both probably have wanted for the last few weeks is for the relationship to quietly and unemotionally end. Maybe that's the way you want it, but I really don't care. I don't care anymore what you want or what you'll do. Honestly, I'm saying that what we had eventually went the way you wanted it, without any compromising on your part or give and take, and I couldn't tolerate it, so I just don't want to see you anymore.

I still love you, but for the first time in my life the existence or reality or whatever it could be called concerning this love for you just doesn't seem to be enough to make me want to stay. I'm sorry. I hate writing letters like this, like less to get them, but there's no other way I see to express what I must say short of calling you, and I don't have a phone, it's a trudge through slush and snow drifts to reach a booth, and you know I'm even more uncommunicative, befuddling and in the end agonizingly pathological when I try speaking on one. So, best ever then, Newt.

Dear Em—

I won't be coming to Stonehill

anymore. I don't want you coming by my place. Simple as I can say it: I don't want to go on with our relationship anymore. It's not going to change. The relationship won't. You talked a lot about "growth," both as individuals and as a couple. But we didn't grow together after the first few months, only repeated the same mistakes and agonies endlessly rather than understanding and correcting them and moving on.

I'm also tired of you always setting the pace, the distance, how high we could climb. That "week" in the summer. On a "beach." Why didn't you also suggest what color bathing suit I could bring along and how many hours in the sun I'd be allowed a day? It's usually been your way, do you agree? I went along like that because I don't like to direct a relationship of any kind—love, business, professional, familial, matrimonial, you name it: none. It's a pity you couldn't have let things sail freely without always dashing and mashing them against rocks every time it went well.

You said you were afraid of getting trapped. Well, maybe the reverse is the trap. The trap could be what you think it's not. Maybe. In other words, the trap might not be the one you think you'll get in with me, but the one you go to to avoid getting in a trap with me, which then wouldn't make it a trap. Wouldn't make the anticipated trap with me a trap. The trap would be the trap you divert to to avoid that anticipated trap. No, the trap is trying to establish here what is and isn't a trap.

We've gone on for hours and ruined too many weekends discussing and discovering the reasons for our inability to sustain preponderantly smooth relationship—our histories and also the irreconcilabilities built into any more than casual comings together of two people: professional, familial, amorous, etc. (see above). But to me, either a couple makes it or they don't. Deep endearing feelings and mutual respect keep them together, and the theories and therapies and the rest of it regarding love are at the most temporarily satisfying but usually stultifying and ultimately desolating and worthless. Even here, the more I think of it, the more I'm giving some theory about it, and the more doltish I am but bombastic I sound and perplexed I get. The hell with it.

I also can't get the bad things out of my head. I think about you sweetly most times. Fooling around. Holding you close. Working. Walking. Talking. Laughing. Jogging. Hogging. Joking. Just dancing to some dumb radio tune together or silently reading different books on the same couch or challenging those boys to a two-on-two basketball game or chasing away those oafs that day who didn't know there were two of us who could bite and bodychop with the best of them to protect old hobos and not one. All that. But the other disturbing things just don't creep in, they rush. A lot else about what's happened between us just hasn't been carved out of my head yet. Turning me on and off. Blowing me up. Flying me like a kite or balloon. Popping me when need be or letting me hang or cutting the string whenever you wanted to and letting me go. I always thought "Em won't do that again." I was always so hopeful. Optimistic. See the bright flashing lights in his naive eyes. After that last time—your last break—I suppose I was just holding on. What in the world was your need for always wanting to come back to me after you broke us up "for the benefits of us both," and after I'd finally felt "Good, I found I can live without her again." Took me four days which is a day more than the last three times but two days less than the first, so maybe in my 20 years of developed sexuality or so I've actually grown some." Now I'm letting go. Nothing much to hold on to anyway, so it isn't hard, and I don't mean to sound tough.

I also don't feel that responsible for any of this. Not at all responsible. And I'm not going to rationalize my decision to disband by saying what you suggested—or more accurately, kidded around about—as we drove in last time (and to pinpoint the spot: on the big bridge at the bistate halfway marker which you only then discovered and pointed out after having passed it a few hundred times and my having remarked about the marker to you at least twice) that a quiet, uncomplicated, indestructible separation is what we've both probably been wanting for the last month. I'm saying that what we had eventually went the way you wanted it, not me, and without any give, take or faint nod toward compromise on your part, and I couldn't tolerate it, though for a while deluded myself that I could because one great day your attitude would change to me and us and my acceptance and sufferance would have been worth it. But now when I think about it I can't stand it and can barely tolerate myself for being such a shortsighted simp and slave.

So I just don't want to see you again—it's important that's clear. I love you very much, that's too damn true, and still do, I'm saying that, no matter how foolish or even gain-making that must now sound, but for the first time in my life the existence or fact of my love just doesn't seem to be enough to make me want to stay. Isn't enough—absolutely, so that's it I'm afraid. Love, Newt

Dear Emmy—

I won't be coming to Stonehill anymore. I don't want you to come by my place again. I just don't want to go on with our relationship anymore. I'm weary of you always setting the pace. How high we should climb, far we can go. Let's sprint, rest, fall back, on our face, scrape our knees, break our ankles, spurt, zip, lunch, get lost, make it a marathon, two marathons, three. That "week" this summer. On a "beach." And "always" is an emotional word you said and I said "It's just a much abused one, but you know what I mean." I went along as I did because I don't like directing a relationship of any kind, personal or professional. What a waste you couldn't let whatever it was between us to happen without your customary dashing it to dust every time it went well.

You said you're afraid of getting trapped. But maybe the reverse is the trap. Maybe the trap's what you're moving to now. We've gone on for weekends about this—our histories. That I met you after not being close to a woman for years. That you met me a month after you left the man you were close to for years. "That the cross-purposes and inconciliabilities of our aims, outlooks and maybe our natures are monumental." I said "What do you mean?" You said "The most ignorant men are those who feign ignorance." I said "What do you mean?" You said "The most ignorant men are those who continue to feign

ignorance." I said "What about women?" You said "The most ignorant of the most ignorant men are those who continue to feign the same ignorance that classified them among the most ignorant of men." I said "What do you mean?" You said. I said. You said that being tied down to one man over a period of 14 years was enough and that instead of pinning in to a second you wanted a rest. I said "I won't keep you back or hold you down." You said "Right now just seeing only one man is keeping me back and down." You said, "Truthful as the pain must be to you, I want to explore other relationships, life styles and professions." I said "I suppose I really couldn't tolerate seeing you if you were at the same time seriously seeing other men or casually allowing them to stick it in." You said "If that arrangement doesn't suit you, Newt, then maybe after a few years, if either of us is still available, which sounds impossible, we can try as a single couple again." I said "That would probably be impossible." You said "We revolve unsolved without resolve." I said "What do you mean, what do you mean?" You said "From paddle to pedal to piddle to podel to puddle again." I said "Don't I know. But why'd you always, unpsychotherapized, always, come back to me, after all those times you told me to go or you picked up and went, and never after more than five or six days?" "You mean I always came back to you in five or six days?" "Yes," I said. "Five," you said and I think I said "I think the maximum was six."

Though I do think of you sweetly most times. Holding you close. Joking, jogging, nuding and screwing around. Sleeping, seeping, eyes uttering, nares stuttering, walking, talking, doing ludicrous things. Precious and energetic and hilarious and creative things. Holding you close. Just playing those boys two-on-two basketball that playground day. Fending off that pack of oafs in front of Ollie's with our hoofs, cuffs and butts when our wits didn't work. Quipping, unzipping, being comfortable and rumpled while silently reading side by side on your settee. Holding you close. Nuzzling. Puzzling. All of those. More of these. Unstrapping, while lips lapping—but the other disturbing things that happened just don't flip in, they flush. A lot else just hasn't been excised out of my head yet. Those four to five times you dropped the relationship cold. Wanted to go back to Myles. "Go if you want to go I sometimes say another way about something else," I said, but when he wouldn't do the bee's dance for you you devised some other plan. "Cancel your plane reservation to Greece with me as I want to go alone. Timing, poor rhyming, but we're just never going to materialize, Newt." Your loving letters, each one better till the last one, when you said "When you come to the airport for me could you only come to return my keys and car?" Then after an exhilarating night and day at the terminal and at home you gave me the boot again.and three days later knocked my vestibule bell and said through my peephole would I be dumb and daft enough to have you back? "Of course—shut the door." Well enough. I'm tired of being turned on and off. Hot water today?—okay. Tepid?—you bet. What's that: boiling, hyperborean?—no sweat. Of being your straw man, tin man, wrong man, enough. Blowing me up. Letting me fly. Like a balloon or kite: piping goodbye as you cut me loose. You: "Howdy-do again, you undrownable goose." Each time my feeling that time's the last. Emotional, always so hopeful I was—my eternally gyring eyes, or what you twice called "The naively long-cherished overromantic view." Well, now I'm letting go. Hip, hip, and nothing much to hold on to anyway, so it's not that hard. And I don't mean to be mean with these remarks, and why couldn't I ever resist your returns long enough till I had become fully unglued?

I don't reel responsible for any of this. Maybe a little. And I'm not going to rationalize my decision away by saying as you hinted when we drove in last time that if we both had the courage to say it, a complete break is what we've been wanting for the past two months. You did, I didn't, and now I don't care what you want or do. I'm saying that what we had eventually went the way you wanted it, with little give or take, and I couldn't tolerate it, though for a while blinded myself that I could—deluded myself was what I was thinking of, and wrote in the previous letter to you that I'm typing this from—and now when I think about it I can't stand it. Can't stand the thought of it all. I don't want to see you again. Don't want you ever to come by here again. If you do—so much as ring the vestibule bell or let yourself in with your key and come up and rattle your baby tap on my door—I'll drag you downstairs by the hair and throw you into the street. I will. So don't!

I love you very much, which has to sound ridiculous and suspicious and quite peculiar after all I said above, but for the first time in my life the existence or whatever it is of this love for someone just doesn't seem to be enough to make me want to stay. Isn't enough. So that's it then: never again, and they'll be no other word more. Newt

Dear Em:

I've tried writing you about something that's sitting very heavy on my mind. A series of letters so far. They're all in front of me, one on top of the other, till the last long one I just finished and am looking at now. Nothing useful, sensible or insightful came out of any of them, and at their very best they were a lot of drivel, bad gags and rhythmic rot. Even this one, I can see, still trying to rhyme and alliterate to impress instead of saying simply what I want to express, though no matter how wretched it is I'm going to send it off. What I intended saying in each of the previous letters today was that I don't want to see you anymore. I still feel that way. It just isn't going to work. We aren't. So please don't come by, I won't be busing up, and they'll be no further communication between us of any kind from now on. Very best and my love, Newt

Dear Em—

There's only one thing I want to say here. I won't be busing up, I don't want you coming by, and we won't be seeing each other again. So that's it. They'll be no other communications, explanations, letters, calls, nothing else between us from now on. Thanks for understanding that and much love, Newt.

Dear Em—

I've decided we shouldn't see one another anymore and that they'll also be no explanations or communications about it either. Love, Newt.

Dear Mary—

No more, and no explanations either. Thanks. Newt

Dear Em—

No more and no explanations. Newt

Dear Em—

No more and no explanations. En

Dear Em—

No more.

Em: No more. En

Em: No more

Dear Mary

This weekend, instead of my busing up, why don't you drive in and stay here? I think we've some things to discuss, and just for a change let's spend an entire weekend in the city. The snow's supposed to be gone and the sky clear and weather relatively mild.

I wanted to write you about what's been on my mind lately concerning our relationship, but decided against even trying to put it down in words, as I thought it best to just talk things out. We always did that pretty well and I'm sure that this problem too will be resolved. If you can't come in, could you call Harriet? I'll be dropping by her place Thursday night and will get your message and then take the bus up Friday afternoon—probably the 4:55, as that one skips several towns and takes the upper route rather than the river and is less crowded, and as long as I have the choice I prefer shorter more comfortable trips and climbing down to crawling up. If you do come in I've already selected the perfect restaurant for our undutch dinner Friday night and "beeg talk." We haven't had dinner alone together in a quiet good place for a long time and that was always a nice experience for us and lots of fun. As a dining celebration excuse we'll make it your teaching show day this week, all right by you?

So, if I don't hear from you I'll know you'll be driving in. If for any reason you want to phone me, tell Harriet. Otherwise: my love, drive carefully, have a pleasant end of week and no matter what I'll be seeing you Friday night. Newt.

MINI-REVIEWS

When a fairly major character steals an insignificant show but does it with all the style in the world, we the audience can sit back and enjoy. And this is exactly what Barbara Lang does as Salome in **Robber Bridegroom**. Aided by a bandit, his brother's head and a pea-brained boy, played by Lawrence John Moss, Ernie Sabella and Trip Plymale respectively, she redeems an otherwise fairly trite musical **Midsummer Night's Dream** set in Mississippi before the West was won. There are some very amusing moments when the entire cast laughs and sings its way through a set change or becomes a scary field or bustling western town. And Rhonda Coullet works hard, singing one of the three interesting musical numbers and playing Rosamund with energy and humor. But on the whole, the plot and lead spoil the show, which is only saved by Miss Lang's considerable talent.

(**Robber Bridegroom**, Biltmore Theater, starring Barry Bostwick, Rhonda Coullet and Barbara Lang. For reservations call 592-5340.)

"Energy" is the key word, and "love." Seven actresses present a series of poems by Ntozake Shange that capture the lives of black women.

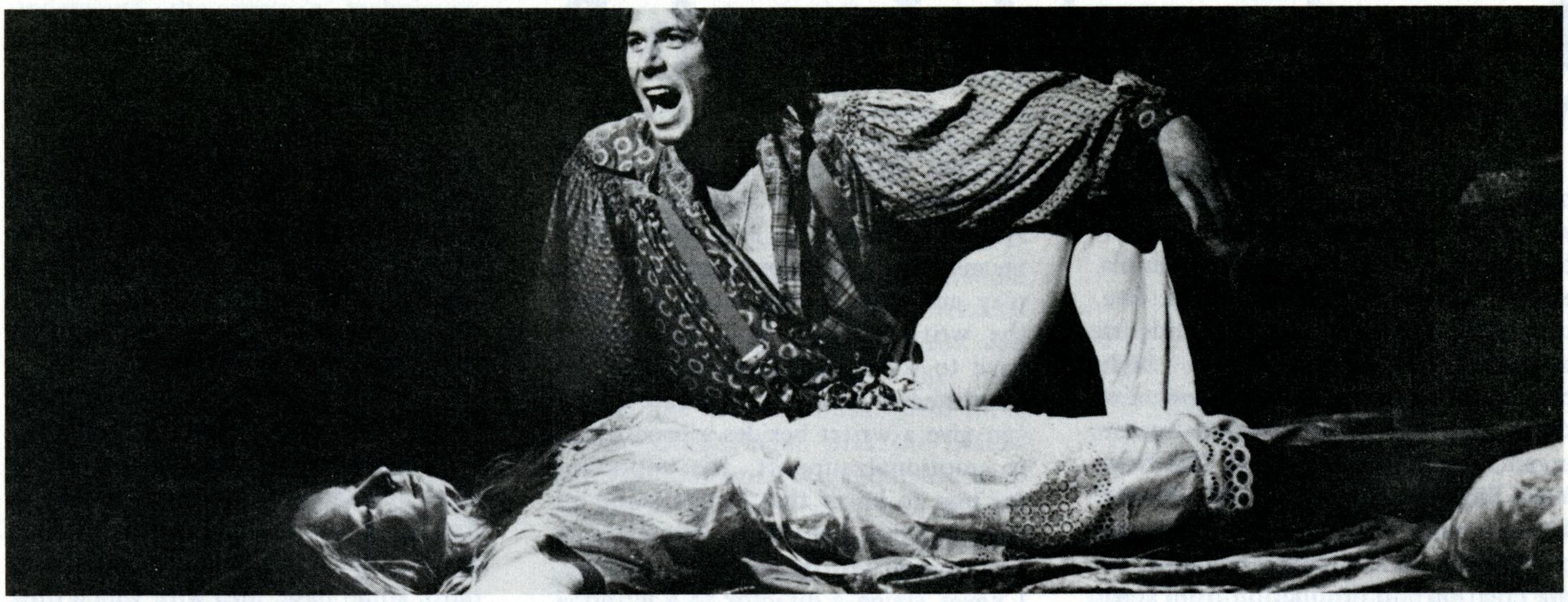
Sometimes, political theater, particularly women's theater, can be unconvincing because it attempts to motivate a character according to a particular ideology. In **For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf**, the voices move and invite audience response because they come from inside lives—from graduation night, a Puerto Rican dance marathon, an abortion. Monologues by Lauries Carlos and Trazana Beverley are especially powerful. **For Colored Girls** is an excellent production, which is fortunate because what it says is so important. It is a demand for the kind of love that provides a lasting strength among black women—the strength to be angry, and not to be beaten down by white society, their own lovers, and by themselves. **For Colored Girls** moves.

There is excellent theater happening at Columbia in the form of the **New World Theater Company**. Organized in 1974 by a group of Barnard College and Columbia University students, New World concentrates almost exclusively on performing plays, dance and other theatrical works by black artists. Since their beginning as a small theater group performing one-acts in a highly energized and enthusiastic manner, they have added a professional style that made their recent performances of **Wine in the Wilderness** by Alice Childress and **The Warning: The Theme for Linda*** consistently excellent. Kuumba Edwards was particularly dazzling as Tommy in **Wine** and the directors of the two works, Clifton Smith and Jeanette McDaniel, were superior in their creative handling of the plays. New World's next performance will be **An Encore: The Black Woman in the Arts**, on Dec. 2, 3, 4 in the Minor Latham Playhouse of Columbia University.

Oh! Calcutta! is certainly a valiant effort. Its exact meaning, unfortunately, is difficult to divine, unless it is simply that nudity on Broadway produces excellent box office returns. The play itself is an extremely loosely connected set of insipid skits and uninspiring dances and songs, all centered around the theme of sex/erotica. The choreography is disappointing as well, as it lives up neither to Margo Sappington's talent as a choreographer, nor to that of the two principal dancers, Haru Aki and Pamela Pilkenton.

The end, in which the actors discuss the play and do a sensual nude dance, mitigates to some extent the coarseness of the earlier parts, and there is certainly something to be said for the energy with which all the actors approach their parts. But as a show, **Oh! Calcutta!** does not hold together, despite a few good basic ideas and considerable talent dispersed sporadically throughout.

(**Oh! Calcutta!**, Edison Theater, with Haru Aki, Pamela Pilkenton, Cy Moore and others. For reservations, call (212) 757-7166.)



A powerfully forthright production of the Brecht-Weill musical, **The Threepenny Opera**, is showing at the Vivian Beaumont Theater, using a new translation by Ralph Manheim and John Willett that retains more of the political and sexual flavor of the original than the 1954 Blitzstein translation. Brecht's unsparing vision of a world of haves who devour have-nots, and have-nots who devour one another will retain its bite as long as society continues to prove it accurate. Ellen Greene is an anguished, febrile Jonay whose frail adolescent body emphasizes her loss of innocence, and Caroline Kava as the realistic Polly Peachum gives a thrilling rendition of 'The No and Yes Song.' The director, Richard Foreman, has made the case and crew work very hard; the result is a passionate, forceful production. With Philip Bosco as Mack the Knife.

(**The Threepenny Opera**, Vivian Beaumont Theater, starring Philip Bosco, Ellen Greene. For Reservations, call (212) 787-8080.)

You're an aspiring dancer who's been out of work for months. You're asked to audition for a part in a chorus. You get to the theater and find about forty others as desperate as you, all trying for the same few parts. The casting director asks you to talk about yourself a little. You're paralyzed by nerves. So what do you do? You burst happily into song and dance. **A Chorus Line**, for all its flashiness, is really the kind of sweet sentimental musical that runs forever. There's also an adorable pathetic homosexual dancer who breaks a leg during the audition and is disqualified; and a tentative lovers' reunion between the casting director and a dancer (played once more by Donna McKechnie) who can't dance in a chorus any more; neither event the stuff of the ordinary audition that the musical is purportedly about. The Hamlisch score is as mediocre as the book. But the play is enthusiastically performed, and the staging is sophisticated. Directed by Michael Byrne.

(**A Chorus Line**, Shubert Theater, starring Donna McKechnie and others. For reservations, call 246-5990.)

Sexual Perversity in Chicago and **Duck Variations** are two one-act plays by the very talented David Mamet, who won 1976 Obies for **Sexual Perversity** and **American Buffalo.**

Sexual Perversity follows the brief, tentative affair of a couple of innocents, and shows how they are affected by their respective best friends, who are less innocent. The boy's friend is an aging boor who can't take his mind off sex, and the girl's is a repressed, overweight kindergarten teacher who tells her students fairy tales in which the prince returns home to find that the beautiful princess is really a hag. The interplay between the two levels of sexual awareness is subtle, sad and thought-provoking; the author also reveals a flair for funny, satiric dialogue.

In **Duck Variations**, two elderly men sitting on a park bench argue—amusingly and idiosyncratically—about ducks, nature, the passing of life, chickens, ancient Greeks and more. It is a wonderfully precise observation of the way people behave when they are conversing at length.

George S. Aronovitz, Emil Varec, Jane Anderson and Gina Rogers are the best players in the six-member joint cast, and the direction is by Albert Yakazaukas.

(**Sexual Perversity in Chicago** and **Duck Variations**, Cherry Lane Theater, starring George Aronovitz, Emil Varec, Jane Anderson and Gina Rogers. For reservations, phone (212) 749-2020.)

Poor Murderer is a tiresomely, needlessly complicated play that raises the interesting question of whether there is heroism in murder, but raises it only in the concluding minutes. The hero is a crazy actor in a sanitarium who is re-enacting a crime he may or may not have committed, together with his fellow-actors in the troupe. The "murder" has supposedly taken place on stage during a performance of Hamlet. There is an extravagant amount of toying with play-within-a-play-within-a-play devices, little of which is really necessary or entertaining. Lawrence Luckinbill in the title role is exhaustingly frenetic throughout; Maria Schell and Keven McCarthy perform more capably. The director is Herbert Berghof, who has done much more distinguished work than this.

(**Poor Murderer**, Ethel Barrymore Theater, starring Lawrence Luckinbill. For reservations, call 246-0390.)

Interview with Joseph Papp

Miranda Papp

Joseph Papp is widely recognized as being a highly influential and successful pioneer in the theater business in New York City. Though his empire extends far beyond the five boroughs, it is here that one finds its nucleus, because of the high concentration of established and new talent in the area. Papp's major organizations, which include The New York Shakespeare Festival, The Public Theater and many others, strive to provide an environment conducive to the creation and production from start to finish of a new play and/or the creative interpretation of an older or classical one. This is accomplished largely through workshops, in which an idea in one form or another is experimented with and tested for its viability as an artistic piece.

Because of his willingness to take a chance on an unknown playwright, unusual play or other insecure (in terms of profit) endeavor, Joe Papp has earned a reputation for "crusading" for the arts, which has earned him popularity not only with the theatrical avant-garde, but with the liberal theater-going establishment which is to a certain extent the financial backbone of his entire theatrical machine.

When a man has so much control over the direction of American theater, both legit, and non-legit., it is important to know his views, aims and a little about his mode of operation. The following is Joseph Papp's perspective, in his own words.

