

RELIX

Vol.4

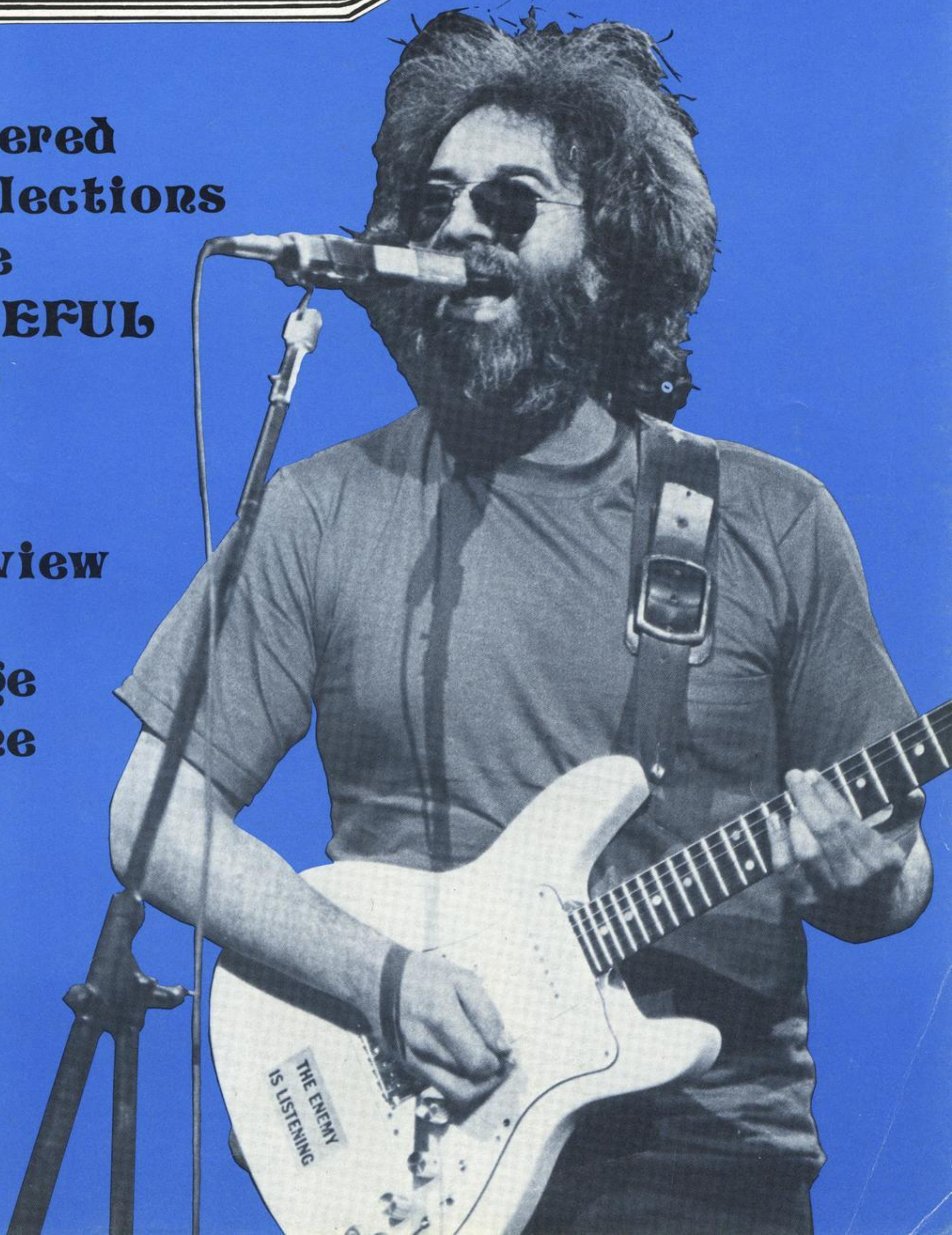
