

The Festival Express

The first
Trans-Canadian
R & R Railroad

by Buddy Cage



My Dad worked for the Canadian National Railway for 40 odd years. He rose to the gravely responsible position of Yardmaster. He has the peptic ulcers to prove it. The job could be compared to that of an air traffic controller. He would take trains coming into his yard, disassemble them, have each car checked for destination, and then re-assemble them into their proper eastbound or westbound packages. No mean feat. Certainly on a day to day basis, fewer human lives at stake, but an error in judgement could be grievously expensive and even near catastrophic. As in the case of a derailment in Mississauga, Ontario about three years ago where some 250,000 persons were evacuated from their homes. The derailment caused the explosion of two liquid propane tanker cars and the potential melt down of one filled with chlorine gas. The person responsible for this rather unfortunate set of circumstances was a Yardmaster. He had put the three tanker cars next to each other instead of spacing them safely with a dozen or so harmless flats or box cars. The blockhead!

Trains carry highly toxic, explosive, corrosive and other weird, volatile and dangerous materials that are restricted by law from being transported by any other popular methods. Such a train was assembled in July, 1970. The railroad's waybill indicated that the commodity was "Entertainers," the American Federation of Musicians knew it officially, as the "Festival Express." We, the cargo, had a few other affectionate, unprintable epithets for it.

Two wealthy Canadian entrepreneurs, Thor Eaton and John Bassett carried off an adventure. A rock n'roll adventure with unusual trappings. They had leased an entire railroad passenger train to carry a virtual cornucopia of demented and very talented minstrels from Montreal to Toronto to Winnipeg to Calgary to Vancouver. Across Canada with grand style! Trains can be the best possible way to travel, if it's the right train. This was!

Amtrak, to the old-timer, is a profanity. It's the microwave version. The only comparison with

the authentic old trains is that they run on the same tracks, but shouldn't. The old trainman knows. The traditional passenger trains have class, style, real kitchens with real chefs. The railroad that carried us was the Canadian Pacific, an ultra-conservative Canadian firm and it takes a kicked-back soul to appreciate it. Airplanes are great at 30,000 ft., and ocean liners offer no view really but endless sea and the occasional port.

I was born in Canada as were Ian and Sylvia Tyson, the members of the Band (Danko, Robertson, Hudson, Manuel), with the exception of Levon, two members of Janis' Full Tilt Boogie Band (Ricky Bell and John Till.) I wouldn't use any of the aforementioned as sterling examples of Canadian Conservatism, but as a rule the country operates with a far less wide open attitude than does the U.S. I've heard Canadians described as English folks dressed in American clothes. Don't use that comparison on a Canadian nationalist, he'll probably throw an empty beer bottle your way. Never, a full one, beer in Canada is sacred.

The idea of a train odyssey reflects the Canadian ideal of good manners, a sense of order, decency, neatness, of environmental appreciation—peace. A time to stop and smell the Dogwoods, trilliums. Fleurs des lis, and Douglas Firs. I wax poetic at the mere thought. When scores of musical maniacs are thrown together with the "old guard," we might anticipate friction. That train crew, with my experience, qualifies as the "old guard." Remember this was 1970 and people like us were considered radicals by the establishment. No joke.

The star diplomat on board was Janis Joplin. My God, she was persuasive. She went up to the engine and boogied with the engineer, smoked a joint with the straight, old bugger, demanded that he slow the train down—make it last a little longer—he did. She had the whole crew rockin'. Thinking back on my Dad and his railroad cronies, I was amazed. The crew had such a good time from Montreal to Winnipeg, so much so, that they tried to 'sign on' for the rest of the tour. Unfortunately, they

were prevented from staying on by virtue of their own union regulations. A new crew was assigned in Winnipeg and Janis had no alternative but to initiate the 'new guys'.

At the time I was working with Ian and Sylvia Tyson, the finest folk duo to come out of Canada. Our own personal tour schedule kept us from joining the passenger list from Montreal to Toronto to Winnipeg. In retrospect, I know I had missed a great deal. In any event we played the Festival concert at a football stadium in Toronto, took off to play some other engagement whilst the train bounced along to Winnipeg. We flew into Winnipeg and took a cab to the railroad siding where the train was parked. Ian, Amos, Garrett (our guitar player) and I stumbled around the train, just checking it out. Sylvia was busy hauling her gear into their compartment. The train seemed deserted so when we found the first bar car we settled down for a beer.

Presently Janis joined us and during the next several rounds, filled us in on the segments we'd missed. From Montreal to Toronto is only 340 miles but the biggie had to be the trip from Toronto to Winnipeg coming in at 1,300 miles. Oh, boy!

Before going off to the stadium, I took the opportunity to check out my lodging. My cabin was about 4 feet by 7 feet, featuring a wonderful comfy sofa-seat, which faced forward. Opposite the chair was a hide-a-way sink and a head, mirror, A.C. outlet, picture window (with drapes), my own little world. A handle on the wall above the sofa-seat turned the entire wall down into a bed. Miniature luxury! A minor inconvenience was the use of the head after the bed was down, I had to get out into the aisle and let the bed back up. Nocturnal use of the head is the curse of the dedicated beer drinker.

People who travel constantly can appreciate the importance, yea, the necessity of having comfort and privacy in their living quarters. Small, seemingly unimportant details can have a dramatic effect. This little cubicle suited me to a Tee. If life, at any moment on the train, got too busy for me, I could retire to my cocoon, close

my door, open my window drapes and gaze privately at the Canadian Landscape.

After the days performance, a lot of us hit the bar car yakety-yak, yakety-yak. The most popular topic of conversation was about the amazing opportunity we all had been afforded in being able to fraternize with each other so casually. Road bands run into each other usually only when they're playing the same bill. And even then your schedules don't really permit any serious gooning-out together.