"I think the country's attitude to new writers is not a good sign. When people talk about how remarkable the business has been in the theater, I always take that with a big grain of salt. I consider remarkable theater theater that's alive with new writers. Most plays on Broadway are fun plays, revivals, musicals. They don't say much about the state of the world and its condition. In contrast, the themes in the new writers' plays are very serious. Survival is a key issue."

Mr. Papp tries to avoid deep, direct involvement in the creative processes of the plays he produces, preferring production and business aspects. "My minimal involvement is first making sure that there's a director who is sympatico with a new play. This means that a director responds to the play and that he will work well with the writer. Before that, naturally, I have to show the playwright that I'm interested in his work. The best thing I can give a writer besides a production is emotional support. It's important for him to know that I understand his play and that I'm deeply interested in him as a writer. He begins to trust me. I never assign a director to a writer; I suggest one who I think will be good for his play and then I let the writer feel him out.

"Once a good relationship is established between the two of them, it's my hope that between themselves they can deal with the problems that arise and leave me alone. I don't go out of my way to become involved. Many times, though, I'm drawn in and I find myself deeply involved."

Mr. Papp's role in the production of a play goes deeper than business negotiations. "I think of myself as the keeper of the play, I feel that I'm the protector of the play. I learned about that from Shakespeare; I learned to protect the author. The nature of Shakespeare's work at its best is so integrated that when you cut a scene you lose certain connective tissues. A good piece of work has integrity, a completeness. I have an idea of what it is in a new play and I try to protect it. Inherent in the way a playwright has written a play is a suggested structure, even though this play may be all over the place. I never try to change the interior structure of a play."

Mr. Papp cites *Marco Polo Sings a Solo*, a play by John Guare now in rehearsal at the Public Theater, as an interesting example of the way he works with a new play. "John's play had many problems structurally. It was rambling and John had so many versions of the play that he sort of lost track of where he was going with it.

"I asked him for all of his versions. One went back over five years. I went back and tried to uncover what I call the original impulse of the play. There were things in the first version that revealed to me what John was after. I met with him to discuss the play. I told him that I wasn't asking him to make literal connections, but to express an idea in his own terms. I wanted him to explore certain areas a little more, make them clearer so that they could be understood.

"As a result of our discussion he wrote some new scenes but again they were too literal. I said, 'You're giving away too much. You're not letting us find it.' I was looking for an invisible handle which the audience could hold onto, some basic idea with which they could connect. I finally discovered the main idea of the play. I could now explain the entire play. Explaining it does not reveal the play. John's ability to use his own particular way of expressing himself was never cut off. I put him in touch with his own feelings."

Mr. Papp asked the playwright's permission to edit the play and while editing discovered many of the elements that go into a well written piece of theater. "I said, 'You can change everything after I do this, you can throw it all out. It's your play, I'm not going to use anything but what you have.' John said, 'Go ahead.'

"I worked 14 hours on his play. I have a good sense of John's structure. I removed all excesses until I saw the clearcut direction of the play. I clarified it, yet it told very little. It told much less than he told and yet revealed more. It's a contradiction but in a good play you'll find this is always true. What is unsaid is much stronger than what is said and it's what is said that opens up areas which make the unspoken things clear. When I say clear I mean lucid in an emotional sense.

"I don't want to straighten out the waves in his plays: I want the waviness of the play. I want his erratic mind, his strange, interesting mind. If I took those things out of his mind, I'd be destroying him as a writer. I might as well write the play myself and I can't write a play.

"I only take away those things which disturb the marvelous nature of the play. I don't intrude on the talent of the person, I intrude on the non-talent of the person. I get to

understand the writer's techniques, what is valid for him and what isn't. Now that sounds very godlike but my contribution is minor in that respect. I never feel at any point that I did it, I fixed it. The writer is the writer. It's his material."

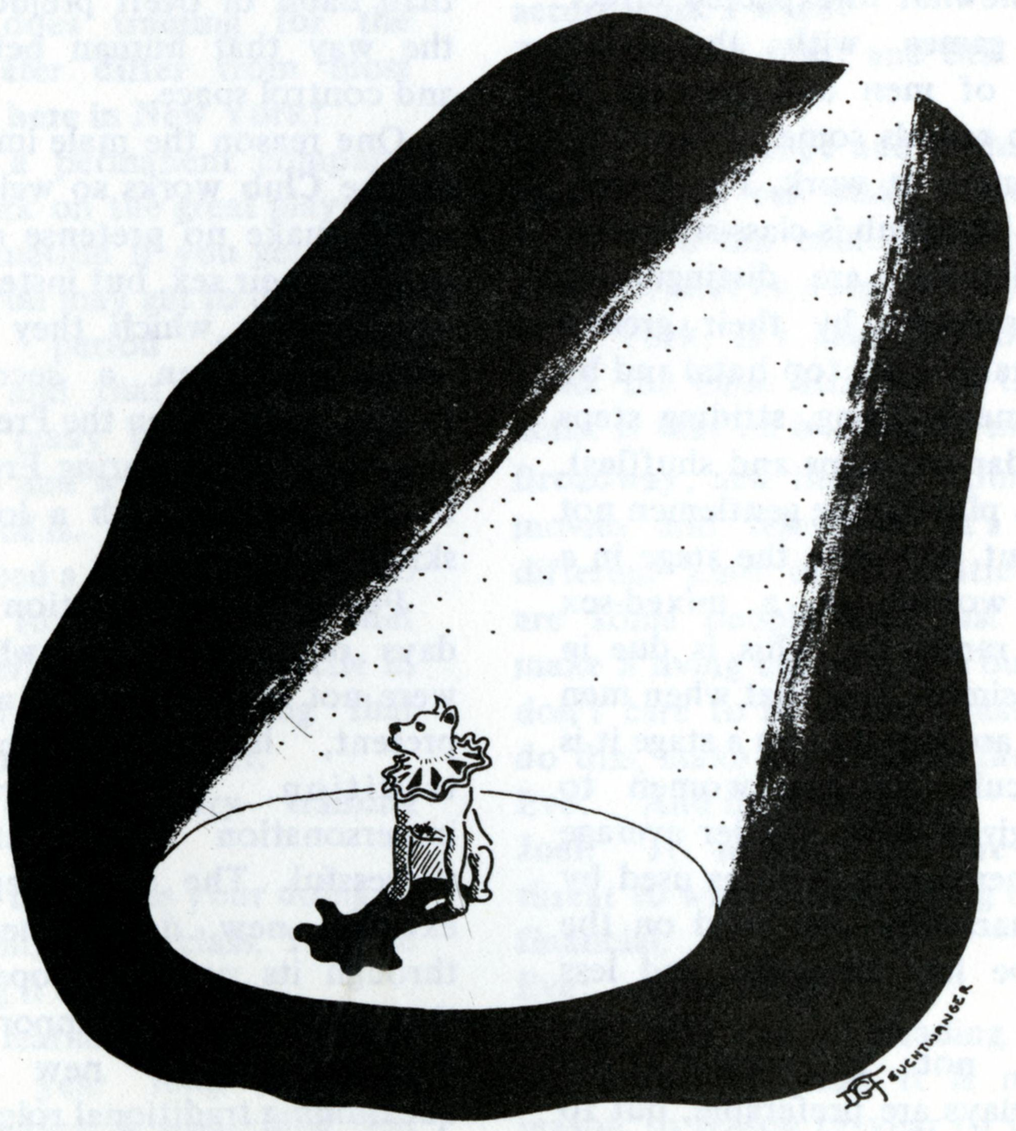
After editing the piece, Papp met with the play's director Mel Shapiro to discuss further possible changes. "His ideas were absolutely coincidental with mine. We made some more changes. After we finished, I said, 'John, let the director work now, let other creative forces work on your play.' He said, 'That's what I want to do.' I said, 'All the final decisions will be yours, but we have a creative triangle.' "

The degree of Mr. Papp's involvement varies from play to play. Papp produced *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*, by Ntozake Shange, *Mod Donna*, by Myrna Lamb, *A Chorus Line*, by James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante, and worked with each play differently. "I spent hours with Ntozake Shange just talking about the whole idea of playwriting, which is alien to her, she's a poet. What I worked on mostly was the organization of the material. I couldn't change the poetry. I was mostly in that instance a taster."

"It varies. Take Myrna Lamb for example. She wrote the first major women's lib play, *Mod Donna*, which I directed. I reconstructed her play almost entirely because she writes sprawlingly. I had her writing scenes while I was directing the play. She was too intellectual. She writes with so much complexity.

Chorus Line was a different story, because extraordinarily artistic people were involved. The director, Michael Bennett, is a master at his work and Marvin Hamlisch served the play beautifully with his music. With these people at the helm, plus the lyricist and the bookwriter, I would have been an extra thumb. I was there when I was needed. My major contribution was to make certain that the musical didn't become sentimentalized, since it was about its own medium, the theater. All I presented was a third eye."

Mr. Papp had a less-than-optimistic opinion on the opportunities for new writers. "My outlook on this matter is very cynical. I think that the situation will remain the same or get worse. Most people want to be entertained by musicals, radio or T.V. There is no welcome mat out for the new writers who deal with serious issues. It's always been an uphill struggle and will continue to be one. It takes a lot of courage to keep writing under these circumstances and the writers deserve a lot of credit. I won't give up. I'll keep fighting along with them."



The Club

Leah Haygood and Reavis Ward

Very infrequently does a play come along that is not only interesting, clever and funny, but also has a well-put, pertinent message. **The Club** presents one of these all-too-rare occasions. It is amusing, creative and challenging for the audience. The pace is quick, flowing through scenes, songs and dances smoothly and easily. The stage in this first production of the play extends runway-style into the audience and, with the aid of economical but appropriate props, helps to focus all attention on the lively activities happening there. The acting, singing and dancing is uniformly good—clean, bright and entertaining—and succeeds in drawing the audience into the play.

The setting is an exclusive men's club in 1903. The play is loosely structured around a series of songs from the period 1894-1903, almost all of which contain some derogatory comments about the women in the lives of the club's members. These are, in the production at Circle in the Square Theater, the typically handsome, devil-may-care bachelor (C. Monferdini), who is having an affair with the wife of the W. C. Fields-like Governor (J. Beretta), the oedipal bridegroom (J. J. Hafner), the tall, moody President with a lovely operatic voice (G. Hodes), and the Maestro (M. Inneriarty), who accompanies the singing with a marvelous flair. These members are attended to and largely outdanced by the porter and valet, played by T. White and M. Dell, respectively.

The clever construction of the play serves to draw the audience progressively deeper into the lives of its characters. The familiar device of a play within a play is used here with great success. As we transcend the levels presented by each play within the play (there are several) we eventually reach the final, very human one and see all the pathos and pain of a man losing his wife to his best friend.

What is especially unusual about **The Club** is the fact that it is written,

produced and acted by women. At first, it seems like a gimmicky idea–a sexist play put on by women–but to see the play is to realize that here the device of women acting men's parts is genuinely revealing of a number of things. One of them is that it points out the absurdity of one group of human beings stereotyping another by making the stereotyper and the stereotypee one. Everyone laughs, actors and audience alike, at one-liners like "Should all women be free? Yes, I hate it when they charge," and songs like "A Woman Is Just A Woman But A Good Cigar Is A Smoke." We are able to laugh because they are so camp. The sexism is like a defused grenade–it becomes fun to toss around.

Another effect of the play's central device is that it sets up a paradox for the audience: the "gentlemen" are clearly not men. This leads to a heightened awareness of the dynamics of sex evident in the play. The club members show considerable ambivalence toward "their" women–they express affection and dependence as well as resentment and hostility. Although the Club acts as a sanctuary from women, almost all the men's songs and conversation concern women. As one of the members says, "Our wives–we can't live with them and we can't live without them!"

The male impersonation has another somewhat unexpected effect. It plays games with the usual perceptions of men and women on stage and so reveals some of the more subtle dynamics at work. The society depicted in **The Club** is class-stratified. The "gentlemen" are distinguished from the servants by their greater stature (enhanced by top hats) and by their movements (long, striding steps versus tap dances, leaps and shuffles). The women playing the gentlemen not only use, but dominate the stage in a way that women in a mixed-sex production rarely do. This is due in part to the simple fact that when men and women are together on a stage it is more difficult for the women to dominate, given their smaller average size. Movements and gestures used by feminine characters also tend on the whole to be less expansive and less controlling.

This is not to suggest that all-women plays are preferable, but to explain the value of **The Club** as something more than just entertainment–(which it is as well). By turning the war of the sexes inside out on stage, it reveals some of the conventions that are formed by more than habit or overt prejudice, but by the way that human beings occupy and control space.

One reason the male impersonation in **The Club** works so well is that the actors make no pretense of deceiving us as to their sex, but instead create an ambience in which they are readily believable. Even a second gender switch works when the President plays a woman in the Spring Frolic and has trouble dealing with a long, flowing skirt.

Female impersonation from the days of Shakespeare, when women were not even allowed to act, until the present, has been an accepted tradition. In contrast, male impersonation has rarely been successful. **The Club** represents an exciting new development in that through its success it opens up new theatrical / artistic opportunities for women, and a new means of questioning traditional roles.

Repertory in New York

Joel Kottler

In the last few years New York has seen a resurgence of repertory companies attempting to operate in European style. Since 1971 Eve Adamson and Craig Smith have been examining and experimenting with this process, primarily within a repertory company they established formally in 1974 in the Bowerie Lane Theater.

The following is an interview with Adamson and Smith in their respective capacities as company director and company manager of the Jean Cocteau Repertory Theater.

Joel: What would you say are the aims of the Jean Cocteau Repertory Company?

Eve: To develop classical repertory based on the model of the European companies, that is, rotating with a permanent company. There are very few places in America where a permanent company can act together, grow together and work on solid pieces of theater. There are all sorts of theaters which call themselves repertory including Lincoln Center, but they don't really do repertory which means a lot of plays in rotation. Opera does repertory, ballet does repertory, but so far the notion to the American theater-going public is a very alien one.

Joel: How does training for the repertory theater differ from most acting training here in New York?

Craig: With a permanent company you get to work on the great plays. In a showcase situation if you get to do Shakespeare, you may get to do it over a two-week period of twelve performances and that's it. By that time you are ready to start growing with the show and with your role, but that's the end of it.

Eve: You need a core of people who are dedicated to and believe in that kind of theater. There is very little in the American actor's training that gears him toward that theater.

Joel: How is repertory training different?

Craig: Your training is your doing it. You are not out taking class. You are here and doing it constantly.

Eve: And learning from a live audience all year long in eight productions, which is something that very few actors have the opportunity to do. It's really format that I'm talking about. This kind of format is virtually non-existent in the United States.

Joel: Why do you think that is so?

Eve: Until about fifteen years ago, American theater was totally Broadway-oriented. Broadway was the only test of theater, and a play or an actor either "made it on Broadway" or didn't make it. Then about fifteen years ago regional theater began all over the country and some of the best theater in the country is being done outside of New York. They are doing some of the same kinds of plays that we are doing, the kinds of plays that Broadway just can't take a chance on because they have a limited audience appeal. But of the regional theaters the only one that I know of which has moved into repertory is Arena Stage, in Washington, D.C. Repertory on a large scale is simply too expensive in terms of technical needs, sets and costumes. You notice that we do our plays for next to nothing, and the economics of the situation make it possible for us to do this kind of rotating repertory where a regional theater can't.

Joel: How many hours do your actors work a week?

Eve: About fifty, and this is on top of full-time jobs.

Craig: In Europe and in the regional theater, you can make a living as an actor. You can make a living and not be a star, but be a respected person. In New York, it's changing, but I still think the basic attitude of the young actor is that he is going to make it on Broadway, and then go from there to movies and television. It's a whole different kind of orientation. There are some people who just want to make a living doing this. You know, I don't care to be a star, I just want to do this, make a living, pay the rent . . .

Eve: And do it well.

Joel: It seems that the greatest threat to what you're trying to build is financial.

Eve: Absolutely.

Craig: We are all treading water. It has gotten so that it is no longer season to season or year to year. Last year for a while it was week to week. Now it's more like month to month.

Joel: What are the tactics which the repertory theaters could use to get the support that they need and the financing to carve their own space?

Eve: I don't know. I've thought about it a lot. It's very interesting that when I was at the state council for the annual interview they asked me how I would define the difference between us and C.S.C. They were very concerned that some of their audits had come back comparing us. That to me is a very bad point of view. We are compared because we are similar in format. But what about the forty showcase theaters that do new plays? Why don't people compare them? It's very easy to compare the three repertory theaters because we all have the same format and essentially the same goals.

Joel: Is there a political consciousness amongst the new repertory theaters which would enable them to work together to meet their needs?

Eve: There hasn't been. The communication, the exchange of information has been marvelous. But in terms of actually doing anything about it . . .

Craig: Within each structure there is not enough manpower or time to do anything like that. It is something which needs to be done, though.

Joel: How are you connected with the other new repertory theaters in New York? That is, C.S.C. Repertory and Soho Repertory.

Craig: We have a close connection with the other groups. C.S.C. helps us. Soho helps us, and we help both of them. I think it's very good. Of course, our formats are very similar. It's very important that there be more than one situation like this. The more there are, the more there will be a change of attitude towards repertory.

Eve: I also see a change. It's interesting that you mentioned one. When actors come to audition for the company I put them through what I hope is a gruelling interview in which I lay out all the problems. It sounds great to spend a year working on Shakespeare, but it is back-breaking work. It is really rough on the psyche. I always start out the interview by asking what the person is looking for in a situation. This year there wasn't a

single person that I hired who didn't say "a chance to grow." To me that was something quite new and unusual.
Joel: Do you think this reflects a change of attitude in the young actor?
Eve: I think, as Craig said, that it is just beginning.
Joel: Where would you like to see Jean Cocteau go from here?
Eve: People always ask where we want to go, and I can't come up with any specific thing, like Lincoln Center next week. I just feel that what we are about is doing what we are doing, doing it continually better and reaching more people with it. What we are really about is the process of repertory.

(The Jean Cocteau Repertory Theater will present fall productions of *Macbeth*, by William Shakespeare; *Rhinoceros*, by Eugene Ionesco; *Androcles and the Lion*, by George Bernard Shaw, and *The Caretaker*, by Harold Pinter, at the Bowerie Lane Theater, 330 Bowery, N.Y.C. (212) 677-0060).

Passion Play

Margaret Liu

At eighteen she cried because there was no god
And, after all, without the great guide
    What wrong is there in sleeping with
The quiet lover.
All eyes and gentle smiles
    But
    All the while
an interior crying browned the edges of the heart
With a picture of Father.

At first she laughed
    For it was all in the mind.
An intellectual and fairly common crisis
That afflicts those who have seen pictures
    of butchered boys
    and old women in Lebanon.

And thought with a cruel smile of sophistication
That God is sleeping.
The watchmaker has left us to manufacture morals.

And she tried to tell the gentle man she loved him,
    and too her father
Even though the boy who looked like Jesus was once
    feeding on heroin.
And that now and then she smoked a bit.

No man is ever far away
From the cruelly human passion play.

The Strong

Margaret Liu

Men of iron soul by day
at night weep home inside,
And sweat and die for wasted pay
that steals their spirits' pride.

And none know hands so strong
And quick but never cruel
That yet at night caress and long
To touch and softly soothe.

Their flesh is hard, their eyes are dead,
Their faces corpses gone.
But dark in night sweet thoughts are bred
That die before the dawn.

Laws

Luc Sante

Two women have started to walk around the perimeter of a swimming pool. They are wearing one-piece bathing suits, darkened with dampness in certain places. One is still wearing her bathing cap, which is white and molded with rubber petals, while the other one is in the act of taking hers off, shaking her hair out as she does so. Nearby, in a field, the field next to the swimming pool lot, in fact, a small airplane has landed. It taxis to a spot very near the chain-link fence around the pool, and stops as a window closes in the adjoining house. A man who looks like a professional golfer gets out and walks over to the fence, keeping his gaze fixed on the two women who have likewise stopped in their walk to look at him, or perhaps his plane. The second of the women has, by this time, removed her cap, rolling it into the roll of her towel. The man removes his white cap, disclosing a completely bald pate. He asks the women a question, which results in some incomprehension, and a contest of gesticulations between the two parties ensues. An intact clay pigeon lands almost at the feet of the aviator. Some heat lightning manifests itself. The man finally returns to his plane, and attempts to take off, but the plane is dead.

They lazed around by the swimming pool nearly all day, drinking malicious little mixed drinks that came in cans. Some of them wore sunglasses, others had on hats, a few had neither. One tall woman looked at a magazine in some kind of fantasy chair that raised her feet and knees way above the rest of her body. A guy strenuously trying to keep his belly sucked in hung around below the lifeguard's chair.

Two women very lazily waved to us from the poolside. They were learning back on their elbows with their hair over their shoulders drooping away. One sat on a balance between her buttocks and her heels, while the other sat further up, kicking a little bit in the water. Then they stopped waving and looked to the right, because one of their guys was coming up on the high dive.

It's in a country estate decorated in

the Chinese. Two women talking, or rather, one of them actually speaking, and as she speaks she slowly rubs one crossed leg over the other, appropriating the rhythm of the wooden venetian blinds in the smaller side windows which are open, the blinds manipulated by the dry wind. The other woman has her hands clasped, fingers pointing downwards, apparently extracting something rapidly by inches from the seat of her chair. Maybe it's an elastic object, she returns to it again and again, and that rhythm talks back to the other woman's legs rubbing to the vibrating venetian blinds.

You walked once around the swimming pool. You took off your bathing cap and shook out your hair, then picked up a styrofoam cup from a card table and almost poured its contents down your throat before you looked straight ahead and in accordance with what you saw dropped the cup very slowly, finger to finger, out of your hand and down to the poolside cement.

As long as "they" were paying for it, I thought I might as well enjoy the circumstances. I felt my shoulderblades sink an inch or so into the leathery but unbelievably pliant synthetic that covered the contour seat, while the seat itself readjusted its dimensions to cup my posture. Countering the effect of travelling in nothing, the secondary surface beyond the window gave out with what became, to my eyes at least, a kind of placebo landscape, or just a signal that registered as "soothing." I found a cocktail sitting on the little dentist's table at exactly arm's length. From hidden speakers came some viscous tonal arrangement, not exactly music and not quite subliminal massage. It said:

I looked at you drowning in your bib and bound feet.

The blonde scampered down the hospital corridor.

There was a remarkable slow movement she did with her hands, circling halves of what would have been her face, like trying to mold one out of ectoplasm. The ruined girlie look she wore completed the effect of the thin cream plastic mask that sat over. Pulling away, a robe would leave imprints on newly grafted skin, so strange to be someone lifelike but too early. First movies became longer and longer, and then movies loved her back. It was the beginning of a new dream which was real life, or the manifestation of an old one at its cusp. She imagined they took her in a white car to a room in a club and the touch was given to her. The other women looked back at her, but they were sisters under the mink, Bobbie and Billie, like any bunch having coffee. She threw off the red cape and sang:

There's no use walking in just a shirt

When baby's got on her animal feet,

And there's no point to a lot of business

When what you mean is nobody's empty chair.

Then they pulled on the cords attached to her legs and she became bigger and bigger. Then bluish finger nails on soft, sticky piano keys.