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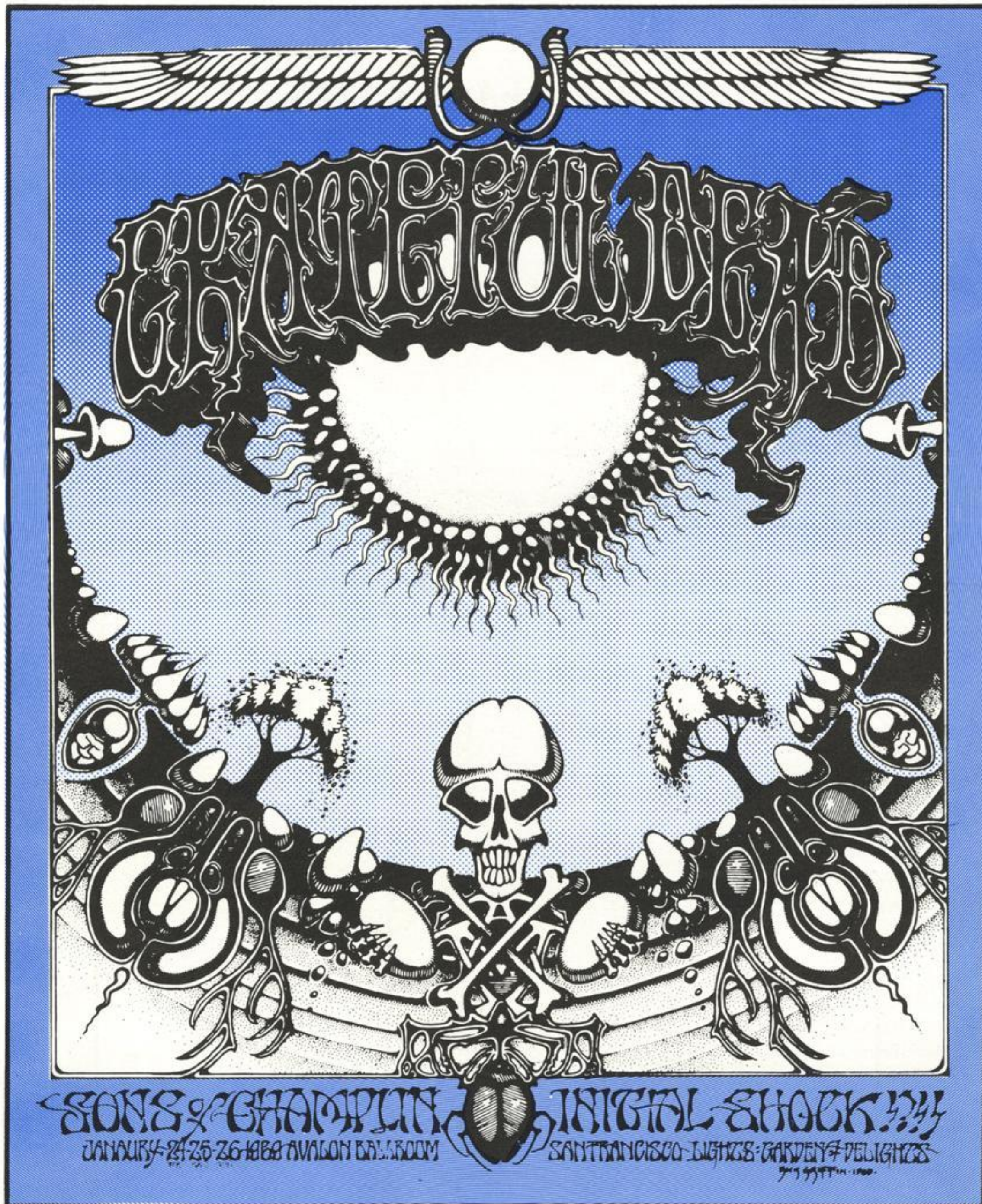
No.4