So, there we were sittin' around quoffing the local libation (Canadian beer comes in at 5% alcohol, kids) and telling each other lies and every hour or so our numbers were increased by the members of other bands returning from their performances. Now, this train was *not* moving. In fact, the only thing moving was the horseshit we were trading conversationally. Our departure was at seven the next morning.

I took leave of my colleagues and prepared to bed down. I was awakened by a visitor. It turned out to be this guy I knew from Toronto who had, with three other folks, driven his car to every gig. He'd been to the shows in Toronto and Winnipeg and I'd given him guest passes. He asked for tickets to the Calgary gig and I promised him he would have them. In appreciation, he tossed a bag of grass into my compartment and we said goodnight.

Next morning—movement—looking out my window, we're pulling away from Portage La Prairie. Relax! Sure would be neat if I had a joint to smoke. Hey! I scrambled around through my bed sheets for that stupid bag. Ah—here we are, here we have it! Just dandy—smoked one laying in bed. Check that scenery! Well, I'm feeling great—totally in command. Time to get ship-shape or whatever the hell the railroad equivalent is. Put away the bed, wash-up—yeah, looking good and feelin' soooo—fine! One fat joint left—might as well. Sittin' in my "smokin'-chair," stoned out of my skull with the Canadian Prairies movie running past my window. Simply outstanding! The click-clack of the train wheels on the track was hypnotically enhancing that beautiful, safe, insular feeling. Womb vibes.

After a couple of hours in the zone, I got the hungries. I thought I'd just nosey on down to the dining car for some breakfast. Easier said than done. Positively ripped. I made my way carefully down the aisle and then cautiously between the cars (Oh, Christ, this is the place where they eighty-six the nefarious types in mystery novels—Orient Express). The dining car—I made it. Nuts! It's packed to the tits with diners. Oh, God, I wish I hadn't left my little nest. But before I could turn around to make a hasty departure a loud, verbal order came my way at about 100 decibels. It was Janis. She'd noticed my predicament and was offering the seat opposite her. The only vacancy in the car.

"You must be starved man," she said. I nodded. It was all I could do. Hey, John, (her road manager), get this poor baby a drink—looks like he needs one! What're ya drinkin' man? "Screwdriver." "Hey, John, make it a double!" That good ol' gal saved my butt. Damn, she had presence.

She let on that it was all true about the first leg of the trip. Yeah, she got the engineer stoned, even had him agreeing that we'd never relinquish control of the train when the trip was over. If push came to shove with the C.P.R. tried to take their railroad train back we'd hi-jack the mother and drive it straight into the Pacific Ocean. In fact, everyone was talking up the idea of continuing this train tour throughout the

United States. Maybe a month or two. How grand!

By the afternoon, things aboard were pretty mellow and Garcia was playing some acoustic guitar in the box car. I really don't know who started it—might've been Danko—but someone started singing "Cane on this Brazas," the old Leadbelly tune. Before long, harmonies were added. Ian and Sylvia, Danko, Janis, Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett, Eric Anderson and Jerry on guitar. When things like this were happening, the film crew came out of the walls.

Did I forget to mention the constant filming of all this? The promoters intended to shoot the entire adventure, presumably for release in North America. To my knowledge it never made the theaters, but I do recall seeing some footage of it. I can't remember where.

A suggestion was made to set up two steel guitars, mine and Garcia's. We played around for a while and took note of the new counter rhythm being insinuated into our music by the motion of the train. Every note played on or about the fifth beat was jolted by the train wheels against the track separations. The beauty of it being that everyone in the jam was affected simultaneously, so that the overall effect created was a bizarre neo-time signature. Nobody had any power to prevent the metrical aberration, so as transmuters, we simply worked within it. It went something like this:

Dee-dee-dah-doo-BLAP! widdy-widdy-ZOTTRIPP! lah-dee-dum-dee-BLOPP! Shazza-skoo-de-RUPP! Innovative.

Late afternoon poured into evening, and I *do* mean poured. That is until the well ran dry. Our two Canadian promoters observed that, as we were approaching Saskatoon, Saskatchewan we would be saved. In that province, package stores stayed open 'til midnight and with a collective effort we could be bathing in the bubbly in no time at all. Dollars were tossed into the kitty and the train was stopped. Our booze crusaders took off on their misison. They returned