She had fallen asleep on her French day bed in the beige room with the big windows. She had fallen asleep with the remote control for the tv still in her right hand, unconscious before she could press the button to turn the set off. She slept on her back, with her hands raised to her breasts, but turned away from them. Her impossibly blonde hair was pulled back, black-lined eyes and straight mouth forming a trapezoid around her nostrils. A very sudden thunderhead had come in and the rain was falling in sheets through her open windows, darkening the beige rugs. She was in stupid dreamland. She rustled and clicked off the television, then lazed back into her supine pose, tossing off the coverings to reveal her completely shaved body, odalisquing a bit to prickle up the nerves on the face of her skin. One arm crooked to turn on the radio, and something came out:

It's winter and you're sleepy so sleepy.

A girl once told me, "I can't get up.

Even when I feel so bad and postured,

Things like afternoon won't draw me awake."

And cars and drones go by empty like,

Like a street on television, you stand at

Your window and follow them out of sight.

All the light was sucked out of the room, and from a corner came this smoky glow, like nylon stockings generating light. It seemed that an arm came out to shake a hand. It took just so much from our blood, because we began to feel a little anemic, like in rarefied air. The song resumed:

It's too hot in here, let's go into the other room

And open a window. No, don't give that thing to me.

Cause I won't take it in my left hand,

And I won't take it in the right way.

I want to sleep. I won't be bothered,

And you're my witness. Go off to sleep.

Remember, this is the city you were born in,

I saw you coming out of the swimming pool,

Glistening in the pool's night lamps.

Remember, you are a woman and a man talking.

One falls by mistake.

I don't know. I was on a train and it was carrying me like a shovel. I felt like a false foot. I felt my shoulderblades sink an inch or so into the leathery but unbelievably pliant synthetic that covered the contour seat, and the seat itself readjusted its dimensions to cup my posture. Well, I thought, as long as "they" were paying for it, I might as well enjoy the circumstances.

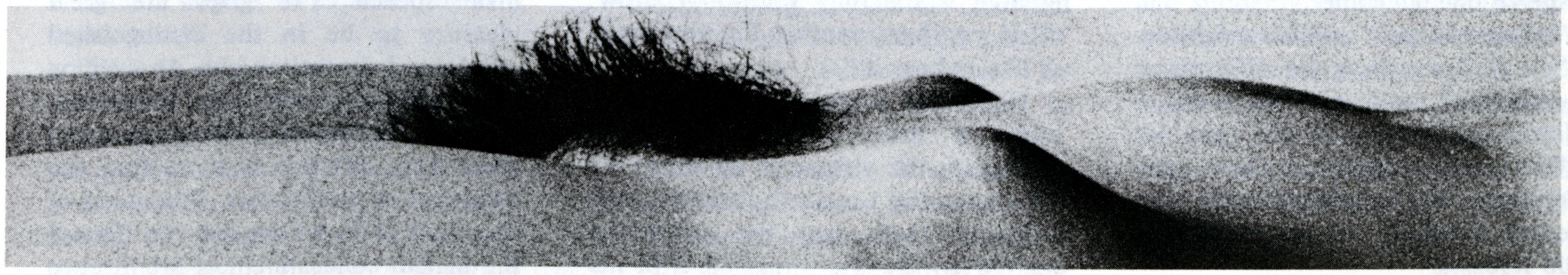


Photo: Joel Liebowitz

Prodigies

Willie Oei

The James Ray Hamilton Scholars were about to have dinner with the distinguished Professor Montefiore, and for nearly an hour the Fuchsberg lounge had been the seat of an awesome amount of intellectual activity.

"Tell me, Chuck," said Gordon Peele to Charles Parker, "what's your opinion of the Rostropovich version of the Beethoven violin concerto?"

"I despise Beethoven," said Charles, who had no intention of being called Chuck tonight.

Peele, who liked his air of independence, tried again. "Chuck," he said, "it looks like you're the only person here who hasn't succumbed to the orthodoxy of a coat and tie."

"Nonsense," Charles snapped, and pointed at Mrs. Ida Mussen, the Co-ordinator.

Mrs. Mussen was bustling about the room making her Scholars feel at home—an easy task, for most of them were in their element at such occasions.

"What American theatre?" said one. "There's Stoppard and a few others in England. There's no American theatre." The speaker had spent the summer in England.

"Malamud? Elie Wiesel's better. But they're all grossly overrated, all they really have is a partisan consciousness."

"Russell misunderstood Wittgenstein all the way," said Gordon Peele, "he thought the *Tractatus* was about logic!" And this was said in a tone of voice which implied that Mr. Russell probably could not add two and two either.

"Oh *everybody* has a Penderecki phase," said this year's aesthete, "mine came after my Hindemith phase, which came after my Prokofiev phase."

"Is the *Tractatus* by Plato?" whispered one latecomer.

"Schopenhauer," said his neighbor.

"Or shall we allow for differences of opinion?" said Charles with a guffaw.

"We must *always* allow for differences of opinion," said the generous aesthete, whose name was Philip Rabassa.

Gordon Peele turned on him. "Someone says there are four letters in the word 'heat.' Someone else says there are five. Are both correct?"

The aesthete blew out a haughty puff of smoke. "That's *not* what I meant."

"The overpopulation of Third World countries . . . "

"Overpopulation," Gordon Peele cut in, "is a myth. This planet has the natural resources to support up to twenty-five times its present population." He had the air of one who had personally performed the necessary research. He continued, "So given the present population growth-rate of two percent a year, it will remain underpopulated for the next two hundred and fifty years. Population explosion is nothing but cheap social alarmism."

There was a respectful little silence after this speech and then Harry Cooper burst out indignantly, "What you really mean is that the Third World can take its time to eat roots!"

"That possibility was never challenged. But I suppose *you* can envision life in the twenty-third century." Gordon paused. "And that's something only the results of recombinant DNA research can determine."

"I've never heard of that," said Harry, "but it's probably still conjecture."

Peele's expressionless grey eyes glittered.

"Perhaps you haven't noticed, but your second remark cannot be made in the light of your first. Recombinant research is the only solution I know of, if you have another I'm sure we'd all like to hear it."

Harry felt every eye in the room turn on him, and he began to appreciate the virtues of armoury. He felt resentful and indignant, and suddenly there was too much he wanted to say. He struggled with his first sentence, but his agitated mind clouded up and closed, and he was speechless.

At this moment, Professor Montefiore was ushered in by Mrs. Mussen. The Scholars moved on to the dining hall. Harry held back a moment, as he felt things fall in place again. "Look Gordon . . . " he began, but Peele had turned away with an air of triumph.

So dinner began. Mrs. Mussen said to the Professor, "I'm afraid we have quite a few very technical ones this year."

Professor Montefiore, properly ingratiated, overlooked the imprecise use of "technical" and replied, "And there'll be more next year, no doubt."

"It's so disenchanting," sighed Mrs. Mussen.

"The very beautiful," said Philip Rabassa the aesthete, "are different from you and me." And he looked about, very pleased with himself.

"Certainly a long way from you," Harry muttered. Was this how people were supposed to behave at these dinners? In college? In the "real world"? Maybe it was. Maybe, he thought, his fears were mere growth pains that he would one day laugh at. One day when, like Peele, he would be cutting down everyone so that he could be the cleverest person in the room. Or when, like Rabassa, he would speak in literary allusions and foreign phrases and make an ass of himself all the while he was congratulating himself for his superior tastes.

After dinner the Professor made a little speech. "It gives me great pleasure to be in the distinguished company I am in tonight. An evening like this is so grand a treat because as one grows older one realizes more and more how difficult it is to find the company of one's peers. True peers of the mind, with whom one can discard the tactful concealment of intelligence

that is so necessary—for we must get along *somehow* with the great many who are unlike ourselves—a concealment that is, as I say, so necessary and so exhausting a feature of everyday life. We are, I know, sometimes accused of elitism. I confess I do not understand the meaning of the word. I do know that the existence of the worst is never a matter of dispute; why therefore should that of the best be?

"But it is useless explaining ourselves to our detractors: the exceptional have never been understood. Rather let us develop our strengths so that we may go out to enlighten and govern and improve. And in the meantime, savor occasions such as these for the opportunities they give us for open, honest discourse among ourselves."

The speech produced its desired effect. The Scholars felt brilliant and special and looked fondly at each other. Mrs. Mussen's eyes shone mistily.

The conversation took a natural turn to literature. "Is the purpose of literature," asked Gordon Peele, the mathematics major, "to describe or explain human action? I ask because it would appear that the latter objective has been taken over by psychology, while performance of the former alone places it on the level of arts traditionally considered inferior to it."

"You're blaming tradition for a completely personal evaluation," said Harry loudly.

The Professor politely ignored this impolite interjection. "It is to describe in such a way as to explain," he said sagely.

"It is to explain in such a way as to describe," said Harry, and started improvising. "Thus the reasons that bring about Desdemona's murder offer a description of the character and destiny of Othello. Thus the reasons behind Elizabeth Bennett's rejection of Darcy . . . "

"I'm sure the coin can be flipped in the Professor's favor in each of those cases," said Mrs. Mussen hastily, only to receive an affronted glare from the Professor in reward.

"Then I'm not wrong," said Harry. "I mean, that's exactly the point, the Professor only mentioned one side. If, that is, any of it makes any sense at all."

Professor Montefiore, without revealing the least discomposure, though Harry was surely behaving uncommonly, proceeded, "The true function of literature is to explore and experiment with ideas, till finally the wrong ones can be brushed off as nonsense, while the right ones can be clarified, refined, polished till they approach the status of facts. Only a work of literature which gives us concrete help in this objective can be considered worthwhile, helpful to mankind. In short, the function of literature is to contribute true, undeniable insights into human action."

There was a little pause as the Scholars digested this unusual theory. Then Harry asked, "Can you give an example of a work which has done this?"

"Mr. Cooper," replied the Professor, "whether or not I *can* is surely a question for you to decide. I overheard you talking about *Piano Roll* earlier this evening; now, that is an example of poor literature, a work which pretends its neurotic obsessions with an idealized past are ideas and . . . "

Harry sprang up and his chair fell back. "But it's a wonderful book!" Mrs. Mussen's bulbous lower lip quavered. "It brings a whole era to life, it . . . "

"But Mr. Cooper, how can you judge the depiction of an era you did not personally witness?"

"Do you have to have lived in Troy to be moved by the *Iliad*? I mean, Professor, do you teach literature or mechanics?" Mrs. Mussen looked a ghastly white. Harry knew he would be terrified by his daring when he recalled it later, but now, anger, righteousness, and the irritation of a long evening combined to give him courage. "I think that theory of yours is the most ridiculous I've ever heard; it makes literature a science. What the hell are right and wrong ideas? I can't believe you meant that seriously. Actually, I can't believe any of the rest of you meant what you said seriously, for that matter. Is this how people are supposed to behave at these dinners? We've been sniping at each other all night, and with what—the stupidest pettiest things . . . I know a lot of rubbish gets said in classrooms, but never as aggressively, as murderously as here tonight."

The Scholars looked at the speaker with amusement, tolerance, condescension, and contempt. Those idiots in the Selection Committee, they thought, can't they do anything right?

Harry saw that he had convinced no one. Well, hero, he thought, you've had your say. He stepped awkwardly over his chair and went out.

There was a moment's silence.

"Anti-intellectual," said Philip.

Professor Montefiore looked at him approvingly. "Well, gentlemen, as I was saying, literature has certain unshakeable obligations . . . "

Outside the air was brisk and cold. Harry quickened his pace, jumped to touch a leaf on an overhanging branch, and suddenly broke out laughing. He wanted to take a long hot shower to wash the evening away, and then settle down with a long novel. Something set far away, he thought. He spent a few happy minutes selecting the volume from his collection, and then ran all the way home.

The 1976 Dance Festival: A Circumspect View

Alexis Adler and Willie Oei

At the initiative of the redoubtable Mr. Joseph Papp, New Yorkers had an unrivaled opportunity for ten nights (and two afternoons) at the beginning of September to savor the delights of the New York Dance Festival at the Delacorte Theater. There was no admission charge, and there were, in addition to the excellent dancing, the pleasures of the Delacorte—with its castle, lake, and romantic skyline—on fine summer evenings. The dancing ranged from the classical ballet of Burton Taylor, to the irreverenced Don Redlich to the exotic undulations of Anahid Sofian, to the ominous rock-like trances of Kei Takei.

Of the four classical ballet troupes at the festival, the most distinguished was that of **Burton Taylor and Anna Aragno** which performed "Le Corsair." Mr. Taylor, who has danced with the American Ballet Theater, the Joffrey Ballet, guest-danced with the New York City Opera, and countless others, was spectacular, flying with dazzle and elan across the Delacorte stage. Ms. Aragno, who has danced with the Bolshoi, with Nureyev and the Ballet de Monte Carlo, and the Metropolitan Opera Ballet, though extremely proficient, was at a disadvantage because her moments were less flamboyantly choreographed. These two fine dancers were unable to dance convincingly together, often seeming like perfect strangers who just happened to be acting out their fantasies on the same stage. There was, therefore, much sparkling dancing, but a completely unconvincing pair of lovers.

Lawrence Rhodes and Naomi Sorkin were much more believable actors on stage, but less exciting dancers. They performed a premiere, "Andante Cantabile," choreographed by Paul Sanasardo, using some entrancing music by Georges Enescu. Both Mr. Rhodes and Ms. Sorkin displayed an impressive grasp of technique and an ability to create an atmosphere, but the dance was, as a whole, overly discreet, and lacking in spirit; it gave one a sense of a missed opportunity.

The New York Dance Theater and the **Ohio Chamber Ballet** presented enjoyable ballet, the first more ably than the second. The Dance Theater performed "Romanzen," another premiere, using the romantic "Violin Sonata No. 3" of Brahms. The company, comprised of five couples who demonstrated a wide range of dancing talent, provided some truly enchanting moments of ballet (especially from a delicate swan-necked member whom we hope to see again, so we can find out her name; as well as the most impressive pirouettes of the festival from another dancer who likewise we cannot name because none of the parts were billed in the program).

The Ohio Ballet performed "Summer Night" choreographed to music by Chopin. The program states that the company has "its roots in classical ballet and its creative focus in the present." (So what it's doing with a classical ballet with Chopin music, we don't know.) The company danced competently enough, but without distinction.

The "Prairie Steps" of **Pearl Lang and Dance Company** was perhaps the most distinctive dance of the festival. Like Don Redlich's "Traces," the theme was frontier life, but while "Traces" was a parody, "Prairie Steps" was an homage. The choreography was built upon Aaron Copland's "Sonata for Violin and Piano." Indeed, the intimacy between the music and the choreography was one of the most important factors in the success of the work. The first movement—"of Rootholds"—and the third—"of Fiddle Flickers"—were lively but restrained celebrative pieces. The center of the dance, with the greatest emotional impact, was the second movement, "of Soldier's Ashes and Silent Stone." On one level, Ms. Lang and Barry Smith portrayed grief-stricken parents who had lost their son at war. On another, however, there was an element of universality in the grief; so that watching them, one could see the intense hardships of frontier life and the agony of losing a member of the family. The choreography and the dancing of Ms. Lang and Mr. Smith were such that the immediate objective of depicting grief-stricken parents was transcended and we saw something of the timeless horror of despair. The choreography, created by Ms. Lang, superimposed the precision and stylization characteristic of classical ballet dancing on the freer colloquial movements of modern dance. The company was uniformly excellent.

Don Redlich's "Traces" looked at the same period of American history with a parodistic, sometimes almost sarcastic eye. Mr. Redlich's comic perspective was firmly rooted in the present, so that he was able to squeeze a lot of easy humor from hillbilly life—and dancing styles. The dancing was energetic and high-spirited, using many staccato jerks and slapstick movements. The effect was sometimes boisterously funny, but sometimes also rather trite.

The Margaret Beals and Impulses Company is an unusual improvisation group which combined dance, voice, and an odd collection of unusual instruments. Beals does not have the classic delicate ballerina's body, being of a rather sturdy build, but she was unusually supple and agile. The company performed a series of dances which employed varying combinations of their rather eclectic talents. Beals believes in the importance of spontaneity in improvisation to a disarmingly democratic extent. One of the highlights of their act was when Beals asked the audience for a word upon which they would devise an impromptu dance-concert. The audience we were with responded with a cacophony of suggestions. Beals looked pleased but nonplussed by this enthusiasm, conferred with her group, and announced that they would improvise on "Ecstatic Earthquake,"

assuring us that it had been produced at the spur of the moment. In any case it was sparkling and inventive, like everything else the group did.

The romance and exuberance of a summer's night outdoors was vividly recreated by "A Time of Crickets," a premiere by the **Pauline Koner Dance Consort**. The mood of mysterious enchantment may best be expressed by the quote from T. S. Eliot which appears in the program, "I can only say that we have been: but I can not say where." The dance alternates between moments of exhilaration depicted in dancing that featured all or nearly all of the company members, with moments of tranquility featuring Georgiana Holmes alone. Holmes adequately personified the beatific spirit of the night, but the moments of group dancing—particularly a thrilling dance around the "fire" reminiscent of Picasso—were better. The music, sometimes dreamy, sometimes urgent, with a slight Indonesian flavor, is by the new composer Michael Colina. The Delacorte with its darkened lake and trees, formed a singularly appropriate backdrop for the choreography of this dance.

The **Lar Lubovitch Dance Company** performed Stravinsky's "Les Noces." The ballet is about the preparations and operation of a traditional wedding, seen in the sardonic light of Stravinsky's peremptory oriental-flavored music. The choreography was richly innovative, and the dancers, despite an occasional lull, were able to keep up with the pulsating drive of the music.

One of the most unusual companies at the festival was the 3-member **Kei Takei's Moving Earth**. They performed part 5 of "Light"—the unfinished 12-part work which in its present form of 11 parts is 7 hours long. In part 5, two male dancers cluster around Ms. Takei in an upright position, slide off and break up the cluster; the group then slowly gets up and repeats the process. It was immaculately performed: each facial and bodily movement was perfectly controlled and flowed almost imperceptibly into the next, (the transition being signaled by lighting cues). The constant grouping and disintegrating were suggestive for two reasons: the

dancers generally took a long time to get to the upright cluster position but a shorter time to fall apart; and Ms. Takei often temporarily remained standing in a clenched stance, with head and arms tightly held back. Ms. Takei may have been making statements about human destructiveness and the strength of woman, or she may not. If she was, the repetitiveness, though justified, was still rather tedious; if she wasn't, the dance was too abstract, and lacked emotional appeal.

"The Murder of George Keuter," by the **Cliff Keuter Dance Company**, was, according to the program notes, "a cry against all killing, and the guns that are everywhere." It made extensive use of props—guns, tires, a rope, a large picture of a man. This most explicitly thematic of the festival dances protested against prevalent idolatry or condonement of masculine aggressiveness—the lumber-jack and the street-tough being the primary but somewhat narrow-minded targets. The choreography was extremely energetic and well-performed by the 4-member, all-male company.

The Toronto-based **Danny Williams Grossman Dance Company**, which performed in the cultural events in the recent Olympics, featured Grossman, his partner Judith Hendin, a ladder and 2 chairs in a dance bearing strong and witty overtones to gymnastics. Grossman, a wonderfully precise dancer, used his strong gymnast's physique, with a control which made for excellent comic timing. As he and Hendin slid, wove, tisted and tried their best to take on the forms of the chairs and ladder, they were fresh, funny and sexy.

Ms. Rudner, Bank, Bartoccini, Rogers performed "Wendy's Solution," a premiere choreographed by Sara Rudner. The only piece in the festival not accompanied by music, the event featured the 4 women in gym suits performing a loosely-structured work depicting the audition of a new member, Wendy, to the group. Their clean, sometimes near-athletic dancing provided an apt vehicle for the unusual subject.

The flexibility of modern dance is shown by the success of both the frenetically lively "Speeds" by **Jennifer Muller and the Works**, and the placid, droll "Ocean" by **Linda Tarnay Dance Company**. "Speeds," a delightful, unpredictable exercise in rhythm, featured a large energetic company forming lines, crosses, and curves on the stage. The transition from one geometric form to another was triggered by a sudden bark of the work "change" from a member—different each time—of the good-humored, enthusiastic company.

In "Ocean," based on the visual effects of an ocean on a calm day, Ms. Tarnay had her dancers roll, wrap, turn about in imitation of waves. It was a witty departure from vertical, astringently precise, tightly muscular dancing.

Rachel Lampert and Dancers performed a rather uneven "Issue." The dance had one hilarious routine whose hilarity, however, decreased with repetition, and one or two other funny, affecting moments expressing a child's wrath at her parents who refuse to stop dancing. The funny routine was a witty jibe at the histrionics of wild-but-controlled tango dancing, it involved eye-rolling, backs arched to the floor, and a bizarre moment when the dancers pummelled their thighs. Unfortunately, they did it once too often.

Carman De Lavallade did "Les Chansons de Bilitis" based on poems by Pierre Louys with music by Debussy. Ms. de Lavallade, playing Bilitis, appeared dramatically from the back of a nearly darkened stage dressed in a bright diaphanous gown, cast soulfully about and loftily recited the Louys lyrics, a great many of which were about her ravishing beauty, her tormented soul and the like. Ms. de Lavalade's dancing had a melodious flow and she projected a haughty sensuality; but too many affected, hyperbolic readings of the Louys lines gave the whole proceedings a pompous, self-congratulatory air.

Another female soloist, **Dyane**

Harvey, danced "Roots: A Dedication to Black Women," with admirable directness and vigor. Choreographed by the talented Eleo Pomare, using folk music, a Billie Holiday number and some incendiary lines of social protest by Nikki Giovanni, "Roots" was a tribute to the indomitability of the black woman. Ms. Harvey was a highly personable dancer, showing an ability to express emotion forcefully, but gracefully.

Theater Dance Collection produced a rather awkward combination of a jazzy Carole King-type vocal providing accompaniment for a rather ordinary modern dance routine. The lack of distinction may have come about because the dance was choreographed, and heavily dependent upon, the mediocre music, which was sometimes so shrill it had a crushing effect on the dancing.

Harry performed "Piece D'Occasion" featuring two shabbily dressed dancers in a droll, near slapstick exercise in rhythm. "Cartouche" by the **Phoebe Neville Dance Company** tried to illustrate Goya's maxim, "The sleep of reason produces monsters," by having pairs of dancers exactly imitate each other's stiff, robot-like gestures. Admittedly an engaging idea for a dance, it was unfortunately rather dreary in performance. The seven-membered **Nancy Meehan Dance Company** performed "Split Rock," an engaging modern dance, but without much distinction.

The festival featured four ethnic dances of varying quality. The most enjoyable was the coordinated middle-eastern dance—or belly dancing— of **Anahid Sofian**. Ms. Sofian revealed that the belly dance is capable of expressing a much wider range of emotions than what we may have seen of it in travel brochures, spy movies, etc., would indicate. In a breathtaking half-hour performance, Ms. Sofian displayed remarkable muscular control, especially of the upper abdominal area, a quicksilver quality especially evident in the many changes of mood and rhythm—ranging from razzle-dazzle to undulating sensuousness—as well as considerable personal charm.

Nala Najan performed two classical South Indian dances, both of ritualistic and religious origin. We found the dance rather dreary and repetitious, but, on the other hand, we are strangers to classical South Indian dancing.

Of the two flamenco dance programs, the one by **Maria Alba and Luis Rivera** was the more appealing. They performed a set of four short dances with moods that ranged from the aristocratic to the torrid. Maria Alba, who made up for a slight stoutness with a nimble muscularity, was particularly effective in the "Aires Andaluces," a solo flamenco in the traditional passionate, high-flying style. Mr. Rivera combined grace with masculinity and cut a smart figure; he should also be credited for choreographing all the dances performed.

Maria Benitez' "Estampa Flamenca" was the other flamenco feature. Titled "Tribute to Garcia Lorca," the dance had considerable programmatic content: a child dies in a smith's shop, is claimed by the spirit of the moon, and his mother discovers his death in a burst of grief. However, had the program not informed us there was a story, we would have seen none—Ms. Benitez danced the part of both the moon and the mother without much difference in style. The mood was thickly ominous, although the dance, as it was performed, did not reveal why. Thus Ms. Benitez, though a capable dancer, was not very effective.

There were two disco-dance companies, **The Fred Benjamin Dance Company** and the **Walter Nicks Dance Theater Workshop**. Both companies offered enjoyable programs of popular dance by watchable, attractive dancers, some of whom were very capable. Using music by, among others, Natalie Cole, Quincy Jones, Santana and War, the dancers at their best offered vivid glimpses of Las Vegas, while also attempting to add an innovative dimension to popular dance.

The View from the Tree House

Pamela Margoshes

I

In tree house child scrawl ease.

II

It was a dizzying climb to the lean plank door;
The key grew larger and larger like in Alice's dream
and once inside we drank of each other and grew and grew.
Remember, I would shake the coverlets out of the window
often, for we were clean and tidy in the old plank palace;
We played Jungle Movie, especially the part where the lion gets fed
You threw half a week's pay to the Beast
(funny how an over-glutted collie dies just like a man)
We ate nuts and seeds which I dried in the sun;
Did you mind that I called you the Hunter of the Rueful Figure?
As a trapper in the woods you would have died within two weeks
But we lasted ten years.

III

We were Monsieur et Madame le Vicomte
We built our house from the nearby trees
with solar heat and 'the insulation that a marriage will bring'
Our well was filled with licorice heavy liquid
which floated in our bellies with a dauphin's grace
We were happy, and we shone like the medals on a colonel's chest
In tree house child scrawl ease.

Love in the Arboretum

Pamela Margoshes

An arrow-prick and then a resolution:
We'll stuff ourselves with grape leaves
and play our puppet-love games at the arboretum.
I'll embrace a tree trunk
while you grin and peek from above
Gathering pine cones is a nice idea
as is covering our heads with lilacs
You can try swooning in the Formosa grove
I'll be big and bold and challenge an oak
You can watch it thrash me with earnest seedling zeal,
No Need To Pack A Lunch
You are easily sated: a fistful of middleaged berries
and a slap of rain water.
I'll hunt for wildebeest on the ground
and hope they never show
while you chant pygmy chase songs.
Ah the two of us in the natural tract
what possibilities
what terror
like lemurs
like Druids
we two in prosimian bliss
Never Before Tried: A Primal Re-enactment
and today's the day.

Airstream

James Jarmusch

The following is a transcription of an interview recorded between 10:46 p.m. and 11:25 p.m., November 2, 1976.

J. Jarmusch: Okay, I want to know about the trailer court fantasy, and if there are things that I can't fantasize I'll have to, uh, ask specific questions to fill in details.
Matt Kennedy: Well, this fantasy is that I live a double life. One life is that of a uh and I have one wife who lives in New York with me. I'm an executive, wear Botany 500 suits . . . .
J: You don't wear Pierre Cardin suits?
K: Botany 500, sharkskin.
J: What kind of shoes?
K: Black. Wingtips.
J: You don't wear Weejuns even on Saturdays?
K: No. I'll tell you how I spend my Saturdays later.
J: Okay. Botany 500 suits and black wingtips. What's your wife like?
K: My wife is very, uh, nebulous because in this fantasy I don't really think of her at all. That's the real beauty of it, you see. My wife is nothing except that she has auburn hair, and she has very pale skin, and she wears very dark red lipstick, but other than that she is totally anonymous. An entity without form or substance. And I, that's all I really have in the fantasy as far as my executive life is concerned. This whole fantasy is a fugue, fugue, is a fugue away from my executive life. Anyway, around Friday at around 3:00 in the afternoon I leave my office . . . .
J: Wait, how much money do you make?
K: I make $80,000 a year. At least.
J: So you live on the East Side?
K: I live on Park Avenue.
J: Your wife just hangs out there?
K: I have no idea what she does.
J: But she lives with you? In your apartment?
K: Yes, and we're very happy together. We're not very happy

together, we're happy together. Of course, there is a feeling that I am content with my wife except for, except for weekends. At least a few hours on the weekend in which I indulge, uh, this certain pastime, which is my own fantasy.

J: Your double identity.

K: Right. So I leave the Pan Am Building with my Samsonite suitcase and my Botany 500 suit as if I was going home for the weekend. It's three o'clock and my wife thinks I get home in the early morning since I usually have, uh, a board meeting in Philadelphia. Or I hang out at the Athletic Club until twelve at night. But actually I go to the Pan Am Building and I board a helicopter, and since this part of the fantasy is very low in intensity as compared with the culminating part, this part is very vague. The temporal sequence is . . . is greatly accelerated. So all I know is I'm in this helicopter taking off the Pan Am Building, and pretty soon I land in a, uh, in a rural area just outside the suburbs, you know there's still a lot of gas stations around and stuff.

J: And this is New York or Connecticut somewhere?

K: It's actually in the Midwest. It's definitely in the Midwest.

J: And you fly there by helicopter? How long does it take?

K: I don't know. All I, all I know, see, the fantasy picks up right when I'm landing, and so since I'm not a totally blank individual in the fantasy, I have some memory even in dreamlife. So far what I've told you is nothing but memory. You know, a fantasy doesn't have to have a, uh, filmic presentation. Once you're in a fantasy you have, you know what has transpired before without actually seeing it come before you, to a certain degree. So the fantasy actually starts when I get out of this helicopter and I'm in this Midwestern setting, which I know is the Midwest because, 'cause I was from the Midwest. Obviously this takes place in Toledo, Ohio, where I was born. So, anyway, the helicopter lands and the visual transmission here is from the point of view of the person in the field. In other words, I see myself, I mean I see a man, but not with my features, these features, undefined features. I just—all I know is—he's exactly the same-looking person. He has a Botany 500 suit on and he has a Samsonite suitcase, and he heads towards an . . . an Airliner trailer. Or a Streamliner, excuse. Those trailers that have aluminum all over them, on the sides . . .

J: Sure, Airstreams.

K: Airstreams, that's right. So and, uh, it's all silver. And it's towards dusk, it's a summer day, and there's AM music playing. Some sort of AM music. Either country or, uh, Marvin Gaye-type stuff. It depends on the dream, the fantasy, 'cause I deliberately reproduce this. Now, I come in, I open the trailer door, and there is my wife . . .

J: Your second wife?

K: Yes. My wife. My second wife. And usually in lime-green, lime-green Capri pants, and high, white heels with the kind of, uh, high heels that have no, uh, solid body to the shoe, they're just kind of laces woven together.

J: Are they like glossy patent leather, or . . . .

K: Yeah, glossy patent leather. Yeah. You got it. And she's got lime-green, um, Capri pants on, and she's leaning over a crib. A bassinet and she's putting a baby to sleep who's my baby, right? I fathered that baby and I feel good about that when I'm comin' in the trailer. See my wife and I haven't had a child in New York.

J: Your first wife.

K: Yeah. My first wife. But my wife in, uh, Toledo has had this child. And I walk toward her and there's an ellipsis, and I, uh, next thing I know I'm screwing my wife while she's ironing. She's gone to another part of the trailer and started ironing, and she's leant over, and I don't really see her face, but I know she's, like, blonde, and she has a beehive hairdo, right? And she's good-looking and she's getting older—she's around thirty and she's the kind of girl who, uh, of whom I've met. And the only one I can think who she's like is this girl named Freddie Fall who was a girlfriend of a friend of mine, and she was, uh, she actually did live in a trailer court. She wasn't very bright. And she *was* pregnant.

J: But not with your child.

K: No. She was screwing my friend who was single and she was married herself to somebody who, uh, someone else in the trailer court. But in this she looks vaguely like that. She has a turned-up nose, and she's pretty, a fake tan sorta, kind of a cheesy tan like she laid outside in the chaise-lounge outside the trailer a few hours a day.

J: Sort of orange?

K: Yeah. But when I screw, when I'm screwin' her, while she's ironing she's, uh, she no longer has lime-green Capri pants on, she now has a print dress on, which is pulled, hiked up over her hips, and, uh, her pants are pulled down. By me. Right? Hey, right? And after that I, uh, seems like I spend a few hours there doing, I don't remember what I do, but all I remember is that occasionally I look at the kid. And after that I'm in the field again going towards my helicopter. The pilot's waiting for me and he's revving up the engine.

J: Is there any kind of music when you're leaving, or you know, when you're looking at the kid?

K: There's AM music on, and it's on a radio that's sort of art nouveau, no, an art deco old radio with rounded corners. Just like the trailer. Rounded.

J: So the music's variable. It's the AM top forty.

K: No, all I know is, yeah, there's cheap music on. See like the aural aspects of this are not very important—they're there just as in my dream, but actually, the visual aspects are more important. And . . . inside the trailer is a pinkish color, pinkish and light green, right? And the walls are brown. Outside the trailer everything's in a very dark blue, as if it was taken in with, uh, Ektachrome. And then I'm in the helicopter and then I am gone, and that's the end of the fantasy. But that last part of the fantasy has to be there. I always think that afterward.

J: The helicopter ride and the boarding of the helicopter?

K: Yeah, going out of the trailer, going out and leaving.

J: And you never fantasize the return to your wife, your first wife.

K: Well—well, no. The feeling is when I leave, when I leave on the helicopter, is that I'm going off to meet my wife, my other wife, who is, uh, I'm . . . I'm . . . I'm looking forward to seeing her. I don't feel unhappy about it.

LITTLE FEAT/RECORD SHORTS

Electrif Lycanthrope. Little Feat is a band whose members believe in improvement. They have never hesitated to re-record a song from one of their earlier albums on a later one and the results are often very satisfying. Let their notion guide you in seeking out Little Feat bootlegs. The one in question, which might be translated as "Electric Werewolf" in some perverted Latin, is a marvelous example of the Feat in concert, and its excellent quality makes it vital to the band's devotees. The concert is probably from early 1975, containing material largely taken from **Feats Don't Fail Me Now**, and the playing is hot. An added bonus is an obscure version of "Willin' ," and it can't hurt to have another of those.

UPSTART'S RECOMMENDED IMPORT

801 Live

Eno is the one. Manzanera's Spanish, right? Re-naming that Beatle song "T.N.K." is, like, showing the mechanization of the new version. You know what I mean. I could say that "Rongwrong" is from some Dada thing, but I don't remember. This is a good one—this is "East of Asteroid," right? That's a stupid title. 'Cause don't you think there's a sort of Latin feel to his playing?

Is this still "Rongwrong"? I was thinking that maybe Jeff Beck people could get into this. Oh, this is—It's—I like this one. This is a good track off of **Another Green World** ("Sombre Reptiles"). Luc referred to this as the disco version of "Baby's On Fire," but I think that disco's just infiltrated everybody's consciousness. This is the part in the song where they always manage to come up with a new lead, and it's always good. This all pre-supposes that my conversation is worth printing, that I can say whether or not people should go buy this record. I feel like Flo and Eddie. Well, okay, it's a classic opportunity. People should definitely go and buy this record. It's a good mini-retrospective of Eno's work of the past couple of years, and it's got a couple of cuts from **Diamond Head**. They're really pushing Manzanera here, see?

2nd writer: Yeah.

But why aren't you saying anything

in this?

2nd: I told you I have nothing to say about Eno.

But even more interesting than trying to figure out **Radio Ethiopia** is thinking about where the 801 came from. I mean it's from that song—you know, "True Wheel"—but where did Eno come up with the number to begin with? It's like "Eno" is an anagram for "one," and you wonder about the degree to which that's conscious.

I like Eno's live stuff, see, because live he loses a lot of that cold quality he's got in the studio. This is a really good transition—this is really good ("You Really Got Me"). And this "Third Uncle" is dynamite. See, it's still mechanical, it's not made by real people. So it doesn't malfunction. And it stomps some rump in a robotoid sort of way—

OTHER MUSIC FOR UNDERGROUND GOURMANDIZERS

One of the things that was always interesting about CBGB's was the lack of distance between the people who were playing and the people who were watching. The bands were never more than a few feet away from the audience, and the band members would usually hang at the bar between acts, blending perfectly into the crowd. It was like they had just walked off the street and decided to entertain us and make enough money to pay their rent in the process. And most of the time they looked like they enjoyed it.

Of course, that lack of distance often extended to the music. Sometimes it seemed that any of us could play some of the stuff that those bands played. But that was OK. That even enhanced some of the songs, made them even more fun.

Live at CBGB's captures a lot of the endearing qualities of that Bowery gang: the erratic work done by the same group on the same night; the crazy eclectic spirit of the players, how every band knew how much they needed a distinguishable kind of sound and appearance to capture anyone's attention; and the occasional gem that a band would come up with, the song that would click, the rhinestone in the garbage can.

Live at CBGB's is erratic, eclectic and has those occasional gems. From the punky precociousness of the Tuff

Darts to the good-natured drive of the Miamis, the versatility of Mink De Ville to the attempting-to-transcend-the-genre sound of the Planets, it's all here, and more, more, more. Though these are generally the second-stringers, it's nice that they've gotten this small, but deserved chance to get on vinyl. This is a great party album, with just about something for everyone. The record's tarnished, and frequently tinny, but it has a heart of gold.

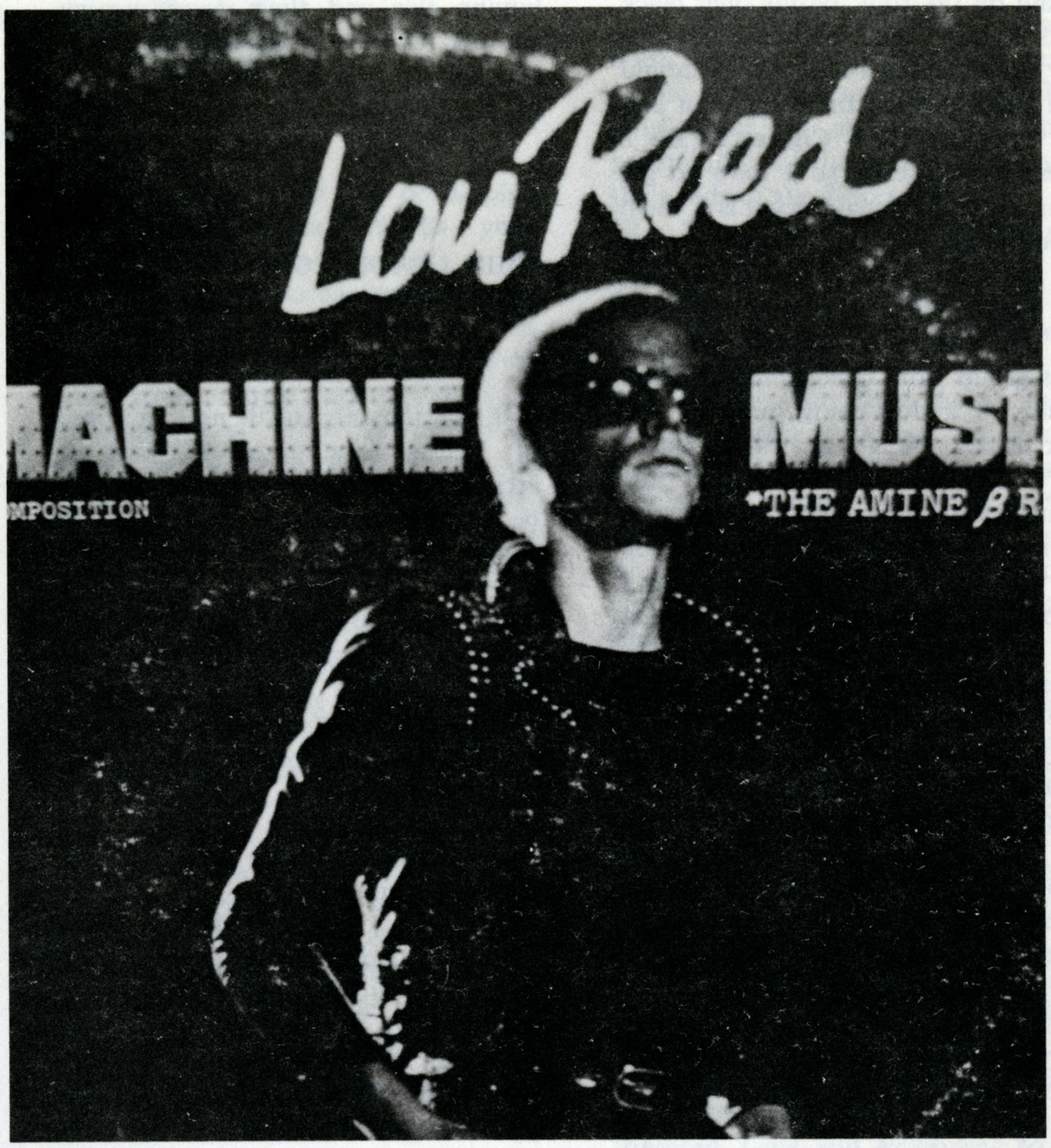
One small complaint: in this evocation, they should have gone all the way and printed photos of the bathroom walls. What's written there is creativity that should not go unremembered.

DELUXE MODERN MUSIC

Anglophiles have been predicting the success of Be Bop Deluxe for a while now, for Bill Nelson, the writer, composer, lead singer, guitarist and co-producer of the band, is a very clever fellow. As a result, their latest bid for success, **Modern Music**, is pleasing and lightweight art-rock in the English tradition. It's very bright and a lot of fun, though Nelson's mastery of technique is somehow self-revealing, a neat card trick in which you still think you might have seen one ace too many. Nelson seems to give equal attention to the various roles he plays in the creation of the record, and the result is a st; listic cohesion. The lyrics, which touch upon popular topics from Babylon to love, love, love (without taking anything very seriously), are overwritten but not overdone. The music touches on any number of pop forms but never rests on one, yet still provides much in melody and exciting rhythm, along with often-inventive guitar work and an occasional soaring lead. And the production is clean and crisp enough to bring out all the details of this kind of work. While perhaps less melodic than their last effort, **Sunburst Finish, Modern Music** has more than a few nice tracks, the title suite, for instance. Pleasant, if not earth-shaking, and extremely listenable, with some durability, **Modern Music** lives up to the promise of its name.

SONG REMAINS THE SAME

The soundtrack to Led Zeppelin's **Song Remains the Same** is everything you'd expect it to be. A "greatest hits" recorded live in concert, it features all the Zep standards that have grown in mythic stature over the years, even if they don't sound drastically different from when they were originally recorded. "Dazed and Confused" gets a side here, and is worth most of it; "Stairway to Heaven," still the most popular oldie of all time, is redone, without changing too much of what made it the most popular oldie of all time; and "Rock and Roll" and "Whole Lotta Love" are rockem-sockem, tear-em-up versions that really capture the essence of Zeppelin live. But for a real rush, see the film. Possibly the best rock and roll performance film ever made, the images and the playing are a mile-a-minute and never grow the least bit tedious, no matter what state your consciousness is in. And the four-track sound in the theaters is so magnificent, that when you finally get the album, you're bound to be a bit disappointed. So make the best of it, and turn up the volume. What's all this fuss about Kiss and Aerosmith? If we've still got the best, why not stick with 'em?



METAL MACHINE MADNESS
by Phil Kline

It's 4:30 and I am getting pretty nervous, even scared. My fever had gone up from 99 to 101 without my noticing and suddenly the malaise is pronounced. The Bloomingdales lingerie catalog is on the desk in front of me. Furthermore, across the street is this mercury blue light on the roof that flashes irregularly: added proof that Martians may have entered the scene. How perversely beautiful *Mahagonny* sounds right now, not particularly because it is perverse, but because they sing with such reverence that they turn the cabaret into a church. Even the building across the street is a church, which it really is. Actually, there is some kind of nuclear device on the ground floor (which appears to be a parking garage), while above all this is a convent school on top of which is a screened-in asphalt playground. An hour or two ago there were nuns—deaconesses actually, since this is an Episcopal operation—running

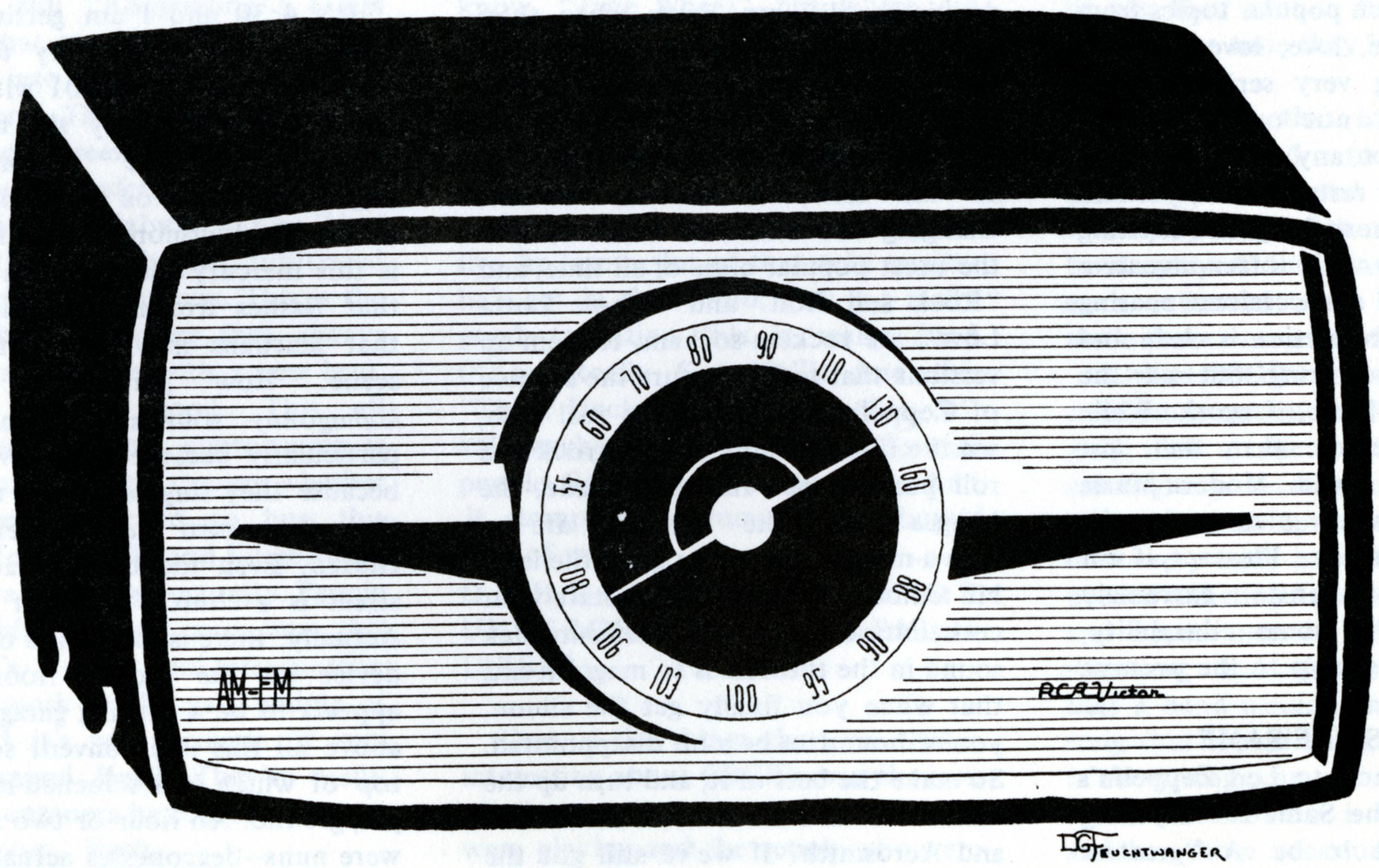
around on the roof, raising their black skirts slightly with both hands when they run to avoid a nasty fall. I should have been out of there by then and now it's almost 5. Cigarettes are a necessary analgesic, so I have to get them. Next to Papaya King is a small record store that has lots of records that are cutouts and I have to go there, too. They have a lot of obscure things like old Marvelettes albums and this blues group from Greenland that has a picture of a dog being hung by the neck called *Hang-Dog Look*, but I don't really like to buy albums just because they have funny covers and I'm not particularly moved by the odd fact that Greenlanders play the blues. I almost got one called *Mighty Mo* that had recordings of passing ships communicating in the night. They have *Robert Redford Narrates the Story of the Wolves*, which is a really beautiful record, but I already have it. There really isn't much in this store but I always stop there because they have about a thousand $1.99 copies of *Metal Machine Music* by Lou Reed which I bought a few months ago. Even though it's a throwaway album it's really great because it sounds like every record in the store played at once. I suppose a lot of people don't feel like they want to hear a lot of records at once but I like to see the whole picture. I could see someone who's never owned a record before buying this and then never owning another record. It's the scariest thing I ever heard.