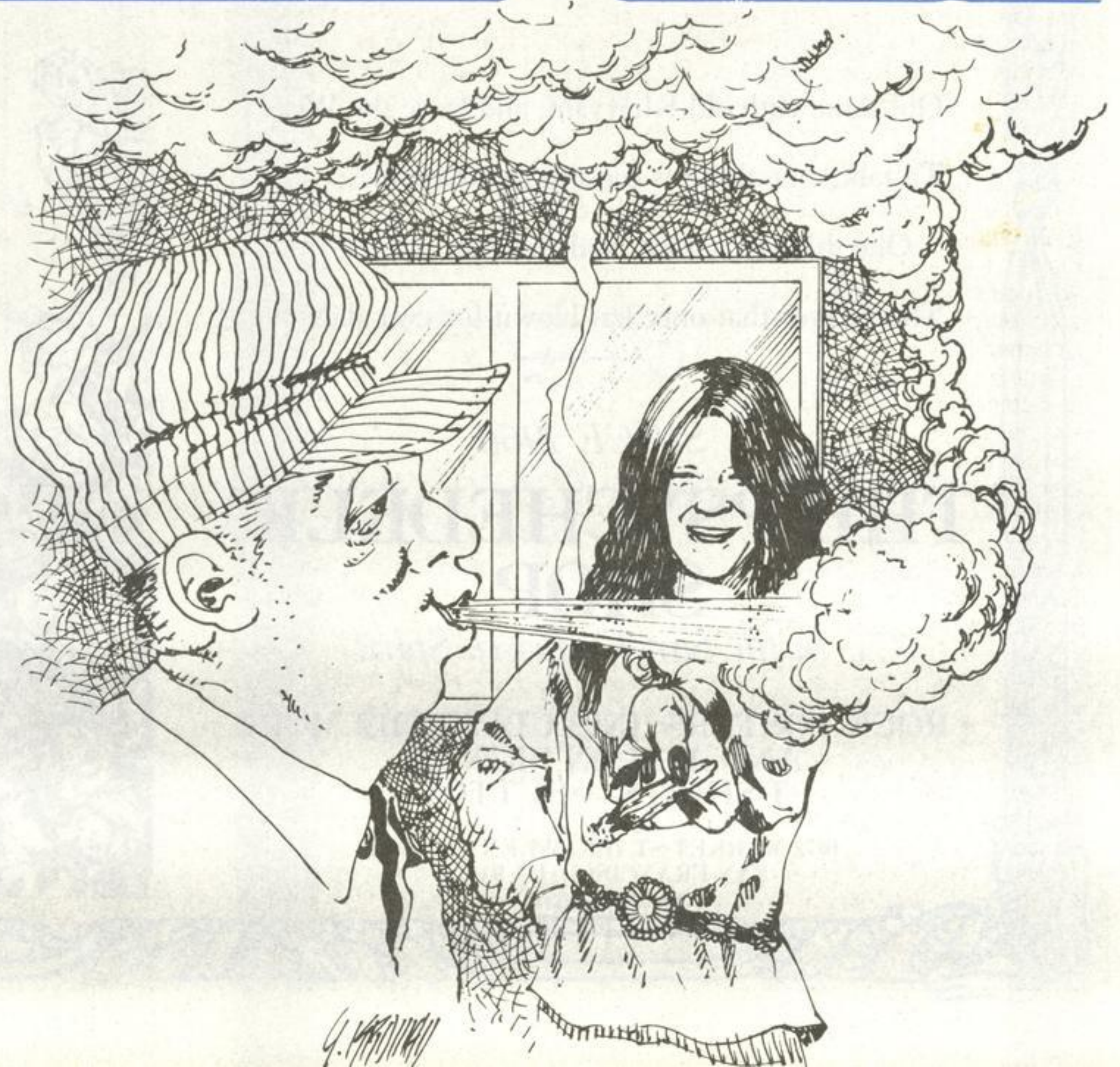
with a ton of beer and whiskey. But the Holy Grail of this pilgrimage was a mammoth bottle of Canadian Club, somewhere in the neighborhood of 133-1/2 ounces. It was a long way to Calgary. The train started to roll again and so did the party.

There's some confusion over how I got the N.R.P.S. gig. Some say the idea came from Garcia during this tour. Nelson told me that when he heard me play at the Toronto show he was convinced I was the guy. Both may be correct. But I know that there was more to it. Bob Weir's old lady, Frankie, took a personal interest and did her own lobbying. She gave me a lot of support during the first year of transition. Frankie went out of her way to make sure I felt accepted and important in my role, over and above Gar's reputation. Well, on the Festival Express, if there was a counterpart of Janis in helping that train move along, it was Frankie. I'm sure that everybody who met her felt the same. A natural catlyst with a huge heart.

News came that Calgary was going to be the last stop. The mayor of Vancouver in his infinite wisdom had cancelled our concert there. The prick. I guess it being 1970, he thought we might bring a whole world of trouble to his city. Avoid riots in the street, etc. Bummer was, we all missed the final leg of the journey, the one where Western Canada really gets spectacular! Lake Louise, the Rockies, forget it! His Honor, the mayor had done a real bad thing. We, on the train were miserable about it.

The Calgary concert was the only one I personally saw from start to finish and it was a monster. I saw it with my motorist friends from Toronto. We sat right in front of the stage just short of the security fence. This area was provided to give the entertainers their own frontal view of the concert.

Blues Image from Chicago "blue-blew" me away! Rick Derringer (I can't remember with what group) played his ass off. All the early acts were super. I'd played real early, around 11:00



a.m. or noon and just kicked back out front to watch and listen to the rest of the circus.

Sha-Na-Na was a different band then, not anywhere as commercial as they are now on television. Today, they entertain the kiddies but their early stuff was heavy. Even scary. The announcer introduced them, "Now, Ladies & Gentlemen, the epitome of refinement—Sha-na-na—watch 'em carefully—they're fast" Au contraire. It took them about 10 minutes to, one by one, assemble into playing position. A snail's pace. God, they were funny! Their guitar player was busted on some musical technicality by the leader of the band, and in defiance he spit in his face. You don't see that on T.V.

The Band, of course, playing like the Band, performed the stuff which would become standard. Buddy Guy, during a seemingly endless guitar solo, climbed the P.A. staging, like some 20-30 feet in the air. Mountain played Mississippi Queen, the Dead-Riders played their three-part set. First, the acoustic bluegrass set with Jerry on banjo and guitar, followed by an electric country set with steel and finished by a pure G.D. set. At the time I thought it was unusual for Kreutzmann, a rock n'roll drummer to be trying to settle down to a straight country—bluegrass thing. My error. He knew exactly what he was doing. Very tasty, Bill. I hadn't done my homework on Kreutzmann.

Janis and the Full Tilt Boogie Band closed the show around midnight. The band started by playing one of those R & B intras. Fast! You know, like the Otis Redding or James Brown thing, to introduce the star. About 96 bars worth Janis walked on nodding "howdy" to her band, took a pull on some Southern Comfort and WHAM! She exploded! One powerful chick for sure. She electrified about thirty-four thousand people for the next 9 minutes.

On the final number, Tyson cued me for the ride back to the hotel. I reminded him that I had my steel and would he give me a couple minutes to heave it into the trunk of the rental car. We were staying at a hotel in Calgary—no more train—so I was in no hurry. I was sitting in the rear seat with our drummer, N.D. Smart (his real name) and a Grateful Dead roadie, Sonny Heard, Ian and Sylvia were up front. A few peaceful miles passed going into town. At every stoplight we kept getting harassed by this carload of Calgary toughs. These young dudes were making rather obscene innuendos directed at Sylvia. Now, she could toss that shit off easily, but Ian is a real ass-kicker and I could tell he was getting hot.

I think everybody in our car intuitively knew what was going to happen next. Tyson held himself in check until we reached the hotel, so as to let Sylvia have immediate protection. I guess those young cowboys were just looking for a good ol' Saturday Night brawl but unfortunately for them, they had picked the wrong people to mess with. N.D. was a martial arts student and Sonny Heard was as big as a house. And, Ian—can be one rough dude—and how.

Now, normally, I'm no threat, but I had my mind on one of my guitar legs in the trunk. It can pack a wallop. Everything, after we pulled to the curb, went like a coordinated stunt in a Hollywood film. Sylvia jumped out and ran for the hotel—Tyson snapped off the ignition. I said, "Gimme the keys!" He tossed them over his shoulder, to me, into the rear seat. Ian, N.D. and Sonny were out of the car and then me. I had the trunk open in a matter of seconds, with one of my guitar legs in hand. You have to eyeball one of those legs to know how brutal they could be. I got a real good purchase on it, and

jumped into the fracas swinging. Too late—no cigar. It was all over. There were 3 bodies on the sidewalk and one in the gutter, cowboy hats laying around. Theirs, not ours.

Sylvia had called the police and with perfect timing they picked up the young dudes and hauled 'em away. I'm told that the Calgary City Jail is a notch below Yuma Prison. Just like a goddamned movie, a hell of a way to end the train tour—a good thing for them that they didn't get a good taste of my steel. "Just passin' through town, Sheriff. Thought I'd just stop long enough to settle the dust in my throat. Much obliged!"

Ian broke his hand, the other two caught a couple of bruises, if that—ME? Not a scratch! Where was that fuckin' film crew? Probably back at the site, shooting the equipment pack-up. They missed a piece of rock n' roll history that only a direct participant can experience. Such is video.

Next day in the hotel lobby groups were in the process of being checked out. Folks were in and out of the hotel bar saying goodbyes. Man, that's one tough job, saying goodbye. You just spent some of the happiest days together ever, and what can you say? Goodbye? Good Luck? Oh yeah, all of those—But, how about, I love you, and I'll miss you and that goddamned train. Let's do it again.

Note: As records of this event are unavailable, it is difficult to give a full account of the people that were present. We have spoken to several artists, and others who were in attendance were Seatrain with Peter Rowan, and Robert Hunter.

We have tried to contact the promoters of the Festival Express, but have, as yet, been unsuccessful. —ed.