JOHN & PAUL & GEORGE &
by Bill Ruhlman

Being the only Beatle never accused of having great musical talent or artistic significance has turned out to be an enormous critical advantage to Ringo Starr. He is the only one from the group whom everyone is willing to accept on his own terms, without pointing to past masterpieces with which he ought to be keeping pace. The danger Ringo once faced was of fading into anonymity as a solo performer. 1971's "It Don't Come Easy" changed that situation, and found Ringo a suitable musical niche: making hit singles.

The questions, then, when evaluating **Rotogravure**, Ringo's sixth album, are how it stands up as pop product, and how many hits are to be found on it. This is yet another album which is more important for its production values than its performances. Naturally, it's a "Starr" vehicle in which the star does little more than sing lead—Ringo is credited with "original ideas"—while various name players perform interchangeably and the producer (in this case Arif Mardin) puts together a smooth, saleable product. Ringo's particular variation on this formula is to call in his former cohorts for contributions. As usual, each one gets a song here. Paul's "Pure Gold" is not striking, and George's fairly mundane "I'll Still Love You" is a number that plods along at the pace of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." But John Lennon's "Cookin' (In the Kitchen or Love)," his first new song released anywhere in quite a while, is a surefire hit, and along with the recent "Dose of Rock 'n' Roll," provides the hit singles that are the necessary element in calling this album a success.

Also included on **Rotogravure** are a fifties pop song, a new Eric Clapton tune, a country and western song, a Mexican-flavored number and a minute or so of noodling called "Spooky Weirdness." A couple of other pleasant sounding cuts round out the album. With the exception of "Spooky Weirdness," almost anything here could be at least a minor hit. While the album as a whole does not, perhaps, stand out as did **Ringo**, the first album of this collaborative pop series, **Rotogravure** is still an album that succeeds on its own terms, and those terms you may hear for yourself on any top 40 radio station.



Living the Pop Life

Felice Rosser and Bud Kliment

John Rockwell talks about rock today, the New York scene, the Times and more.

(John Rockwell is one of the most widely-read critics in the music world. Rockwell came to the *New York Times* in 1974 and brought with him his deep involvement in all areas of music including classical, pop, avant-garde, rhythm and blues, and more. He's got a great feeling for new music and wrote convincing articles on Patti Smith, Bruce Springsteen and the Talking Heads that may have proved invaluable to their fledgling careers. We thought it might be interesting to talk to Rockwell to find out something about the nature of music criticism, especially pop criticism. This interview was conducted in July of 1976.)

Q: Do you ever feel that your age is a deterrent when you're working with pop music, which is largely supported by people younger than yourself?

A: It's curious that most people who wind up being pop critics do something else or want to do something else. Either they broaden their interests to include all kinds of non-commercial pop, jazz or oldies or whatever, or they start writing about other popular art forms like television or comedians, or they go into production or become record company executives. I suppose that sort of dissatisfaction *is* a generational thing, that commercial pop music is a youth-oriented phenomenon, and as you grow older you begin to start worrying about being divorced from your audience.

I gave up the notion that I was fifteen years old a long time ago, but I have always been interested in classical and jazz and all kinds of music including pop. I'm not really restricted to one form and, as a result, not that prone to losing interest in it.

Q: As a music critic for the *Times* you reach one of the largest audiences of any music critic. Perhaps more than any other rock critic you are read by people who don't know much about it, people who might just be flipping through the paper. What's your responsibility to this audience?

A: One wants to be responsible to the art of music and to the readers in that one wants to give them an honest guide to the things they should go see or buy, but all those responsibilities should be exactly the same if you were writing for the *Bergen County Bugle*. It's a journalistic ethos rather than something that's affected by the number of readers.

To some extent one tries to write something more oriented to a general reader. My deliberate policy is to try to write my classical reviews and my rock reviews in almost the same tone, and try to take into account the reader who might know less about the subject than a true fan. But I also have to assume that while I get more general readers, a review of Elliot Murphy at the Bottom Line, for instance, will still basically be read by the people who

". . . with all due respect to the* Times, *we are not generally regarded as the world's hippest publication."

are interested in popular music. In situations like that I'm still aiming towards an in-crowd audience.

Q: There's also the popular idea of the vast power of the *"Times*critic." What do you think about this?

A: Sometimes the power of a critic is exaggerated, sometimes it isn't. For instance, the power of the *Times* critic in classical music is greater than it is in popular music because the real power behind pop music is the radio. A song will live or die on the basis of radio play. Also, with all due respect to the *Times*, we are not generally regarded as the world's hippest publication. Therefore, a kid is more likely to trust *Rolling Stone*'s opinions, merely on the basis of labels.

On the other hand, when it comes to classical music, the *Times* is the whole ball game. The music critic's power isn't anywhere as exaggerated as the theater critic's, but it's amazing how the *Times* critic may be the only critic read after a significant classical music concert. Often the fate, in terms of the reputation and general public's opinion of an artist or an opera production or whatever, is entirely in the hands of the *Times* critic.

Q: Do you think you could make or break an act?

A: No. I could help, perhaps.

Q: But you could probably make an act more than you could break one.

A: Maybe, but there are so many factors involved. Of all the people around, the one whose career I think I played the biggest part in was Patti Smith. But I hardly made Patti Smith. There were lots and lots of people around contributing to her success. The first big rave I wrote about her had no effect at all. This was in the summer of '73 or '74. I wrote all these hysterical raves about her for a long time, and the one that is supposedly credited with having actually triggered Clive Davis to sign her was this old throwaway item in the column. Davis denies that that affected him and there were a lot of people pushing her, so there's no way of figuring it out. The Springsteen thing is similar. Others have claimed that the fact that my articles on Bruce Springsteen appeared on the second front at the time it did triggered *Time* and *Newsweek* to get interested. They, too, deny it, but if it is so, then it's because it's part of a process. There are millions of other people who are equally responsible. The radio people, for instance, key disc jockeys who start playing an artist heavily. Other media will perhaps read the *Times* critic and perhaps be interested, but the *Times* is only a part of a chain of events that leads to success or failure.

Remember, New York is the absolutely uncontested center for commercial theater, dance and classical music. But it's not the center for movies or pop music, because these things can be duplicated and released simultaneously all over the country. For that reason, the *Times* critic might have little impact on the whole commercial structure of the thing. On the other hand, for all that Hollywood may say they don't care what Pauline Kael thinks, they prize her reviews as some kind of certification that they are not just money-grubbing swine, but instead noble pursuers of artistic excellence. In the same way, the

commercial guys might prize a review from the *Times* in a way that they wouldn't really prize one from *Creem*. It's silly in a way, but it has to do with the *Times*' reputation; it goes beyond me or any individual critic.

Q: What do you think the new trends in pop music will be?

A: Predicting new trends is a fatal flaw. If I could do that I would make millions of records. Nobody can really predict, even one whose livelihood depends on it. At the moment, we have a situation in which there are several types of pop music, each of which has its strong following. Indigenous to New York there's disco and cabaret and punk rock and progressive country stuff which is coming up a bit faster in New York than it did a few years ago. With different degrees of trendiness these various forms are going to continue to happen. We are in a period of a lot of diversity and sometimes you might think that at some point it will all cohere around some leader in the field. If someone comes along and has an enormous success you get imitators but that's not a trend. A trend is a bunch of fans following strong people, and so, in that sense, the strong people are more interesting than the trends, for example, Stevie Wonder.

Q: How do you feel about disco?

A: I haven't got anything against disco, but I think a lot of it is garbage. Then again, a lot of everything is garbage. The best diso is fun, it's good to dance to.

Q: But so much disco is just pure formula. Do you think it has the energy that a lot of earlier black music had?

A: In a way, our notion of what was going on in black music in the early or mid-sixties was largely formulated by various superstars' greatest hits collections. But if you were actually listening back then, the amount of crap that came out was just terrible.

Q: You mean when every Motown album had two hit singles on it and that's it?

A: Yes, right. For example, I did a piece on Stevie Wonder for the *Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock and Roll* and so beforehand, I sat down and listened to all of his albums. Now Stevie Wonder's a great guy, full of talent. But you listen to some of his older albums and you hear Christmas songs by Stevie Wonder, Surfing songs by Stevie Wonder. It's incredible.

The point is that there are always lots of different kinds of formula schlock, and disco has its share. It's obviously limiting in some ways but then, on the other hand, a song like "Rock Your Baby" is wonderful. The basic notion of an ostinato bass line is a real interesting structural idea and there's nothing cripplingly mechanical about that. Even the most mechanical stuff like Silver Convention is just as good a novelty song as many other novelty songs. The point is that it has to be judged on its own terms.

What disco obviously lacks, and what most black music up until 1970 also lacked, was a strong social consciousness. It began when Sly and Gamble and Huff started injecting social messages into their songs seven or so years ago. That sort of thing is different from disco and maybe more interesting. But I don't think disco has

"What disco obviously lacks, and what most black music up until 1970 also lacked, is a strong social consciousness."

any less energy than other forms of black music. It certainly has less importance, but then again pop music needs reaffirmations of non-importance occasionally.

Q: Why are so many mediocre bands now extremely successful, Kiss and Aerosmith, for example?

A: Let's face it, there is a proletarian white teenage punk audience that goes in for simplistic theatricalized heavy metal. If they weren't into Kiss and Aerosmith, they'd be into Led Zeppelin or Black Sabbath. There is a kind of violence-oriented music that appeals to a certain kind of white punk. Not a punk with artistic pretensions as in *Punk* magazine, but genuine white punks. There is a kind of music for every kind of sensibility, including crude ones.

Q: Why do you think that a lot of bands make it in other parts of the country, in Philadelphia or Cleveland, for instance, before finally making it in New York?

A: It probably has something to do with the sheer density of population in New York and the funny, febrile lifestyle here, the fact that everybody is pursuing trends and similar preoccupations. There is also the vaunted conservatism of WABC, the fact that they never go with a record until it has caught on in most of the other parts of the country.

Q: Do you purposely go out and try to spot new people who are playing, or new bands?

A: I don't have enough time or interest to go down to Max's or CBGB's night after night, waiting for something to hit me. I am perfectly willing to use word-of-mouth and other publications. If I hear some band is interesting, then maybe I will go down. It's not something I do deaf, dumb and blind. I deliberately try to be selective about it.

Q: What attracts you to a new band? Originality?

A: It's mostly subjective. Sometimes it's novelty, sometimes it's reaffirmation of tradition, sometimes it's undefinable. I'm generally interested in something that is interesting, fresh, unusual, strong, or individual, something that is not necessarily related to technique. It relates to the impact that they make. For example, I really like the Talking Heads, but I like them for a variety of reasons; the fact that they make a sound unlike any that I've heard . . . I also like the instrumentals, Franz's drums and Martina's bass, David Byrne's guitar playing and his singing, once you get into it. I also think that they're a fabulous visual image, that combination of the three of them. She's so trendy/sexy, and Franz's is the perfect sort of androgynous Renaissance face. And Byrne is so obviously demented. With the jumpsuits, the alligator shirts, they look wonderful. You could argue that what I really like about the Heads is that they are new, but I really like Springsteen, too, and it's clear that he recycles so much. He's a compendium of R&B and early rock styles. So novelty has little to do with my interest in Springsteen.

Q: It's just some sort of indefinable click when all these things come together?

A: Yet you don't necessarily have to have all of them. Many of these New York Rockers are inept from a

technical standpoint, but that doesn't necessarily invalidate them. It's just a characteristic rather than a limitation.

Q: Do you think that the New York Rock Scene has reached a plateau?

A: Most fads begin with a quick eruption of energy and they constitute a coming together of similarly-minded people; punk-rock bands, for example. Suddenly you have new places you haven't heard of before and there's lots of bands playing and people hear them up and down. Then the truth of the matter is inevitably revealed, which is that many of these bands are copies or inadequate. But the initial burst of energy is always interesting. What remains is the obvious tradition of that neo-Velvet Underground/punk rock kind of thing that goes back nine or ten years and is likely to continue after the excitement of the CBGB's scene has faded, to reappear some other time. The nicest thing about the whole scene that will hopefully remain is that two years ago there were not places in New York where unknown bands would play, and now there are a lot of places.

Q: Why do you think that more bands didn't get signed by record labels? A lot of those bands have distinctly, traditionally commercial sounds, strong melodies, etc.

A: All the record companies are probably scared because of what happened with the New York Dolls. Actually, I think a lot of the major record companies are being classically unimaginative. A lot of other garbage is passed out, merely recycled stuff. Every session man in L.A. gets a record because his friends are rock stars and they push him. An occasional one is good, but rarely. Then the records aren't promoted and they die and disappear. If so many of these kinds of records are made, it's just very peculiar that the companies don't experiment with some of these New York bands more.

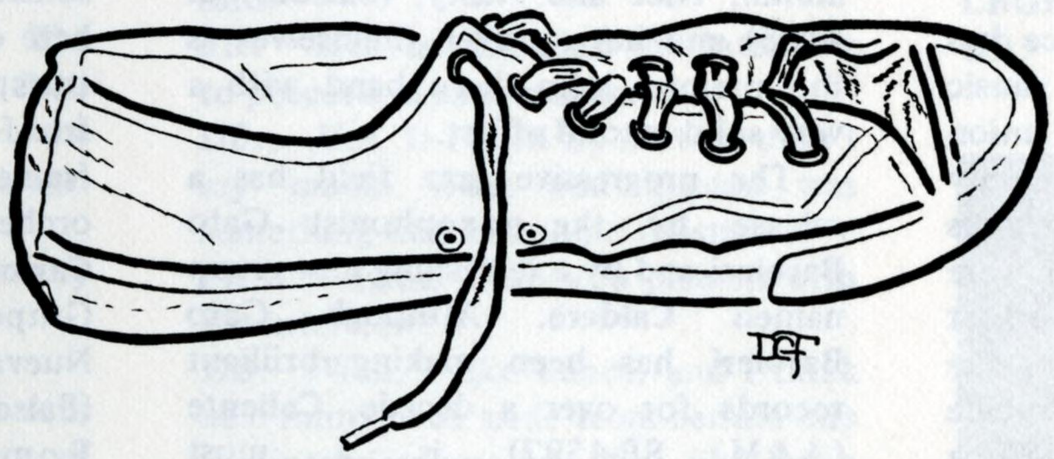
". . . pop music needs reaffirmation of non-importance occasionally."

Q: What are your feelings, as the classical music critic as well as the pop critic, about new classical music?

A: Classical music is in something of a crisis, simply because it has reached a point of evolution in accessibility. Now most new classical music tends to be an elitist phenomenon, not necessarily of elite and refined individuals so much as an elite of composer's friends and things like that. But non-commercial, non-jazz music is in a kind of fermenting state in which there is an enormous variety of music being created which is wildly disparate. It even blends into pop, too. There are experimental composers who are involved in the rock world; Brian Eno, for example. It's a similar situation to pop in the sense that it's very diverse with no sense of leadership, but rather some moribund traditions and some newer traditions sharing crossed borders.

Q: Do you think that rock will become more visual, say, with the advent of video cassettes, which might replace the individual ideas of "records" and "concerts" and will instead merge the two?

A: I think rock has trouble being visual simply because a successful act plays such large halls and then it becomes very difficult to be visual except when you use lasers, smoke bombs, and that sort of stuff. If video discs become big, then sure, but that's more a technological innovation than an innovation rising out of the music itself. Whether rock will become more theatrical because something in the music demands visual expression or whether the technical means will become available and hence impose visuals on the music, I don't really know. I do think there is a kind of human sensibility that derives satisfaction from the organization of tones, and that sensibility is not going to be answered or satisfied by video discs. Video discs may come along, but the phenomenon of aesthetic pleasure derived from sound will remain



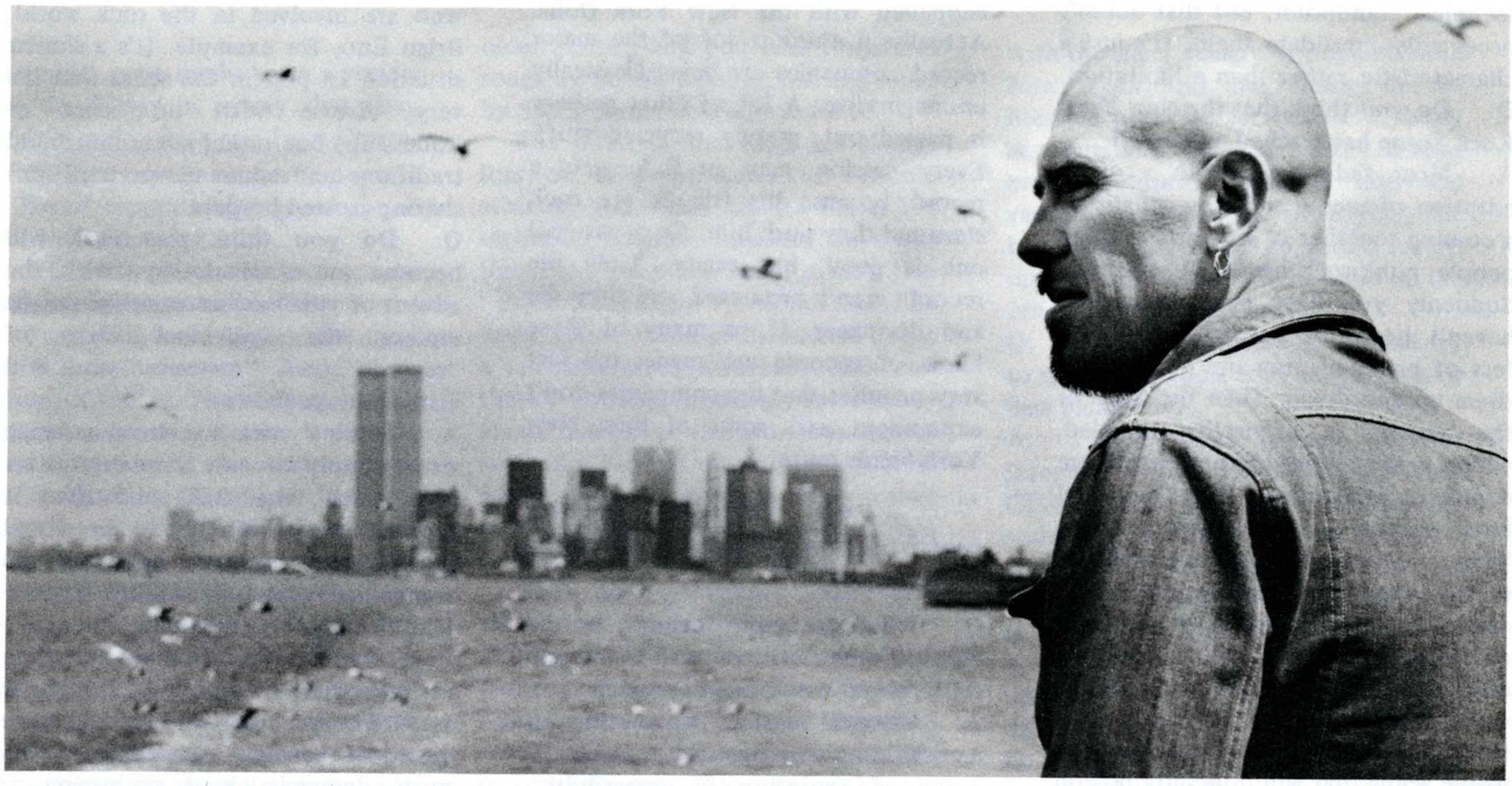


Photo: Tom Ross

"A Taste of Latin"

by Gustave A. Paredes

For that small share of the mass market, there has emerged a revitalization of the special interest segments of music. Jazz, reggae, latin and rhythm and blues have each mutated in different variations to compete for attention in the commercial market. Rhythm and blues has a new sound in disco, big band jazz in progressive, reggae has remained intact but is spearheaded in a new direction by Rastafarianism, and the mambo has returned as salsa. These various music forms have been promoted rather heavy-handedly recently with the exception of latin, and now its time has arrived.

Latin music and its influence has been very strong in American music since the early 50's when union musicians went on strike and the only non-union musicians were Latin, thus Xavier Cugat and Perez Prado were seen in Los Angeles and New York at such hotspots as the Paladium, the Roseland and in MGM films. Lucille Ball made it fashionable to bring Cuba (cha-cha-cha, spanglish, and Desi Arnez) into your living room. This all ended with the revolution in Cuba and all trade of services were abolished.

The latin influence was to surface again with the Stones, Santana, Stevie Wonder and disco. Latin music always had infectious rhythms but it was never really a marketable commodity after the 50's. Various albums releases in recent months have highlighted the effort to be palatable to discerning musical tastes. The Fania All-Stars, long the stronghold of latin rhythms, have released a disco album, **Delicate and Jumpy**, on Columbia records (PL34283), produced and arranged by Gene Page. They have added a few classics to a disco beat, offering themselves as the new disco force to be contended with. Also the Salsoul Orchestra has released their second album, **Nice and Nasty**, (Salsoul Sal 4105) and have proven themselves as the premier latin disco band with a very solid second effort.

The progressive jazz field has a release by the saxophonist Gato Barbieri and by a refreshing new group named **Caldera**. Although Gato Barbieri has been making brilliant records for over a decade, **Caliente** (A&M SP-4597) is a most disappointing recording. Overproduced, and repetitious, Gato appears to have abandoned his vanguard position and followed a trend of syrupy, easy listening musak. **Caldera** on the other hand, combined the qualities of Chick Corea and George Duke with rhythmic latin percussion and produced a debut album that is distinctly powerful. The amount of promotion **Caldera** has received has been negligible, but they have the spirit and the creativeness to be a formidable sextet, proven with each succeeding album.