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

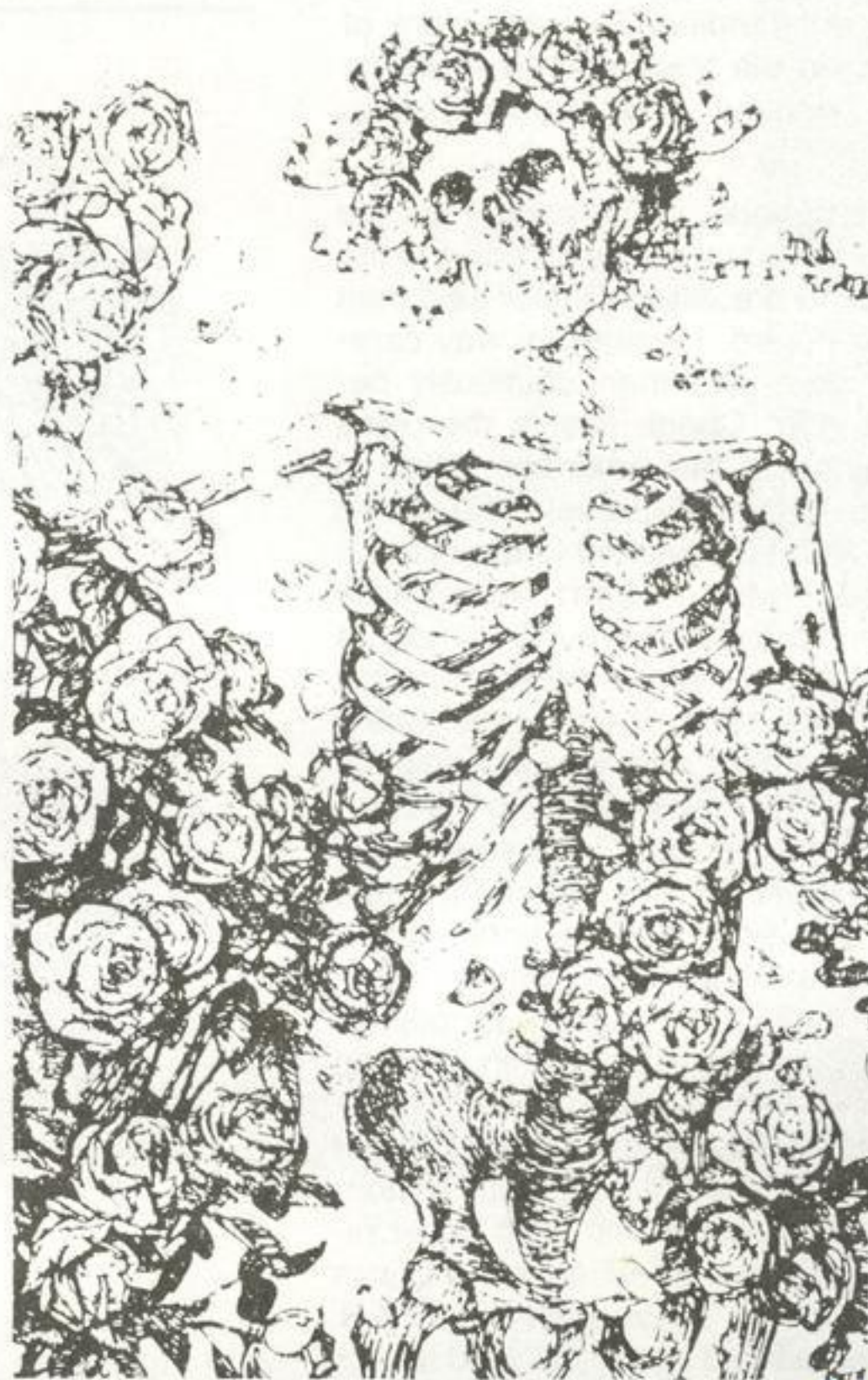
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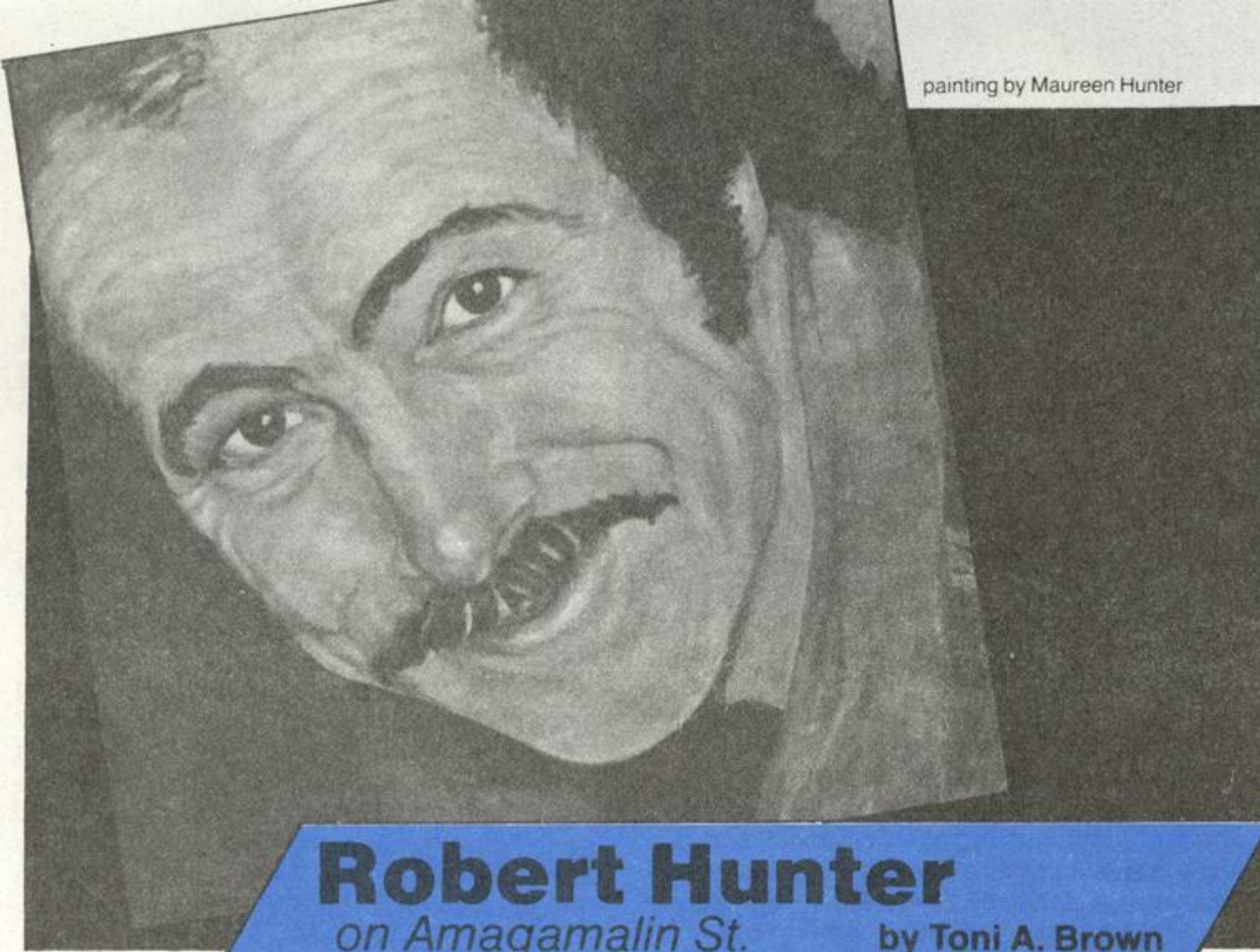
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Robert Hunter

on Amagamalin St.

by Toni A. Brown

"Out of thirteen people who come here
twenty six stay
Half of them haunt the street the rest hide
away

They call me the Rambling Ghost
It's my pleasure to be your host
You buy the bottle I'll drink a toast
to the kind of people you meet on
Amagamalin Street

trying to beat the heat
trying to make ends meet"

Robert Hunter Amagamalin St.

Let my inspiration flow . . .

Just an ordinary little yellow house—on the
outside. But inside . . . Seeing him robed,
fresh from his shower, so mortal a man. Yet his
immortality is destined through volumes of
prose, neatly typed and bound. And in his
songs: meaningful declarations, latent impli-
cations, words to live by—or die by . . . words
forever.

Robert Hunter is a family man, although I
somehow can't picture him making a barbe-
que. We were invited to that yellow house, just
north of San Francisco. It was a brand new
Spring morning and the crisp air sang of new
things coming alive. Robert and his beautiful
wife, Maureen, laid in a brunch reminiscent of
New York (lox and bagels), in an effort to make
us feel quite at home.

We talked and rambled on so many sub-
jects, but the most interesting and important
topic was Hunter's upcoming album release,
Amagamalin St.

Hunter: I have a new album, called Amaga-
malin Street, which will be out by the end of
April. I'm going into the studio to record part
two. I'm working out the last touches on the
arrangements.

Relix: Who are you playing with on this new
release?

Hunter: I have a fellow called Vaclov Berosini
on bass, and Roy Blumenfeld from the Blues
Project is playing drums. John Cipollina is
doing all the electric guitar work, and I play
acoustic guitar and a bit of harp.

Relix: Sounds like a rock album.

Hunter: I guess you'd call it that. It's a story.
The first song on the first side is about 16
minutes long. It's the entire side. It's called
"Roseanne," and it's a story of a fellow who

sweet-talks a girl into going across the country
with him, and leads her into the life of, first, a
fortune-telling gypsy, degenerating into a
prostitution scene. The guy is charming, and
this, I think, comes across on the record. It's the
kind of a charm a pimp sort of personality has to
have in order to charm somebody to do what he
wants done.

The second side shows, after he leaves her
on the west coast, some of the attitudes, the
things that have happened in his life leading to
his degeneration and inevitable fall in the last
song, "Rambling Ghost."

The second record deals with a friend of his
who figures prominently in the first part. The
fellow in the first record is named Chet, and the
whole story is his story, mostly in present tense,
and his reminiscences. The second record
examines some of these same characters and
situations from the point of view of a friend of
his, Murphy, who is an ethical type. You will see
a different side of Chet from his viewpoint. I
think it's the first rock 'n' roll recorded novel—
Amagamalin Street.

Relix: Do you plan to have Cipollina and the
same musicians on the next record?

Hunter: There will be some shifting of person-
nel to get different flavors. I'm very pleased with
what John Cipollina has done on the first. He's
given me some of his signature guitar playing.
It's pretty tough rockin'.

It's a clean record. I do feel that it washes
everything I've ever done in my spotty record-
ing past right down the steps, the first record
I've done that I think I'm pleased with in all
respects. It came out the way I planned it.
Nothing's ever done that before.

Relix: But at one point you wanted to go into
the studio and record an acoustic album, so
how can you say it came out the way you
planned it?

Hunter: Because I heard all of this real big in
my head. I was going to do it all with, acoustic
guitar and slight overdubbing, but it became
quickly apparent that in order to capture my
fantasy, solo guitar and voice were not enough.

The musicians were pleased. They felt they
were playing live, and I think the record reflects
it.

Relix: Sounds like you've been doing a lot of
work . . .

Hunter: I thrive on a lot of work. And I have not

had the opportunity to do a lot of work in many
years, except sitting home writing my books
and my poems.

Relix: Is anything special motivating you now
that was lacking before?

Hunter: There comes a time in your life when
you realize that you are at your prime, and if
you don't do it now, the statement that you feel
you have in you is not going to get done.

Relix: Do you intend to do anything with the
poems you've written, like turn them into songs,
or give them to other musicians, or publish
them in any way?

Hunter: No, because these suites that I've writ-
ten make Terrapin look like a midget, length-
wise. They run variously thirty, forty, fifty pages.
They're too long to consider recording. Some of
them are lyric in essence, although not all, by
any means. In writing what I consider my more
serious works, I haven't struck for lyricism. I've
been using words in a different way, but sud-
denly, I felt like working lyrically again. The
"Amagamalin Suite" is what's coming out of
that.

Relix: Any chance of publishing any of your
suites?

Hunter: Oh, I assume I will. I may publish all
the suites together. I have about half a dozen,
which would make a fat little book, at some
point.

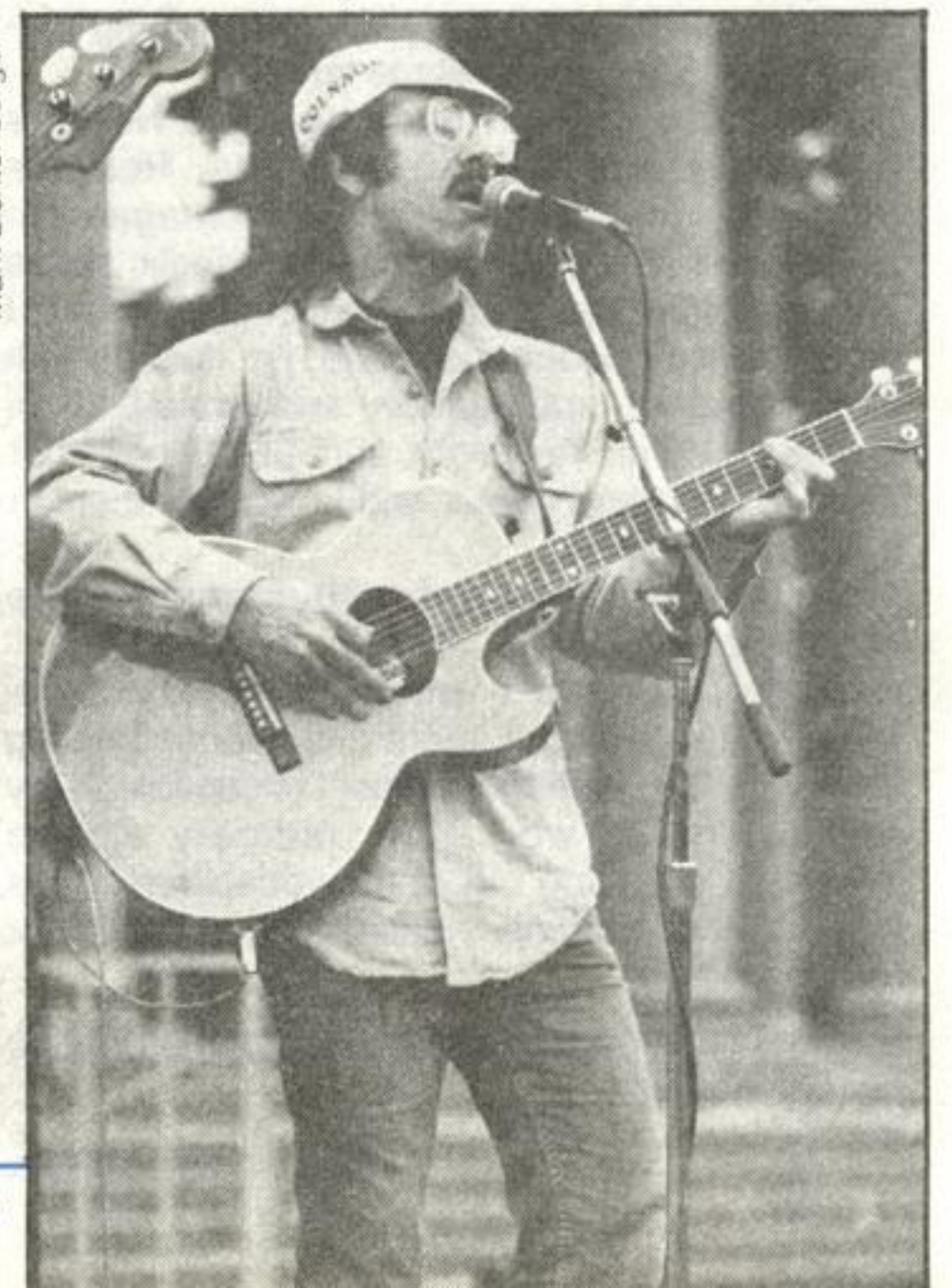
Relix: You mentioned "Terrapin Station." Is
there more to it than it being a song?