A reunion album featuring the great Dizzy Gillespie and the progenitor of latin-jazz, Machito, entitled **Afro-Cuban Jazz Roots** (Pablo 2310-771), is a connoisseur's dream. The earlier years of the Apollo and the Savoy, where big bands and featured solists were the norm, are captured here on vinyl. Dizzy, the wizard of the trumpet, has the opportunity to free-form with the structured framework of one of the tightest latin orchestras ever. The music of the Caribbean and Brazil is spotlighted by Grupo Folklorico y Experimental Nuevayorquino, **Lo Dice Todo** (Salsoul Sal-4110) and Dom Um Romao **Hotmosphere** (Pablo 2310-777). These two albums captured the intensity of the Afro-Caribbean and Brazillian roots and added them to more modern sounds, to form a true melting pot of the Afro-Caribbean-Brazilian melodies.

Talking Heads Talk

Peter Allen Rose

David Byrne returned my telephone call Sunday night, 11/14/76, upon his return to New York from a weekend in Boston playing a few clubs, and a date in Providence, R.I. He interrupted a rehearsal I was involved in, but I obliged him without hesitation.

DB: Hi, Peter Rose? This is David Pyrne.

PR: This is Peter. You must have gotten my recorded messages. I'm glad you could call back.

DB: Well, I just returned from Boston. We were there over the weekend.

PR: What clubs did you play?

DB: We played The Rathskeller and a place in Providence, R.I.

PR: Did you play with anyone from The Modern Lovers?

DB: Yes. Jerry Harrison and Curly.

PR: When I called you on Friday I had prepared a set of topics and questions for us to discuss. Now they're not at my disposal, but I had been inspired by Roger Shattuck's article "Exploding Artaud" in The New York Review of Books and called you soon after reading the article. I sensed a similarity between Artaud's goal of achieving a "delicate concordance between the mind's animal, (physical), impulses and the highest operations of the intellect," and the group, in that you are very physical, constantly in motion while you play, and your songs are formally tight and lyrically well-conceived. Have you ever heard of Artaud?

DB: Vaguely, but it sounds interesting.

PR: Would you agree that The Talking Heads work to fuse their well-constructed tunes with the constant motion you present on stage.

DB: Yes.

PR: Your songs have many references to motion in them—

DB: That's true.

PR: And I think that combined with your physical presence, that of considerable motion, the expression is total and dynamic, and works for me.

DB: Thank you very much.

PR: In your interview with Lance Loud (in "Andy Warhol's Interview) you stated: "Nowadays the art that

goes on is just people getting into different styles. They rarely think about who they are . . . they just work to get into a framework of an already established style."

DB: I remember. Could you repeat that though?

PR: ". . . Nowadays the art that goes on is just people getting into different styles. They rarely think about who they are . . . they just work to get into a framework of an already established style." I took "style" to mean a form of artistic expression.

DB: Right. It was a long interview. Lance asked us questions for three hours and we were pretty tired.

PR: Were you pleased with the interview?

DB: Well, Lance was recording responses and placing them with different questions. Some of the interview just wasn't quite what we said.

PR: Had he intended the interview to proceed in that manner?

DB: Yes. It ended up that we didn't say much. What you quoted was something that had some substance.

PR: I agree. Were you pleased with the interview?

DB: Well, I like Lance, and I think he's funny, but aside from certain bits the interview was just silly, like much of the work in the *interview*.

PR: Is it true that "The Girls Want to be with the Girls" is about how at parties the girls often huddle in corners with girls and the boys remain in groups with the boys?

DB: Yes. (warm giggle)

PR: I'm sure you've received many different responses as to the meaning of the song.

DB: We have. But that's really how the song was written.

PR: Well, an audience will always endow certain songs with meanings that you may not have intended.

DB: That's true; we're finding that out.

PR: I saw you for the first time in December of 1975 at CBGB's. How long had you been playing there?

DB: We first played there in June of 1975.

PR: With Television?

DB: No, with The Ramones.

PR: How do you feel having signed with Sire Records?

DB: We're very pleased.

PR: You've told me before you like The Ramones (and you've played with them before at Max's, CBGB's and My Father's Place). Is there any significance to your signing with the same record company?

DB: No, I don't think so. Our success with Sire will not relate to The Ramones success with them. The Ramones' success with Sire doesn't depend on Sire, and our success with Sire will not depend on either Sire or The Ramones, and will not make or break us or Sire Records.

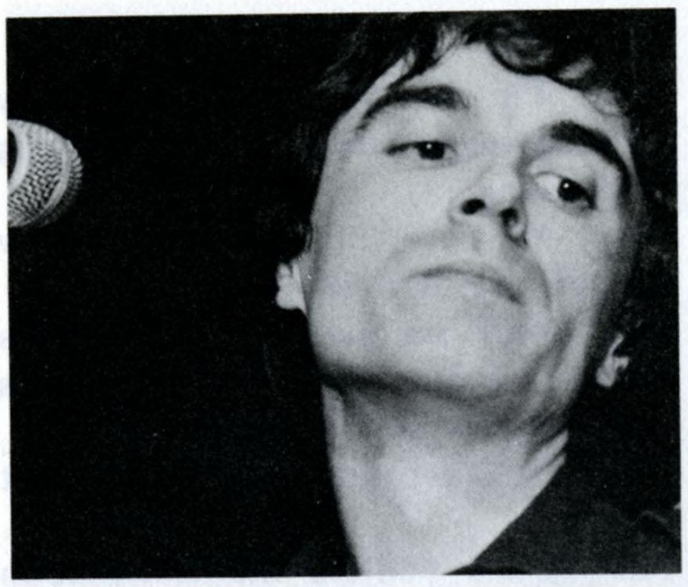
PR: Can you foresee a date for the album?

DB: Not really; we're just concentrating on how to produce it.

PR: Every time I've seen you with my friends over the last nine months or so, we've made a cassette recording. The quality of sound and performance has increased consistently from June '75 to the recent October 29th date at CBGB's.

DB: Thanks. I guess so. We had a

Photos: James Jaramusch



really good P.A. system the last time at CBGB's.

PR: The vocals were the clearest they've ever been. Aside from the better P.A., what do you think has developed?

DB: Well, it's not ideas, it's not feelings. It's that we're better entertainers.

PR: How do you feel about that?

DB: Well, it's unavoidable. We've worked for something new. But as our performance changes our ideas and feelings don't. We hope we can maintain what is new, hopefully something . . .

PR: Does Sire have anything to do with your improving as entertainers?

DB: No, they don't care what we do. We're happy with it.

PR: Do you plan to use other musicians on the album?

DB: Yes. We've been working with some of The Modern Lovers.

PR: Do you plan to play rhythm and lead guitars and mix them, overdub, whatever—?

DB: Overdubbing and mixing is necessary to fill out the sound. In order to capture some of the live sound we'll have to fill out our sound with studio work as much as possible, other musicians, a little overdubbing . . .

PR: One of my favorite tunes off my June, 1975 tape from CBGB's is "Theme," an instrumental. Do you plan to use that tune again, or do any other instrumental work?

DB: We will use "Theme" again. We'll wait until we can fill it out a little more with sound.

PR: I feel there are two distinctive characteristics to many of your tunes. Some, like "Stay Hungry," "Warning Sign," "Tentative Decisions" and "Who Is It? What Is It?" have a strong beat/rhythm, while others, like "The Book I Read," "Artists Only," "Happy Day," "Don't Worry About The Government," etc. have a strong vocal melody.

DB: I think that's right. The earlier tunes are very rhythmic. Lately I've gotten into vocal melodies and writing pretty melodies like "The Book I Read."

PR: Which song is your favorite as a pretty melody?

DB: I really like "The Book I Read"–and "Happy Day."

PR: And as a rhythmic song? It always seemed as though "Warning Sign" was the most popular.

DB: Yes. "Warning Sign" and "Stay Hungry."

PR: How did you write "The Book I read"?

DB' I started with the chords. The song took a very long time to write. It slowly filled itself out.

PR: It's a love song–

DB: Yes. It began as a story about a relationship I was involved in, and as I wrote the song the truth of the relationship changed, but that's bound to happen because you're writing a song and not only telling a story.

PR: Does the song deal at all with one's relationship to a book as a love object, and not solely as a metaphor for a human relationship?

DB: The song is about relationships.

PR: Apart from the strong instrumental rhythms in many of the tunes we've mentioned, there are strong vocal rhythms that ascend as the song moves forward, climaxing in intense physicalizations and screams. Many of the words are not formal and have an innately primitive quality.

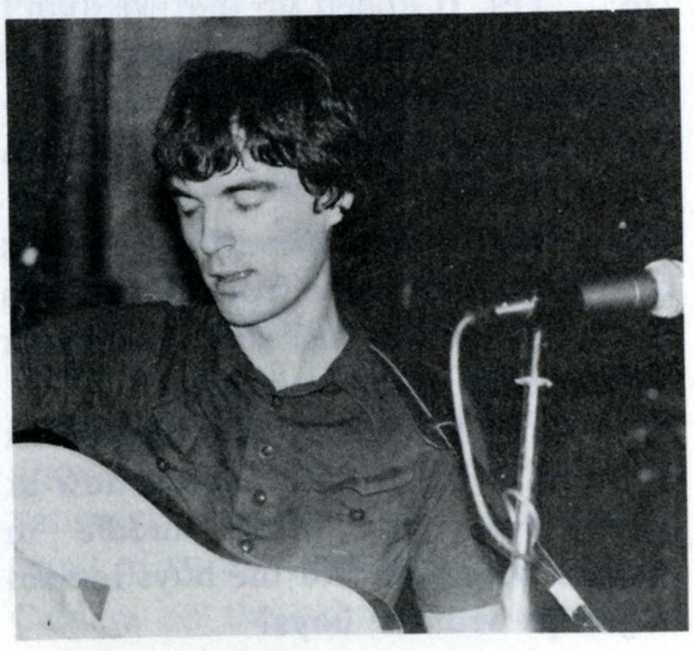
DB: You mean the use of syllables.

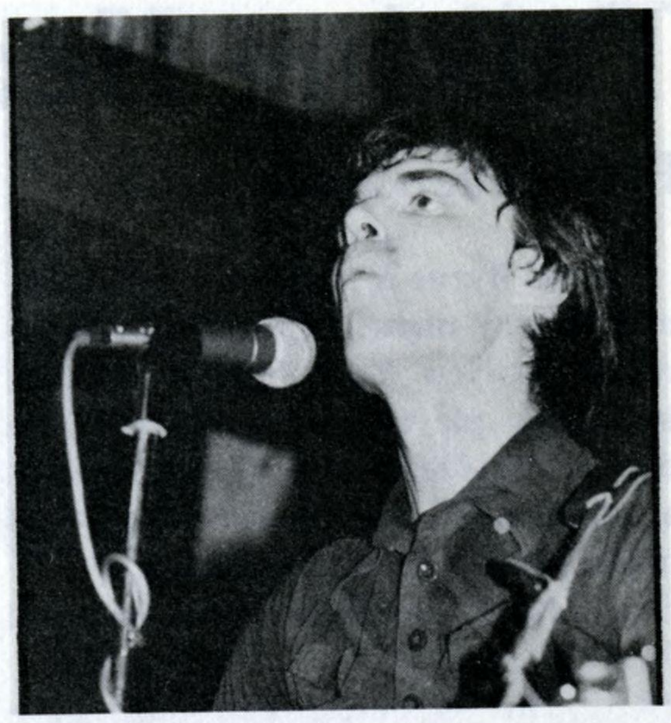
PR: Yes.

DB: They're spontaneous formalisms.

PR: Like, "Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa Fa . . . " from "Psycho Killer."

DB: They're spontaneous formalisms. It's not unique to pop music. Like "Wah, Wah," or "Ditty, Ditty."





PR: Yes. But I think your use of syllables is much more of an integral part of the tunethan a "Wah" or "Ditty."

DB: The voice is an instrument itself.

PR: An expressive musical instrument. When you become so involved vocally the songs are even more effective and believable. The expression is truer because you are less in control of it. The spontaneity is vital.

DB: That's what I try to do. I have no set approach. I'm trying to be honest and perform with conviction, not by rote but with heart. I try to put my heart into it whenever I play.

PR: You succeed.

DB: Thanks. (warm giggle)

PR: At the last CBGB's date, the audience began clapping when you sang "They'll come a day when we won't need love, I believe that we don't need love, Please respect my opinions they will be respected some day . . . " from "I'm Not In Love." How did you feel about that.

DB: (giggle) bemused . . .

PR: Wad that ever happened before?

DB: NO! Nobody has ever clapped for a lyric before.

PR: What did you think was going on?

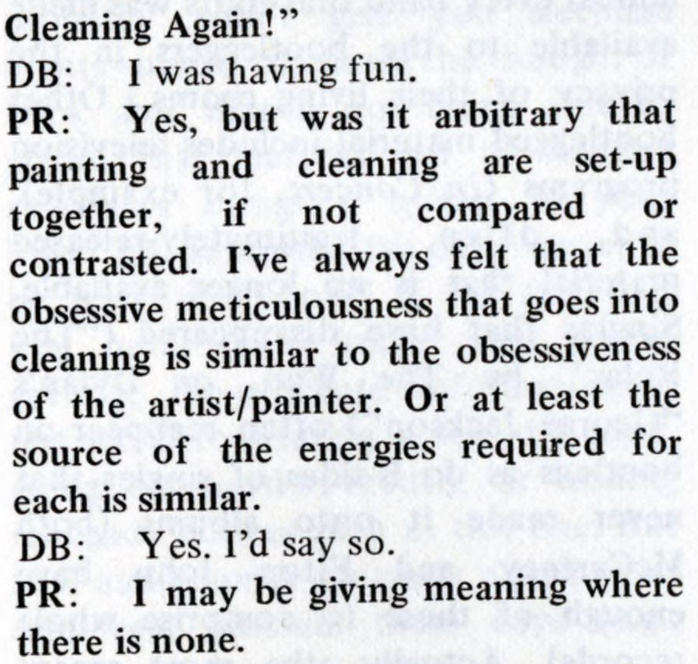
DB: I thought perhaps something was going on in the audience until I realized it was us, the tune . . .

PR: And then?

DB: And then I imagined it was a recognition. A realization by people in the audience of a similar experience and feeling about that experience. It was a shared moment.

PR: It was very nice being in the

audience.
DB: (giggle)
PR: Is it true that Tina's bass line has been extended on two songs: "The Book I Read" and "New Feeling."
DB: (giggle) Yes.
PR: Do you like it?
DB: Yes. It sounds more band-like with a longer bass line.
PR: Is it also "I'm Not In Love" that has a longer bass line?
DB: Maybe.
DB: I reworked it from a poem my friend had written. I threw the words into a new form that wasn't narrative. I gave them a form to keep things in order.
DB: No. But it was partly arbitrary.
PR: Then it wasn't a Dada song.
DB: No.
PR: I always wondered about the placement of the opening phrase of "Artists Only," "I'm Painting! I'm Painting Again! I'm Cleaning! I'm Cleaning Again!"
DB: I was having fun.
PR: Yes, but was it arbitrary that painting and cleaning are set-up together, if not compared or contrasted. I've always felt that the obsessive meticulousness that goes into cleaning is similar to the obsessiveness of the artist/painter. Or at least the source of the energies required for each is similar.
DB: Yes. I'd say so.
PR: I may be giving meaning where there is none.
DB: No. I think that's interesting, about painting and cleaning.
PR: You usually do a 1960's tune like "1, 2, 3, Redlight," "Love Is All Around" or "96 Tears" as encore tunes. Are you particularly into that musical period and style?
DB: No. They're just fun to do. They're fun to sing. But in regard to "1, 2, 3, Redlight," and "Love Is All Around," I'd say I believe in them. I have to go soon.
PR: Alright. A few more questions. This chance doesn't come often and I've really looked forward to it.
DB: O.K.
PR: How did you write "Psycho Killer"?
DB: As a stylistic exercise in writing a rock 'n' roll tune. Kind of like Alice Cooper. The initial intention was as a stylistic exercise.
PR: Did you ever intend or imagine that people would identify you as the "psycho killer"?
DB: No. And I was upset when people did that at first.
PR: It was your stage presence that probably made it unavoidable.
DB: Yes. But it doesn't matter.
PR: Have you heard Patti Smith's new album?
DB: Only once.
PR: Did you have an immediate reaction?
DB: Well, I've only heard it once and I've been up to Boston listening to the radio in the car.
PR: What were you listening to?
DB: Elton John.
PR: Elton John?
DB: I can't figure him out.
PR: What do you mean? You're not interested in such a commercial product, are you?
DB: NO. But I can't figure him out. So much of what he does is commercial garbage, but then he'll come up with a beautiful melody every now and then. I'm sure he's just as surprised over the whole commercial success thing as we are . . . a short little bald guy . . .
PR: (Giggle) What was the deal with the "Nick Detroit" issue of PUNK Magazine?
DB: Oh, that. Legs just called us up and we said, "Sure, guys." (giggle)
PR: Is there any significance in the fact that Tina and Chris are gunning you down?
DB: (laugh) No. But maybe.
PR: What did you think of Jonathan Richman?
DB: Well, I knew what he was like before I saw him, so . . .
PR: After hearing the Berserkely album a lot of people expected him to be a rocker.
DB: Well. I liked his sound. The drummer was excellent. But he's funny. He's an athlete/jock/high school kid.
PR: How long have you had your T'ai Chi slippers?
DB: I've had them since the summer, but they're getting worn out.
PR: Is it true that you worked in The Shirts studio for awhile? A friend of mine is close with Annie Golden's brother—
DB: Yeh. We had worked down there but you could say we grew out of it. And having signed with Sire . . .
PR: Chris wrote the lyrics to "Stay Hungry," right?
DB: Yes.
PR: I've always thought that one of the couplets was "Andre Masson! Andre Masson!"
DB: (giggle) When in the song is that?
PR: After "Move a muscle!" "Move a Muscle!"
DB: That's "Make a Motion!" "Make a Motion!"
PR: Do you write all the tunes, aside from Chris' work on "Stay Hungry"?
DB: And the poem I reworked for "Artists Only." Basically, I write and when we practice with the song, we collaborate. As we arrange the song in practice we pick and choose and elaborate.
PR: Are you writing new material?
DB: Yes.
PR: Do you plan to use it soon?
DB: I don't know. I hope.
PR: Do you plan to add to your live performance in terms of personnel?
DB: Yes. Eventually, I think Jerry Harrison will work with us on keyboard and guitar.
PR: You'll expand the trio—
DB: Yes.
PR: Glad you called back.
DB: Thank you.
PR: See you soon.



Some People Are Never Satisfied:

The Resurgence of Bootleg Albums

"*Wooden Nickel*? Never heard of that record, no."

—Neil Young, from the bootleg album *Live on Sugar Mountain*

"It must be good for somebody, this here song. I know it's good for somebody."

—Bob Dylan, from the bootleg album *John Birch Society Blues*

The concept of the bootleg album probably had its origins in the invention of the portable tape recorder, for that device made all music subject to unlimited reproduction and distribution. For years, avid fans of both jazz and classical music have made and traded tapes of "essential" performances in order to complete their collections, considering these copies as important as actual records.

With the advent of popular music and increased technology, the bootleg album became a reality. In the last seven years, bootlegged rock and roll records have been secretly produced and distributed under the counters and in the racks of record stores throughout America in an attempt to make some big bucks satisfying certain needs of the record-buying public.

Without attempting a full-scale history of the phenomenon, it's commonly agreed that Rock bootlegging originated around 1970, with the success of two particular collections. **The Great White Wonder**, a collection of various early tapes and much of the famous "basement" material by Bob Dylan, is thought of as the grand-daddy of all bootlegs. Appearing during a period when Dylan had not released any material for a long time, **GWW** satisfied Dylan fans' need for a new record, and is reported to have sold enough copies to make it a Gold album. **Live R Than You'll Ever Be**, the other original bootleg, was a recording of the Rolling Stones' Cow Palace concert of 1969. Now thought to be the biggest selling bootleg of all time, **Live R** came out months before **Get Your Ya-Ya's Out** and is still considered by some to feature a better performance than the one on **Ya-Ya's**. (**Live R**'s sales have often been said to have motivated the release of **Ya-Ya's** as it seemed that record company execs feared a loss of revenue from the pirate recording's appearance. Apparently this fear also prompted the release of the Plastic Ono Band's **Live Peace in Toronto** and Elton John's **11-17-70**; both concerts had been heavily bootlegged.)

After bootlegging's energetic beginning, which spawned such classics as Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's **Wooden Nickel**, Led Zep's **Live On Blueberry Hill**, and the Beatles' **Kum Back**, various attempts were made to stamp out the practice, including the passage of several federal laws. For a while, bootlegs almost totally disappeared from view. But in the last two years there has been a strong resurgence of pirate records, indicating that as long as there continues to be a demand for unreleased material, that demand will be met in some fashion, by some means. The new bootlegs are noticeably improved in quality, packaging and variety. Professionally printed covers, or attached paper flyers, list both recording information and complete (if sometimes mis-titled) contents. And whereas bootlegged material once featured only the most popular artists, it now features artists of every degree of popularity, from Lou Reed to Linda Ronstadt, from Kiss to King Crimson. We've come a long way from the days when scrawled notes on white jackets would simply read "Dylan" or "Beatles."

Bootlegged material now generally comes from a variety of sources. Continuing in the tradition of **Live R** the most prevalent form of pirate material is concert recordings. Frequently, recordings are made on tape recorders from the audience and, as a result, the quality of the records that result can vary greatly, due to each bootlegger's particular situation at the time of recording. Some records sound as if they were recorded from the upper balcony at the Garden; some from the third row. Some recordings are distorted by deafening applause near the microphone; some are remarkably clear. Concert bootlegs taken from radio concerts, on the other hand, tend to be the most superior quality that's available: blissful, uninterrupted stereo. (Indeed, the appearance of shows like the *King Biscuit Flower Hour* contributed heavily to the return of bootlegs, as the bootleggable performance of almost every band that tours was made available to the bootleggers in the privacy of their living rooms.) Other bootlegged material includes television programs (*In Concert*, for example), and often, legitimately-released material that is no longer available. Singles that have disappeared ("The Relay" by The Who, or Dylan's "George Jackson") often reappear on bootlegs as do B-sides of singles that never made it onto albums (both McCartney and Elton John have enough of these to comprise whole records). Actually, the most recent bootlegs tend to feature all of these sources. The result: interesting packages whose quality varies from cut to cut.

The appeal of bootleg albums is probably as varied as the records' quality and the material that they feature. Obviously, the primary motivation to buy a bootleg is to obtain material that is not otherwise available. Or one may have an interest in a band that doesn't release live albums, or records of particular events (Watkins Glen, for example). But the biggest factor is fanaticism. People who buy bootlegs are obviously diehard fans of the artists involved. This fanaticism often reaches incredible proportions. Certain Grateful Dead freaks buy every bootleg that's available, making and distributing tapes in an attempt to collect every note ever played by

Garcia and Co. Whole societies of "Dead Heads" exist in order that this collecting can be as large-scale as possible; correspondence is coast-to-coast as well as international. Even if all artists do not generate the same degree of interest, the Dead Heads represent a magnified version of the reasoning that prompts most bootleg buying today: some people are never satisfied.