Hunter: I do have the complete "Terrapin
Suite." I must disclaim and repudiate the ver-
sion on Jack O' Roses, because I had lost the
original "Terrapin." The complete thing that I
gave to the Dead has been lost for several
years, so in doing the Jack O' Roses album, I
tried to reconstruct what I could but it took a
very different direction, because I had lost
many of my initial ideas. I finally found it in one
of my trunks while I was going through them
last year. I took it out and finished it up.

Relix: What were some of the differences
between the Jack O' Roses version and the
original version?

Hunter: Well, the original version was written in
one breath. From beginning to end it ran about
four or five typed pages, maybe six. Failing to
remember what I had done, I went off on some
tangents, a whole change of direction. The new
parts on Jack O' Roses are appropriately part
of "Terrapin," but as for them being "Terrapin,
Part II" as I originally envisioned it, no. It's off in
the bushes somewhere. I don't expect anyone
else is ever going to record the finished work. I

Mark Lichtenberger





Maureen & Robert Hunter

may publish it sometime, because I'm pleased with it.

Relix: What about some of the other things that you've done?

Hunter: *Alligator Moon* has given me so much trouble. I've rewritten it dozens of times. I'm not satisfied with the version I recorded of it or the lyrics. I kept missing it. It wasn't what I was driving at. I think maybe the concept of *Alligator Moon* was too vague in my mind. It's a kind of a burnt sienna wash. What I managed to get from it is only texture and no solidity. Phantasmal. It keeps flying away from me. I think it may be a couple of years before I get *Alligator Moon* written the way it's supposed to be, and I'll know it, because I know what I want in that song, or that suite. But in the mean time, I keep rewriting it and putting it away, looking at it, and no, that wasn't quite what I wanted or had in mind.

Relix: *Alligator Moon*, was that the concept for the record that was recorded but never released?

Hunter: That was a second or third runthrough, of a lyrical idea that I have for *Alligator Moon*. It sings well, it sounds good, but basically it's ephemeral. There's nothing to get your teeth into. It's one of these concepts that a writer or painter will get, you can't say what it is because what you have written, in the end, is what it is. It's something you find out later. And I'm a real severe critic of my work. I'll put it away for a while. I'll look at it. If I didn't get it, I'll either scrap it or rewrite. I have several projects that I've been working on for years.

Relix: Did you ever perform *Alligator Moon*?

Hunter: Comfort performed it often. There's undoubtedly dozens of taped versions of it circulating around, most of which are probably livelier than the unreleased recorded version.

Relix: Is there any work that you're doing currently, just songs of average length?

Hunter: A couple of tunes for Dave Nelson's new band with Billy Kreutzmann, Nelson's tunes are in a simpler pocket. *Amagamalin Street* isn't all that far out. No psychedelic space pilot stuff in there. It's the way people talk, and I think the way people do relate. I'm dealing with the theme of subjugation and brutalization, themes I think are very serious, things that need to be talked about, and I can't say them in a cosmetized way.

Relix: Your language is becoming more straightforward.

Hunter: The more I write, the more straightforward it's getting. I spent this year examining language and writing the best I'm capable in my strictly written work. The radically elusive image, is dropping out of my vocabulary. Let's talk about something. I was talking about space ten years ago.

Relix: The *Amagamalin Street* albums are laid out like novels.

Hunter: I hope the whole *Amagamalin Street*, will be a real place when I'm done with it.

Relix: And you'll be releasing the albums on Relix Records. How do you like working with a small, independent label?

Hunter: For the way I like to work, an independent label is ideal. My investment is in my work, not in promoting my image, and the work must speak for itself. Anything to do with a major record label promotion won't mesh with my writing. I think independent distribution can. Plus, I can write my own ticket here. These two albums are a huge textural project. If I was going to go to Killer Records, they'd want to know which were the potential hits, and can the kids dance to it. I don't deal on that level.

Relix: How are the Dinosaurs doing?

Hunter: The Dinosaurs are going to put out an album within the next five years.

Relix: Does the band have any new songs?