Are there any reasons not to buy bootlegs? There are the rather sticky moral questions. Bootlegs *are* illegal (to produce, not to buy; the cuffs will not be slapped on upon purchase), but if you have a strong sense of the law you probably wouldn't have started reading this article in the first place. Bootlegs *are* a mite unjust: the artists don't get a cent from these records (though Paul Simon once claimed to get mysterious royalty checks on occasion). But rock stars' lost wages probably won't give you sleepless nights–unless of course the thought of Mick and Bianca not being able to afford that matched set of studded sun-visors brings a quiver to your lower lip. Seriously, the only reason to be wary of "boots" is the fact that you never quite know what you're getting. Pre-purchase information is restricted to hearing a friend's copy, going by word-of-mouth, or reading renegade notices such as this one. But trial and error is generally a part of all semi-legal pursuits these days (e.g., The Loose Joints Gamble).

Bootlegs are valuable for a number of reasons. First of all, they help to fill the gap between releases. If 18 months is just too long to wait for a new Little Feat album, a copy of *Electrif Lycanthrope* can help to pass the time. Secondly, there *is* an incredible amount of primo material to be found on some of these records. If you think that David Bowie's version of "Station to Station" at Nassau Coliseum last spring was so far superior to the RCA album version that you can't bear to listen to the original anymore; or if you think that Dylan's best song is "I'll Keep It With Mine"; or if you think that Bruce Springsteen lost it all after 1974, then bootlegs are for you.

If you are a true fanatic, any critical comment will be "wasted" on you, but some evaluations follow. In general, the series featuring a small emblem of a girl crouched before an old radio is good, as are the Double-Diskk and Ze Anonym Plattenspieler labels. Although bootlegs are not available in the bigger record stores, they can be found in stores around beach areas from here to Miami. In Manhattan the best places to find them are generally concentrated in the Village. With a little imagination (the Yellow Pages can help), most of the following should be only moderately difficult to obtain.

Some popular supergroups have spawned truckloads of bootlegs. While it's impossible to detail this astouding number of albums, a few general comments about each group's bootlegs follow.

THE BEATLES

In general, only hard-core Beatlemaniacs should bother. The material that's available is mostly poor concert tapes (only up until 1966, obviously), oddities like non-musical Christmas messages (once only available to members of the official Beatles Fan Club), and lots of miscellaneous material from the **Let It Be** sessions. (Most recommended of these is any album that features the un-Phil Spectorized, original **Get Back** album cuts (which became **Let It Be**); this will include the long version of "Dig It.") There are a plethora of Wings concert albums out, but the official three-record set should be out by the time you read this, so don't bother with them.

THE STONES

The interested reader is advised to stop in at any good bookstore and check out the discography of a new, large-size paperback titled "The Rolling Stones: An Illustrated Record." This is probably the most thorough listing of The Stones' recorded material and it features a comprehensive listing of all extant Stones bootlegs, listings that include recording information and songs available on each record. Quality is still a question of chance, though, and it should be reiterated that most of this material is from concerts, so be careful. (Current Stones plans call for a new, legit live album in the next couple of months. It might be wise to wait and see what's included before you do any bootleg buying.)

THE WHO

Like other supergroups, The Who have been so heavily bootlegged in the past decade, that the list of albums could go on for pages. (For such a list, fans should contact the "Trans-Oceanic Trouser Press" to see if their Definitive Discography of the Who is still available; it is invaluable to any serious collector.) Still, from the many possibilities, two records are recommended:

Who's Zoo

This album is a two-record set with enough artwork and information to belie its bootleg status. The cover notes that the LP is "a menagerie of obscure tracks hitherto unreleased on any American l.p.'s." This is certainly the case. Sides one through three consist of various legitimate material from English EP's and B-sides of singles. Early influences are revealed, in James Brown's "Shout and Shimmy," Motown's "Heat Wave," and cover versions of "Batman" and "Barbara Ann." Also included are the first Who single "I'm The Face Zoot Suit," rare songs like "Waltz For A Pig" and "Dogs, Part 2." Side four features songs from American TV broadcasts from the sixties. The quality of this record is fairly murky, but this seems more the fault of the original recordings than the pressing.

Live at the Fillmore East

This is a quality concert album from 1967 or 1968. The performance is excellent. Who fans who first got into the group around the time of "Tommy" might find this an interesting sampler of the period immediately preceding "Tommy," which featured a sound that's closer to that of the classic Who than might be expected. Includes such standards as "Summertime Blues," "My Generation," and "Boris the Spider."

LED ZEPPELIN

Their **Live On Blueberry Hill** was one of the original bootleg classics, despite its only-fair quality, and the followup bootlegs usually have the same poor quality. Because of the infrequency of Zep's radio or TV performances, most bootlegs tend to be concert LP's made from the audience. Because Plant, Page & Co.'s sound is so difficult to capture live, we recommend the legitimate live album **Song Remains the Same.**

GRATEFUL DEAD

You readers who are into this group probably know them better than we do. If you're not a Dead Head, chances

are you know one or two. Ask *them* about Dead bootlegs. Be prepared to listen for a couple of hours.

DYLAN

As Bob Dylan is the most bootlegged artist, trying to review the material that's available is a complicated process. New bootlegs appear all the time, often containing the same material as various other bootlegs. Aside from his prominence in the rock world, Dylan is really a bootlegger's dream. Any number of early tapes of his performances exist. He seems to write and record a number of extra songs for every album that he makes. In concert and in out-takes he frequently changes lyrics, which makes these versions valuable. His indecisiveness has often caused albums to be released, only to be withdrawn and re-released with different songs; and demo copies of records sent out whose "final" recordings are then changed, or never released at all. All this material has appeared, and continues to appear on bootlegs.

The best Dylan bootlegs are the older ones. **John Birch Society Blues** has recently reappeared, and is probably the most consistent collection of rare material. Also highly recommended is **Royal Albert Hall**, a live recording with The Band made in London in 1965. Despite its notoriety, **Great White Wonder** is an uneven collection, as might be expected of the first bootleg. **The Basement Tapes** is, of course, now out legitimately, but it might still be valuable in a bootleg version to those wishing to have versions of "I Shall Be Released" and "The Mighty Quinn," important songs that were excluded from the official version.

Regarding Dylan's latest efforts:

Any recordings from the '74 tour. The official **Before the Flood** contains most of what is important, though true *aficionados* may want bootlegs that feature "Except You," the one new song from '74 not yet released. Quality of most of these recordings is only fair, since they tend to be audience tapes.

The Rolling Thunder Revue:

The Night the Revue Came to Boston

The quality of this recording is good, even though it's an audience tape. The album consists largely of material from **Desire**, arranged similarly to that album, but the first three cuts, "It Ain't Me Babe," "Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" and "It Takes a Lot to Laugh . . . " are exciting rearrangements and performances. This album probably gives a better indication of what the Rolling Thunder tour was like than **Hard Rain** does, as the latter was recorded as the tour was beginning to peter out.

Passed Over and Rolling Thunder

This is an absolutely vital anthology of the best of Dylan, divided neatly into four sections. First, five songs recorded at a concert in 1965 that, as far as we can tell, have never been bootlegged before. It's likely that they're from one of the very early folk/rock concerts, such as Forest Hills, since the band that's backing Dylan sounds very much like the musicians on the albums from that period. Sound quality is excellent. Part two consists of five out-takes from **Blood On The Tracks**, and each one offers new interpretations of the songs, especially the slow, sad version of "Idiot Wind." Part three includes the three songs Dylan sang last year on the John Hammond TV special, with a version of "Hurricane" that's much stronger than the legitimate version. Finally, there are six Rolling Thunder songs which display the melodic, folky aspects of that tour, aspects which **Hard Rain** did not feature. This is the best recent Dylan bootleg, and important to any Dylan fan.

BOWIE

David Bowie's favorite role as media manipulator has worked against him: his numerous radio concerts and TV appearances have resulted in a particularly comprehensive assortment of bootlegs from every stage of his career.

David Bowie

This two-record set, available in any number of forms, features the first Ziggy and the Spiders tour. Recorded from a radio concert in California, the quality is consistently good. Standouts are the long version of "Width of a Circle," and the otherwise unavailable Bowie versions of Lou Reed's "Waiting for the Man" and Jacques Brel's "My Death."

Dollars in Drag:

The 1980 Floor Show

Taken from a Midnight Special, the quality of this bootleg is also consistently good. This record includes the original long version of "1984," his "I Got You, Babe" duet with Marianne Faithful, and a nice version of "Supermen."

His Master's Voice

The "soundtrack" to the D.A. Pennebaker documentary of Bowie's first "retirement," this bootleg is a must. Contains one of the first versions of "All the Young Dudes" that Bowie himself sang (here in a medley with "Wild-Eyed Boy from Freecloud" and "Oh, You Pretty Things"), and a dynamite version of "Jean Genie" that's helped along by Jeff Beck. Also recommended for Bowie's premature announcement that "This is the last show we'll ever do," followed by screams of "NO, NO" from the audience.

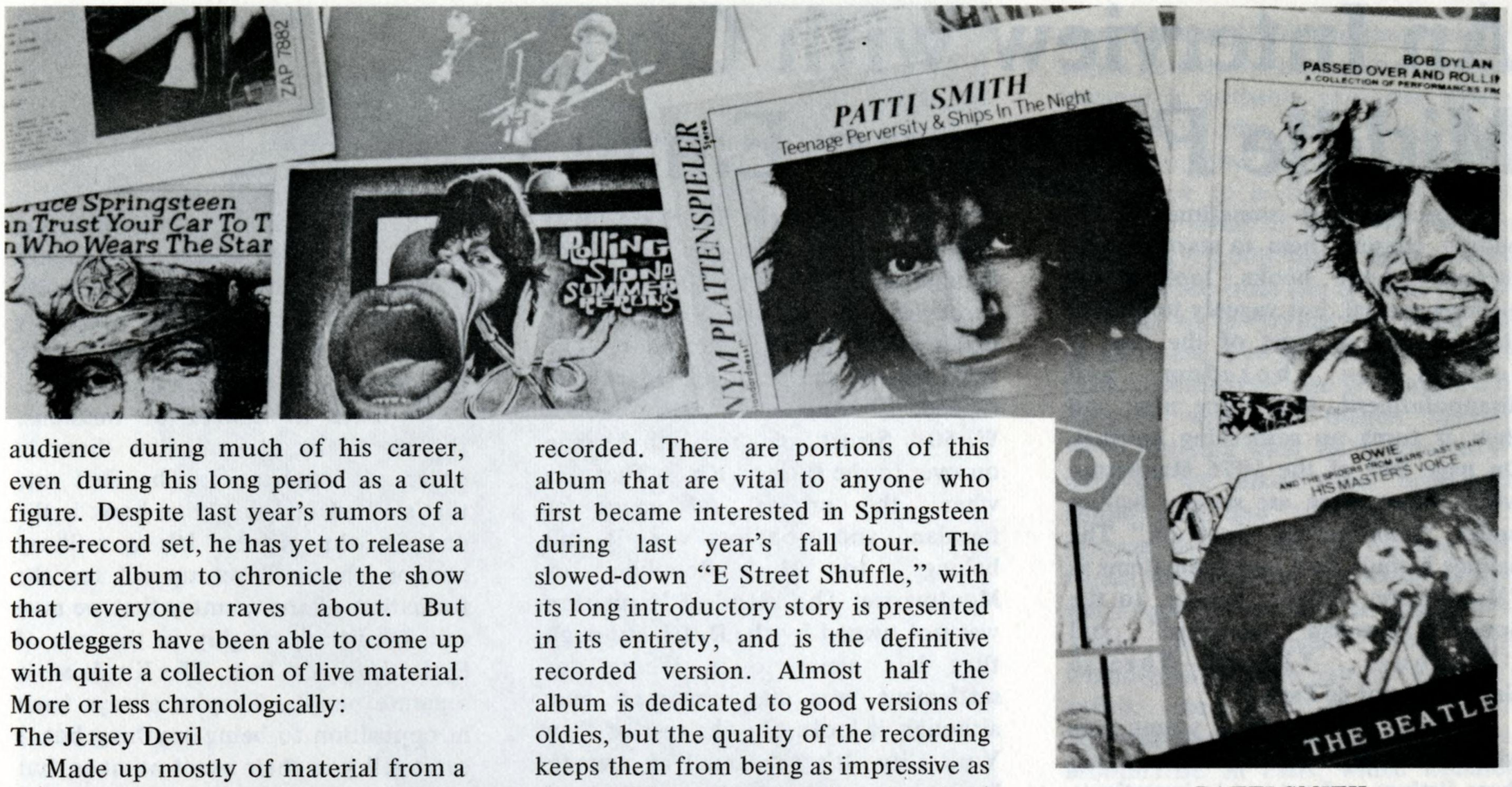
A Tasteful Display and
The Thin White Duke

These are two bootlegs taken from this year's triumphant concert at Nassau Coliseum (which Robert Christgau called "the best large-scale arena show since the Stones in '72.") The first is a single album, pressed on multi-colored vinyl, which features versions of songs from **Station to Station** that put the originals to shame. Also great is the version of "Fame."

The second album contains the material from the first, but adds versions of "Diamond Dogs," "Rebel, Rebel" and "Jean Genie," recorded from the same concert. Also included as a bonus are the cuts Bowie performed on the **Cher** show. The quality of both these records is excellent (the single has a slight edge over the double). These albums, if legitimately released, would have certainly been among the albums of the year, for Bowie and the band, on this night, were incredible. (A third album from the beginning of the tour, **Wish Upon A Star**, displays the band in its embryonic stages. They're good, but nowhere near these other records' performances. The only different song on this LP is a less-than-amazing "Waiting for the Man.")

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

It's no surprise that Bruce Springsteen is the victim of a lot of bootlegging right now. He is a performer who has attracted a fanatic



audience during much of his career, even during his long period as a cult figure. Despite last year's rumors of a three-record set, he has yet to release a concert album to chronicle the show that everyone raves about. But bootleggers have been able to come up with quite a collection of live material. More or less chronologically:

The Jersey Devil

Made up mostly of material from a concert given at the Main Point, Bryn Mawr, Pa., in May '73, this record represents the beginnings of Springsteen's work. The sound quality suffers from some distortion. The material will interest true fanatics, but not those looking for a recording that's similar to the most recent concerts. Included are an early version of "New York City Serenade" with different lyrics, recorded before he had a chance to write a coherent melody line for it, and three originals not to be found anywhere else: "Contessa," "And the Band Played On," and "Thundercrack."

You Can Trust Your Car
To The Man Who Wears
The Star

This two-record set is made from a good tape of a concert from the Main Point in February of '74. The band at this time featured a violinist, and she's prominently featured on "Incident On 57th Street" and "Jungleland." The album is also notable for its sole oldie, "Mountain of Love," and early versions of "Thunder Road" and "She's The One." Also included is a lovely interpretation of Dylan's "I Want You."

Hot Coals From
The Fiery Furnace

This is another double-set, put together by a group of Springsteen-lovers from various sources. The sound quality is very uneven, but most of side one is well recorded. There are portions of this album that are vital to anyone who first became interested in Springsteen during last year's fall tour. The slowed-down "E Street Shuffle," with its long introductory story is presented in its entirety, and is the definitive recorded version. Almost half the album is dedicated to good versions of oldies, but the quality of the recording keeps them from being as impressive as they might otherwise be. A mixed collection, but containing some of Springsteen's best.

Bruce Springsteen/Live and
Flat Top and Pin Drop

These two double albums were made from radio concerts from the '75 tour. The first comes from a New York radio station's broadcast of one of the Bottom Line shows, and was recorded and compiled with a curious lack of interest in the material. Not only are there sound drops and a great deal of radio static, but whole portions of songs disappear, to be replaced by legitimate album cuts of the same song. Still, what makes the album worthwhile is the performance of songs not to be found elsewhere, especially the three magnificent oldies, "And Then She Kissed Me," "Every Time That You Walk In The Room" and "Quarter To Three;" and the acoustic piano performance of "Thunder Road." Don't be fooled by the quality of the record's packaging into thinking the recording is the same high quality. But there are some pearls.

Flat Top and Pin Drop, on the other hand, is *the* tour album of 1975. If you didn't know it was a bootleg, you wouldn't find out by listening to it—the quality of the recording is that good. There's not much unfamiliar material on this album, but as a concert album of high quality, it's unparalleled.

PATTI SMITH

Although a recent success, Smith has four bootlegs to her credit. Don't be fooled, though, three of them are from the same concert. **Teenage Perversities And Ships In the Night** is the best, featuring Patti's "versions" of the Velvets' "Real Good Time Together" and "Pale Blue Eyes," "Free Me," from the film "Privilege," and early versions of "Pumpin" and "Ain't It Strange" (the latter as good, though faster than the version on **Radio Ethiopia**). All the Smith concert standards are included, the quality is good (from a radio broadcast), and there's a guest appearance by Iggy Stooge.

The other bootlegs go by the titles **Hard Nipples, Turn It Up,** or **Patti Smith**. From a different concern, and recorded from the audience, these are not of the same high quality as **Teenage**. Included are: "Free Money," a weirdie called "Giuseppi Verdi" and a surprise song from John Cale, "I Keep A Close Watch."

Unfortunately, our list is far from complete. Large sections of heavily bootlegged artists are absent. We would like to include a bootleg quality report as a regular feature. If you have further information regarding the existence and quality of bootlegs, classic or recently released; or if you're just desperate to find any of these albums, drop us a line c/o this magazine.

An Interview with God's Middle Finger on Earth

A peculiar urge sometimes strikes people, causing them to start flipping through phone books, looking for nothing special, but vaguely hoping to find something. Most of the time it results in boredom and disappointment, but every now and then it turns up something unusual. On page 949 of the 1976 Manhattan white pages there are sixteen listings under "Montmartre, Govt of." The listings include such intriguing items as "Montmartre military mission to the Soviet Georgian guerrillas" and "National Theater—Theatre Grand-guignol de Paris."

A friend of *Upstart*, a young man who works at the U.N., came across these listings and set out to investigate on his and our behalf. For weeks he tried to crack the high-level security and find out what it was all about. The answers he received were evasive and inconclusive. The investigation appeared to have reached a dead-end until an *Upstart* editor managed to get through directly to Montmartre's President, Barry Richmond. A short interview was conducted that day on neutral territory, and was followed by a more extensive interview in the presence of two other editors in the *Upstart* office. We present here Montmartre's history and politics, the story of its national theater, and the personal background of President Richmond in his own words.

Montmartre was formed in 1600. Its original inhabitants were from France, and it was a French colony until the French retreated from the area and it was cut off, when it became a small French independent country. It was actually a kingdom for a few days, but the man who was king was very arrogant, so his friends overthrew him in a few days and it became a republic. The king's name was Otto the First.

We're older than the United States. We were independent before the United States was. In fact, we were the first country to recognize the U.S. when they gained independence.

The country has a population now of about 16 million, scattered throughout the world. There are about 230,000 people on the island of Manhattan and about 350,000 spread throughout New York. Montmartre is divided into three Departments. The first one, on the island of Manhattan, extends from about W. 40th to about W. 50th Street, and from 8th Avenue on over to the Hudson River. That was where the original settlement of farmland and woodlots was. It still belongs to the Republic of Montmartre. The island of Manhattan was not owned by the Dutch although they laid claim to it. Where our settlement was has remained ours although it looks like the rest of New York City. It's too small an area to have grown up with any kind of separate identity.

The second area, called Middle Montmartre, is above the Croton Reservoir. It has about 500 square miles. Inside of that is also the Federal District of Montmartre, where most of the public buildings and also the military installations are. The third district, Upper Montmartre, is a few miles further up, also in an isolated area. These were all farming areas, and they got cut off. The Americans infiltrated in between. All we were able to lay claim to was what was ours. That is about 30 square miles.

Then there are enclaves, for example, half the land that Kennedy Airport is built on. There are others scattered here and there: there's one, in fact, near Mystic Seaport. There's a military mission in Greenwich, Connecticut. We have our own army and factories. We have American and French equipment and Mirages. Our military installations are financed through taxes—income taxes, excise taxes, that sort of thing. We also accept donations. We have our own currency that's used in Upper and Middle Montmartre. It's redeemable. For example, Canadians redeem it. You apply for citizenship by filling out the same forms you would to become an immigrant to any other country. It's a fairly easy test, but there's one group that has trouble and that's Republicans. From members of the Republican Party, unlike any other group, we require a 6-month quarantine and a certificate of health from another country. That's the only exception, and the elephant has to have a clean bill of health himself.

We have a number of missions. Diplomatically, I can't list them in order of importance. The first one that's listed in the phone book is the one to the Kurds. It's a military mission that will set up aid for the formation of the country that we now call Kurdistan, roughly in the area of Syria, Iraq and Iran. The Kurds are a separate people. They've always been in opposition to being anything but. I can't tell you their exact number, but there are probably something like 17 million of them. They were promised their independence in the 1920's in one of the follow-up treaties to the Versaille Treaty and everybody reneged. In 1973, the Israelis tried to talk the Kurds into launching a second front, by diverting the Syrian troops, to take the pressure off the Israelis. This the Kurds were willing to do. Kissinger promised them aid and then reneged, but we aid them by providing military supplies.

The second mission is to the Royal Scottish Jacobite Government, the head of which is Prince James Edward Stuart. He has recognized Montmartre as an independent country. He has a whole host of other titles, but that one is his primary title. He's next in line to the Scottish monarchy, if the Scots decide to break away, if they maintain the order of succession, and if they decide to remain a monarchy. We're aiding them at this point only with installations. There are no arms.

The third one is to the Soviet Georgian Guerrillas. Georgia was independent until 1920. Stalin was a Georgian. He was at least a fledgling priest at one time. They are very different from the rest of the Soviet Union, and even more so because they were independent within the memory of many living people. There is an underground movement in Georgia, and we've got munitions and a military mission. Because of the nature of the

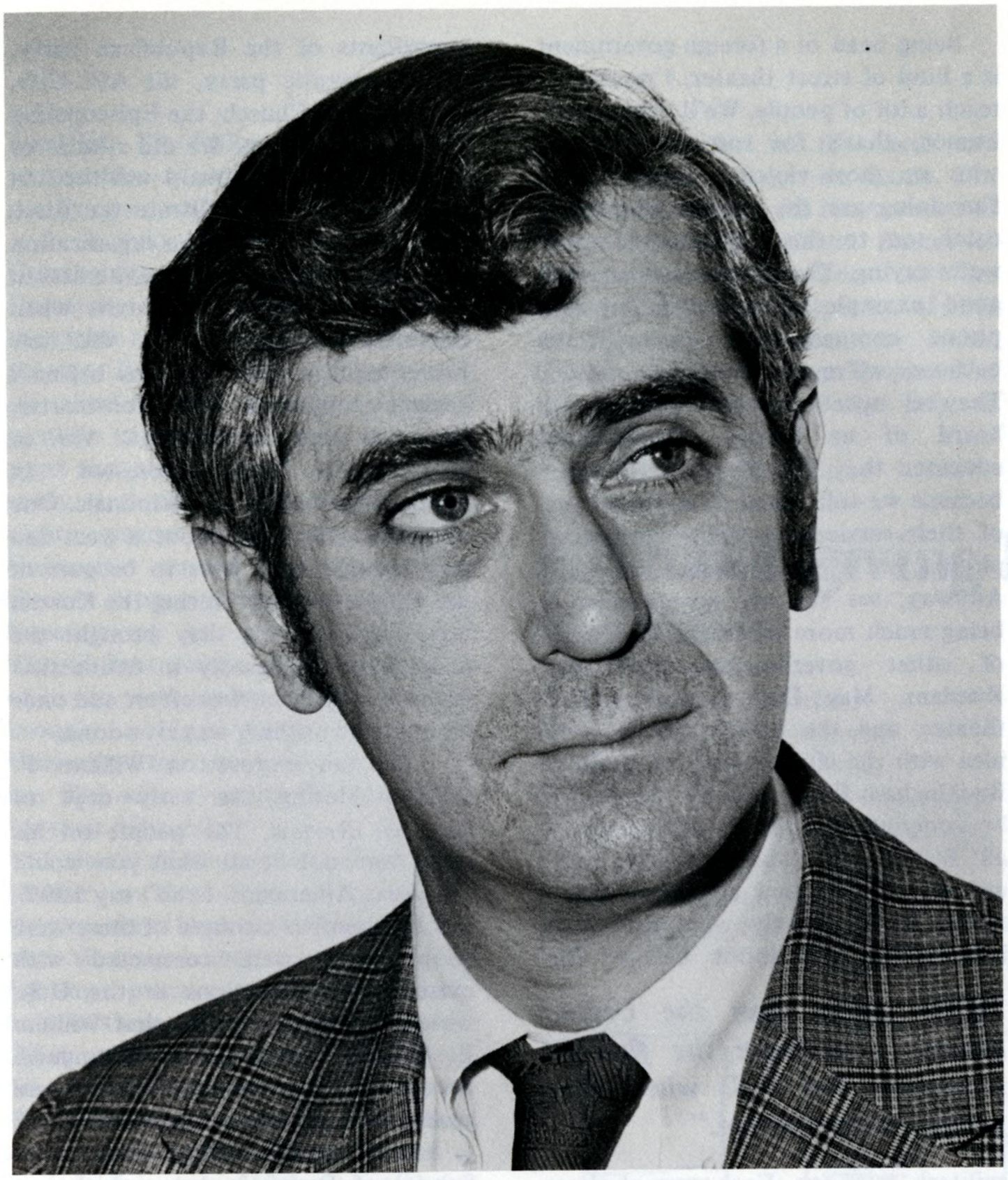


Photo: Lawrence Howell

whole thing, they're fighting troops, not in the sense that they would be sent out to fight, but that they are capable of defending themselves. It's very mountainous territory—it's unexplored in the sense that not many people live out there. There are Georgian guerrillas hiding out there now. As a matter of fact, next week, the Russians are going to interview me. I assume that's what they want to discuss. I'll just have to tell them that we'll bury them.

There are others, the Committee to Internationalize the Vatican City State, for example. It was set up to point out, particularly to the Vatican, that there is no difference between Internationalized Jerusalem where there are more than three major faiths, and the Vatican, which has certain areas (particularly the tombs of Peter) that are of importance to other faiths like the Protestants, who have no say in what happens to them. So the similarity is there. Either the Vatican must give up its pushing for Jerusalem to internationalize, because as long as Israel is fair to the other religions there's no reason why it should be, or else if they're going to internationalize Jerusalem they should internationalize the Vatican City.

We have a number of other missions and aid relationships. We have a saying that we'll accept aid from anybody as long as there are no strings attached, or in the case of the United States, rope. One of our former presidents, a man named Hamilton Hyton-Smythe, who was not the world's greatest president, signed a treaty and was not very careful about it and we found out after two years we were accepting strings without any aid attached. We're not taking aid from anyone now. Whether we would or not is something else, but we have no need to. Matter of fact, our dollar is worth one tenth more than the American dollar.

Montmartre's National Theatre, Le Theatre Grand-guignol, is one of the most famous theaters in the world. It is just perfect for our national theater because it probably expresses what's going on in the world today better than any other. It was founded in 1897, and it is the world's largest theater in terms of repertoire, with an estimated 10,000 plays, about 7,000 of which are from the original French branch. We're trying to bring the theater here. The area that we have in lower Montmartre also just happens to coincide with the theater district. We're not sure what we're going to do with it. We talked about razing the whole area and turning it into a garbage dump, but we decided that would already be an improvement, and we're not in business to make New York look nicer. Now the Grand-guignol is in Europe in what's called the free community of Montmartre: the former district of Montmartre in Paris, which declared its independence in April, 1920. That kind of thing went around the world. Greenwich Village declared its independence. It was called the Republic of Washington Square. Montmartre, if you were going to compare it with anything in New York City, would certainly be Greenwich Village.

The Grand-guignol is the world's greatest theater for the grotesque, the macabre, the horrific. It's probably the first theater of the absurd in the sense of grotesquery. It is the only theater in the world where, if the script calls for an act of violence, the act of violence is done in full view of the audience. In any other theater, either the act of violence is done offstage or it's done by faking it. For example, the man who is the killer will step between the victim and the audience so they can't see the knife thrust. In our theater you see the knife thrust. You also see the blood. We have our own formula for blood. It comes in 9 separate shades and has to be mixed fresh every night in a cauldron. No one other than us has ever discovered it, and it's only known by one man. Look—you're talking about eye gougings, heads being cut off, parts of the body being cut off; you're talking about thousands of the world's most famous playwrights writing this kind of theater.

This kind of theater has been attacked by people who were

squeamish. First of all, if it's a piece of art it presumably is something reflective of life, even if it's death. Death is simply a part of life. It's probably the most fearsome thing to most people. If you have the guts to sit there and look at death, in a sense that's an even greater affirmation of life because facing up to something that comes to everybody (with the exception of myself) requires a certain amount of courage.

Grand-guignol obviously bears a relation to folk theater because the higher up you go on the scale of sophistication, the less contact you have with blood, or any kind of bodily functions for that matter. I've found in my personal experience that people who refused to do it were emotionally disturbed. There are people who object to it on philosophical grounds. I don't happen to agree with them because studies have shown that the experience is catharsis. The French used to describe it as a hot and cold shower for the spirit because we do four shows every night: we do a drama, a comedy, an intermission, a drama, and then another comedy. You always went out with a laugh. On the very rare evenings that we used to do a full-length play we would finish up with a comedy so the audience left laughing.

It's a purer kind of theater than most, because traditionally if you do a three-act play, at the very height at which you can no longer maintain the tension, you relieve it with laughter. In our plays the play culminates at that moment instead of continuing or dropping down because you're relieved by laughter. What happens right after that point is that the comedies begin, and they relieve it. The point is that when you mix drama and comedy in a single play, it's not as pure as when you have it each in its own play.

Theater is not watching people sit down for breakfast. It has to be something extraordinarily different—something that will grab your attention and your imagination. Theater requires a fantastic script, lighting and acting. Lighting should do more than just illuminate; it should talk. That's the problem with Broadway. It doesn't use the resources of the theater, and it doesn't go outside of the normal range of experience.

Being head of a foreign government is a kind of street theater. I'm able to reach a lot of people. We'll never reach humor, that's for sure. The people who are most violently against what I'm doing are the people who don't catch on to the subtleties of what we're saying. The phone company is a good example. There's nothing the phone company can do with us because we're a sovereign nation. They're upset because they never heard of us before. Shows how educated they are. They're also upset because we told them if we found any of their servicemen trying to remove phones we'd hang them on sight. Anyway, we see our government as being much more theatrical than a lot of other governments. With the Russians, May Day is nothing but theater, and the British have a good idea with the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. We just happen to be completely, 100% theatrical, that's all. But theater (when it's done well, anyway) draws your attention. We're trying to do exactly what you were interviewing me about before: the

"We're older than the United States . . . we were the first to recognize the U.S. when they gained independence."

military missions. Each one of those countries has a legitimate purpose for being and has really been betrayed by the world. Whether we'll succeed in helping them is anybody's guess, but I happen to think we will. We've already begun to. The Russians are coming over and interviewing me next week and one wonders why. All of a sudden somebody's taken an interest in the Soviet Georgian guerrillas. I think you will see more about Georgia in the press in the future. But it's the other countries that will make the difference, not the Russians.

That's the serious part. Certainly there's laughter too. If Ford had a sense of humor wouldn't you enjoy being an American more? There's a man I admire very much. For months now I've been practicing falling down and bumping my head, trying to be presidential.

About our War Crimes Commission. You see, I used to be an intelligence agent investigating American extremist organizations. We were paid consultants of the Republican party, the Democratic party, the AFL-CIO, the Unitarian Church, the Episcopalian Church, and so on. We did studies of extremist organizations. I was the first person known to infiltrate the Birch Society. The head of the organization and all of its agents were on the lists to be killed in the gas chambers when Lincoln Rockwell became the new *fuhrer* of the U.S. This was before I became connected with Montmartre, when I was a student. We at Montmartre are interested in publicizing lists of war criminals. One of them who died about a year ago was brought over here to be part of the Nixon law firm during the Korean war. The point is, they brought the man there supposedly in connection with the American war effort and once he was here nothing was ever done.

I did an expose on William F. Buckley during the early days of *National Review*. The people on his staff were not at all what you would call great Americans. I can't say 100%, but I remember a couple of these were people who were connected with extremist organizations in the U.S., which is only indicative that William F. Buckley could never distinguish between extremism and a little more gentle form of political expression.

I was a student at Columbia in the School of Dramatic Arts, which was later called the Program in the Arts. When I left I was also the head of the University Professional Theater Program. I left in '66. I resigned in '64, and I assumed my position in '60. The school was in a little caretaker's cottage next to Earl Hall. My office was in the basement in an incredible dump where I never went except to pick up my mail.

The University decided to have a professional theater program and put Dr. Clifford Lord in charge. He was the kind of guy who you could tell that you wanted to take the Empire State building, evacuate it and turn it into a bird sanctuary. If you could justify it, he'd say go. But the University officials could properly be described as one degree to the right of the girondist. We were going to have a $300,000 theater in Lewisohn Hall, an experimental theater which I designed, along with an architectural firm. Now that space is used for office space, which tells you what happened when

Lord left. The University was opposed to the idea of a professional theater run by an educational institution.

I bought the rights to the Grand-guignol for Columbia. Columbia University woke up one day owning the rights to the world's greatest shock theater. Dr. Lord was delighted, and we raised millions of dollars to build a pavilion at the world's fair, but it all went out the window. A man did a study and found that for the last eighty years, every ten years the University started and stopped a theater program. There was just no hope trying to work with them. They'd fight you on every level. A lot of it was very unethical. When I left I brought a legal charge against the University for attempting to defame me. The school eventually apologized for their behavior.

I don't think very much of most theater in New York. First of all, they're very backward. The theaters were all designed before contemporary lighting practice was understood, before there was a real theory of lighting. They simply can't do a lot of the things they would like to do, or they do them with an incredible amount of agony. When I was a student living on 113th Street there was a power blackout from 110th Street down. Some buildings had emergency power systems–hospitals and things like that. And do you know that the theaters kept running? The reason was that most of the theaters were still on direct current. Only the most primitive kind of lighting board can work on direct current.

The things that I want to do, and the kind of things that I'm doing in my theater, you either can't do on Broadway for economic or physical reasons, or you can't do them because the producers are still living back in the 19th century and they're afraid.

We had originally planned to bring Grand-guignol here in 1984, because we figured if we had a flop in a year like that, who would notice? But really, we don't know. It's a difficult thing to do all the translations and get the proper flavor.

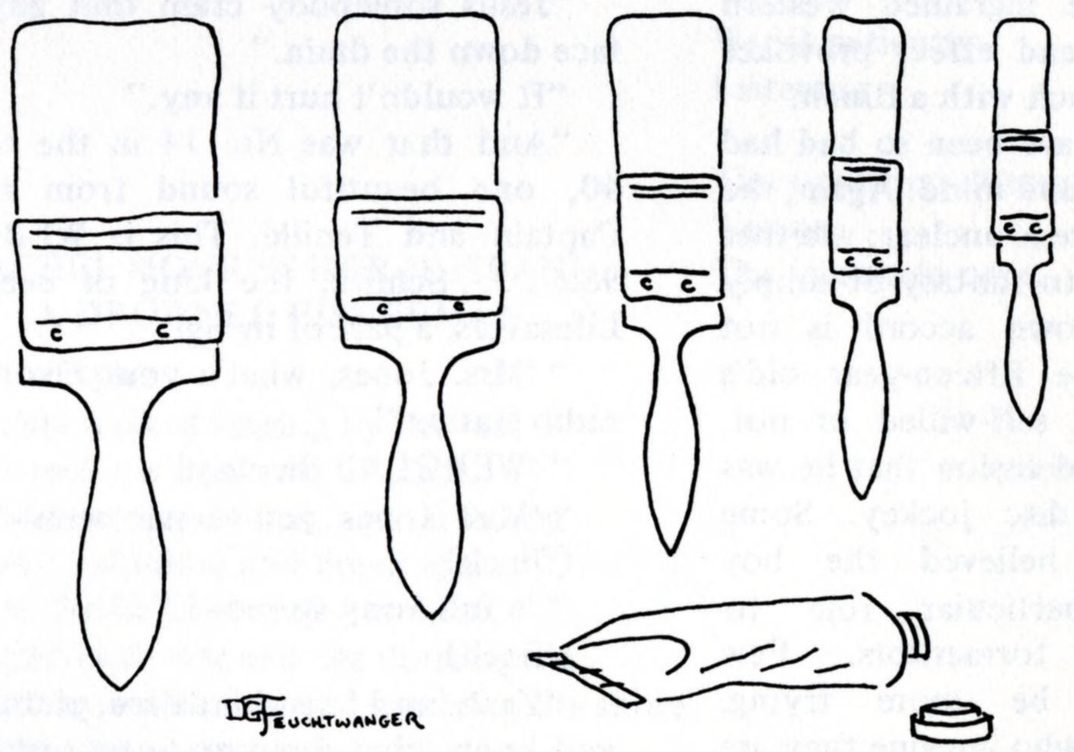
One last thing. My titles are: President of the Republic, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, Defender of the faith and God's Middle Finger on Earth. I'm High Muck-a-Muck, the No-Account of Monte Cristo, the Grand Basket of Flanders, the High Priest of the Effluent Society, Emperor of the Montmartre possessions in India, China and the Ottoman Empire. I'm the Bey of Prigs and the Dey of Reckoning.

And now, good night.

A Thanksgiving Poem

Mary Wallach

Victor Vegetarian
Could not stomach carrion,
But holidays must be enjoyed!
He made a turkey out of soy,
And loved it so, when he was through,
He changed his friends and family too;
Soybean sister, soybean dad
Soybean Gladys, soybean Chad,
What a feast our Victor had!



found poem

Alexis Adler

ya it was both

tom jeff tyranny on the left and tyranny on the left

well the only thing

90 college kids went down to cuba illegally

i was a student there

Noddy

Lionel Shriver

It was as if there were a great fist drawn back, poised on the verge of making Enrico's face unrecognizable, and the boy would catch glimpses of it each two or three minutes. A 'nervous tic' it was not, more like a flinch, a quick evasion of something dreadful, a reflexive withdrawal from demons. Pursued by these spectres, Enrico's chin would jerk suddenly towards his left shoulder, his forehead would buckle and knot, and his right collar bone would jut out as if broken. Often a bit of saliva flew from a parted lip and snatches of hair dangled distractedly out of place.

Perhaps Enrico's apparent fear of invisible punches was one reason he received so many real ones. "Noddy" had no need past his eighth year to concoct supernatural aggressors, and would have done well to concentrate on eluding ceaseless packs of painfully substantial bullies. Evidently children cannot tolerate a little boy who behaves as if he is being beaten when he is not; some ingrained western desire for cause and effect provokes them to pair a punch with a flinch.

It would not have been so bad had Enrico been of sound mind. Again, the causal relation here is unclear; whether he was "driven" to fantasy or simply walked on his own accord is not determinable. The fifteen-year old's second affliction, self-willed or not, was a consuming delusion that he was a number one disc jockey. Some relatives firmly believed the boy adopted this particular role to vituperate his tormentors. Few ailments could be more trying. Autistic children who imagine they are butterflies or hummingbirds are difficult, but at least they live quietly enough in their corners, buzzing or fluttering or drawing small animals on the carpet. Enrico neither buzzed nor fluttered, but broadcasted, deafeningly, blaring advertisements for deodorant soaps and pimple cream, blasting atonal renditions of the top ten.

This combination proved disconcerting even to potentially sympathetic adults. "I'm not going to hurt you" rang like a litany in Enrico's presence as he twitched, flicked and jerked out of the way of undelivered punches; yet after the boy had repeated the 7:00 news in increasing volume for the fifth time the most patient people *did* want to hurt him—stuff his left shoulder in the mouth it seemed so drawn to, anything, just to stop the drool and the drivel, the ugly drone of a radio that could not be tuned out.

"It's two—two—TWO mints in one . . . "

By all rights he should have had the sympathy he deserved, but his demeanor was hard to tolerate. Young men with twitches, stutters or wheelchairs become shy, apologetic and retiring, terrified of being spotlighted. And this, above all, Enrico was not: disc jockeys are not. Why not a butterfly? A hummingbird? "God," his mother would wonder, "why can't you be a door knob or a chair?"

Enrico sat in the shallow end of the pool, up to his neck in water, and with each twitch his chin splashed a film of chlorine over his face, and WERO gurgled a moment.

"I love ya, love love love ya, baby I love ya . . . "

"Jesus somebody cram that guy's face down the drain."

"It wouldn't hurt it any."

"And that was No. 14 in the top 40, one beautiful sound from the Captain and Tenille. This is WERO, 98.6 . . . . Schlitz, the king of beers. Lifesavers, a part of living!

" 'Mrs. Jones, what's your favorite radio station?'

" 'WERO! All the way!'

" 'Mrs. Jones you've just won—' "

(flinch)

" 'a full Sony stereo—' "

(flinch)

"Yeah, and I can kinda see, picture, you know, that drain grate set real far back in his face . . . Hey, Noddy, you thirsty?"

Even through the din of diving and cries of "Look, Mom!" his station could be heard, broadcast in a high-pitched monotone. Snatches of the non-stop dialogue could be caught even underwater, and children coming up for air would cringe as Enrico began a new song.

" ' 'Disco . . . Disco duck . . . Disco . . . Disco duck . . . Do the hustle!' "

"Greta, those boys are being awfully mean to the big one in the shallow end." (WERO gurgled more noticeably as a team of irate listeners barraged its disc jockey with a spontaneous deluge.) "Should someone tell a lifeguard?"

"Oh, *that* boy. If some of these children manage to keep him quiet with a little splashing it's all right with me."

"That loud kid you were complaining about? The one-man radio? That's him. I swear I've been about to leave for the past few minutes because of him."

"I suppose it's all right. There must be a thousand people here—they won't try anything serious."

There were a thousand people there. All were bombarded with the broadcast, that shrill continuous barrage at full volume. Like a Brillo pad Enrico's voice tore at the nerves of his audience, wearing down the protective layer of compassion that kinder people wear about. The meager sympathy of the crowd was systematically ground away. A thousand individuals became one entity, pressing fingernails into their palms, wearing down their tooth enamel with just-contained fury, doing isometrics and squeezing tightly wrinkled towels in their fists.

Only the splashing stopped it. Only water drenched the circuits, quenched the tubes, shorted out the mechanism—water, and the intermittent flinches. A poolful yearned to make those flinches real.

"Take a mouthful of this, you big-mouthed bastard."

"Still thirsty, Noddy? You keep talkin', I keep thinkin' you want more water."

" 'Mrs. Smith, what's your favorite radio station?' "

"Someone shove his face up his asshole, where it belongs."

" 'WERO, you bet!' "

(flinch)

"It's a rainstorm!"

"Hurricane WERO! Drink up you son of a—"

" 'You've just won . . . ' "

"You're all wet, sucker—"

" ' . . . a three week Hawaiian vacation—' "

(flinch)

And a thousand people splashed him in the face, stung his eyes red with chlorine, filled his nose and tireless mouth with water. Only three boys

did it—but a thousand people, clenched and frayed uncivil, watched and condoned, would have thrown water had he been within their grasp.

"Goddamn, he's still talking."

" 'Love ya, love ya baby . . . ' "

"I do believe he ain't had enough."

"Shut up, fucker."

"Shove his head under so he can get a *good* drink." So one of the crowd's emissaries grabbed Enrico's hair and plunged his head soundly below the surface. The broadcast stopped. Diving stopped. Swimmers doing laps paused to take in the silence.

"You gonna keep him under, Cob?"

"You wanna hear more WERO? Why should I let him go?"

(flinch)

The flinches had finally found their cause. The water heaved on the surface, as if to signal the presence of small fish, churning nauseatingly as Cob's hand failed to release its catch.

"Sher is quiet here, Cob. All of a sudden."

"God, yes."

"Gonna let him up, Cob?"

"Maybe. Maybe not. You miss your regular station or something?"

"And why do we have to deal with the crazies?" thought the watching thousand. "God, the normal people are bad enough—with heart conditions and psoriasis, special diets and stutters, bankruptcies and post-nasal drip. Why the crazies? Why expect us to take them after a rush-hour subway ride?"

"It's been a long time, Cob."

(flinch)

"He's still kickin."

"It's *mighty* quiet, Cob."

"Blessed quiet."

"Yeah . . . I kinda like it . . . quiet."

Editor's Note: *This story is based upon a true incident which took place in London in August 1976. Not one of the thousand at the pool sought to prevent the murder, or came forward as a witness afterward.*

LISTEN

Serge Gavronsky

Paris in the thirties
The portraits life-size are speaking
Their beards fill the living space

You eye my crib
Great Russian overcoat
Hold your hands the snow burned them
In the confines of a closed village
In Siberia

I too hold you on consignment
Implacable I hear you breathe

Is it true you made a cellar of old newspapers
Is it true you read Tolstoy those years of exile
To prisoners who could not read their native tongue

Is it true

RACHEL MOURNS HER HUSBAND, A DROWNED FISHERMAN

John Taylor

Rachel walked singing by the sea;
The reckless tidal roar at night,
Shuddering and breaking and falling
Back to shudder and break again,
Gave the lie of love to her voice,
Gulled in clouds and the dingling sea
And the wash flung like hands on the shore.
Foam soaked grey green about her feet,
Filled the cupping tread of heel and toe;
Though she sang out of love—her voice
Never gathered the sullen sea, nor giddy
With grief and blame ran the sculled sand
Down—waves luminous and as a choral round
Shouldering her song, gave over the lie.
Hurrah for the tide, buckled by stars!
And love like bodies furling
And unfurling in the moon tumbled sea,
Wilder than any baubled wave or the tug
And panic undertow, Hurrah!
Rachel walked singing and the spittle-
Driven mouth of tide and wavering surf
Sucked her feet, cried a lie in her hair,
And like forgiving, pulled her voice into the sea.

UNTITLED

Serge Gavronsky

In this trajectory
For an instant
We are placed on this island

We sit at tea
Like some porcelain group
Someone plays Chopin
Someone stands and turns the pages

We sit patiently
Listening

The sun filters through
We are
The fortunate ones.

Bb6 Am7 Bb6 Bb6 Am7

when you

Am7

cy, you got lots o' friends,

mf

Gm6 Gm7 Gmaj7

she feels so sad. Wants the world to

Cmaj7 G F E

know just what the blues is all a - bout.

Bbmaj7 D7