Hunter: Well, we do mostly original Dinosaur tunes. Somehow the word got out that we draw from old individual band repertoires, which is not exactly the case. I do a version of "Fire On The Mountain" with the band, which is kind of a communal tune. The Dead do it and Mickey Hart has done it, and other people did it before it came out as a Dead tune. Barry (Melton) does "Please Don't Drop That H-Bomb On Me," and Peter (Albin) does "Blind Man Stood On The Wing And Cried," and John does "Mona." But

except for the very fact of our existence and who we are, other than that, musically we don't trade much on the parent band stuff.

Relix: Are you hoping to do a national tour with the Dinosaurs?

Hunter: When people will pay us what we're worth, we'll go on out. You know, it's a very conservative promoter's market, on the east coast. The offers we've had have not amused us. We will continue playing locally, which is to say, the west coast, until promoters notice there's a demand for us out there, which there is, and agree to pay us what this band is worth. I can't afford personally to finance a band tour. It's a question of faith at this point, for the promoters, that we will draw, and they don't have that. That's fine. We can wait forever. We've got time.

With the interview concluded, we went on with the day. Hunter evoked our enthusiasm by reading to us from some of his unpublished work. His resonant baritone voice brought his words to life, as we sat spellbound, woven in story. Notably, we were treated to an R-rated version of *Raggedy Remus* which was so humorously clever that it lightened the intensity of the imagery. The man is a master story teller. Shakespeare, move over!

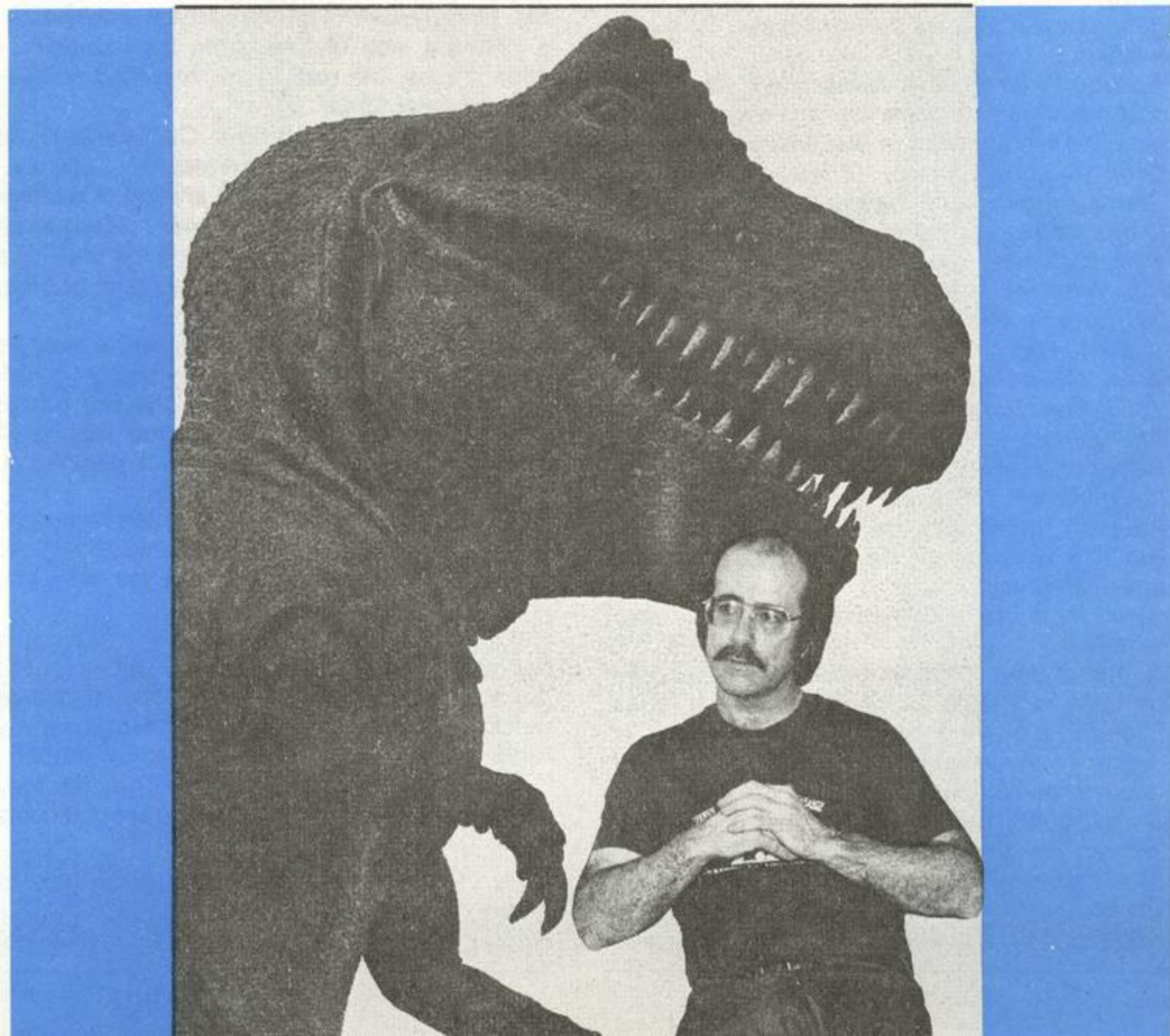
The day came to a close, but the animated images of Robert Hunter's work had just truly come to life.

As for *Amagamalin St.*, it is a finely paced, up-tempo rock album. It presents Hunter in a different light than any past recordings have. The lyrics admit cruelty, violence and harsh reality. Hunter's passion is showing here. He creates a smooth narrative, accentuating the fine lyrics, rendering them fully audible.

John Cipollina's guitar work is purely magic. His style effectively enhances the flighty, illustrated characters dealt with in the story.

The recording of *Amagamalin St.* will be released soon. Be sure to watch RELIX MAGAZINE for availability.

(Note: Part II of *Amagamalin St.* will feature Jorma Kaukonen on electric guitar.)



Robert Hunter by Amy Bursten
Dino by L.D. Kippel