July-Aug.

Scattered
Recollections
of the
GRATEFUL
DEAD
Tour

Interview
with
George
Frayne





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RELIX

Vol. 4 No. 4 Summer 1977

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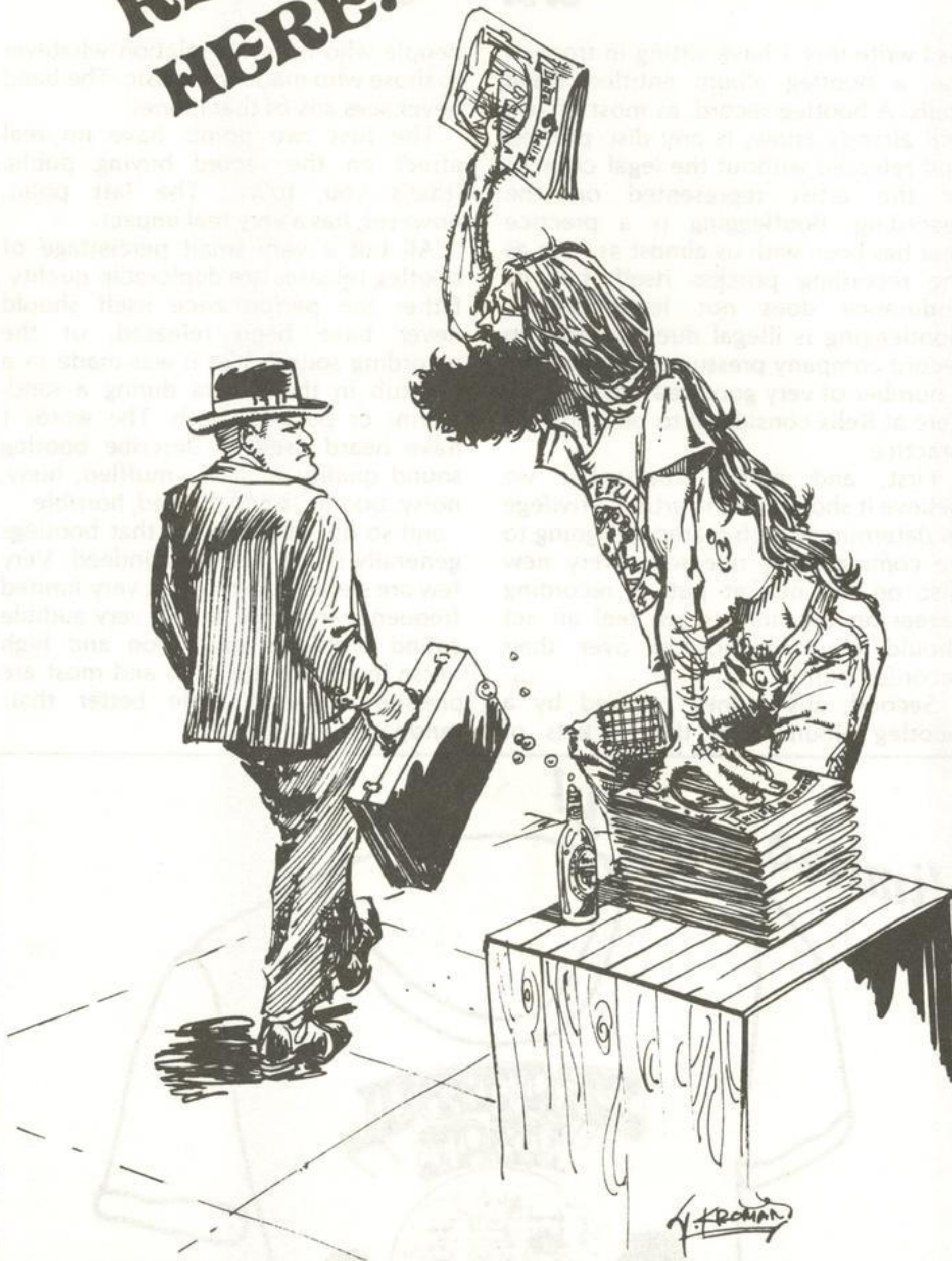
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Editorial statement on bootlegging

As I write this, I have sitting in front of me, a bootleg album entitled **Dead Relix**. A bootleg record, as most of you will already know, is any disc pressed and released without the legal consent of the artist represented on the recording. Bootlegging is a practice that has been with us almost as long as the recording process itself, but its endurance does not legitimize it. Bootlegging is illegal due primarily to record company pressure, but there are a number of very good reasons why we here at Relix consider it to be a shoddy practice.

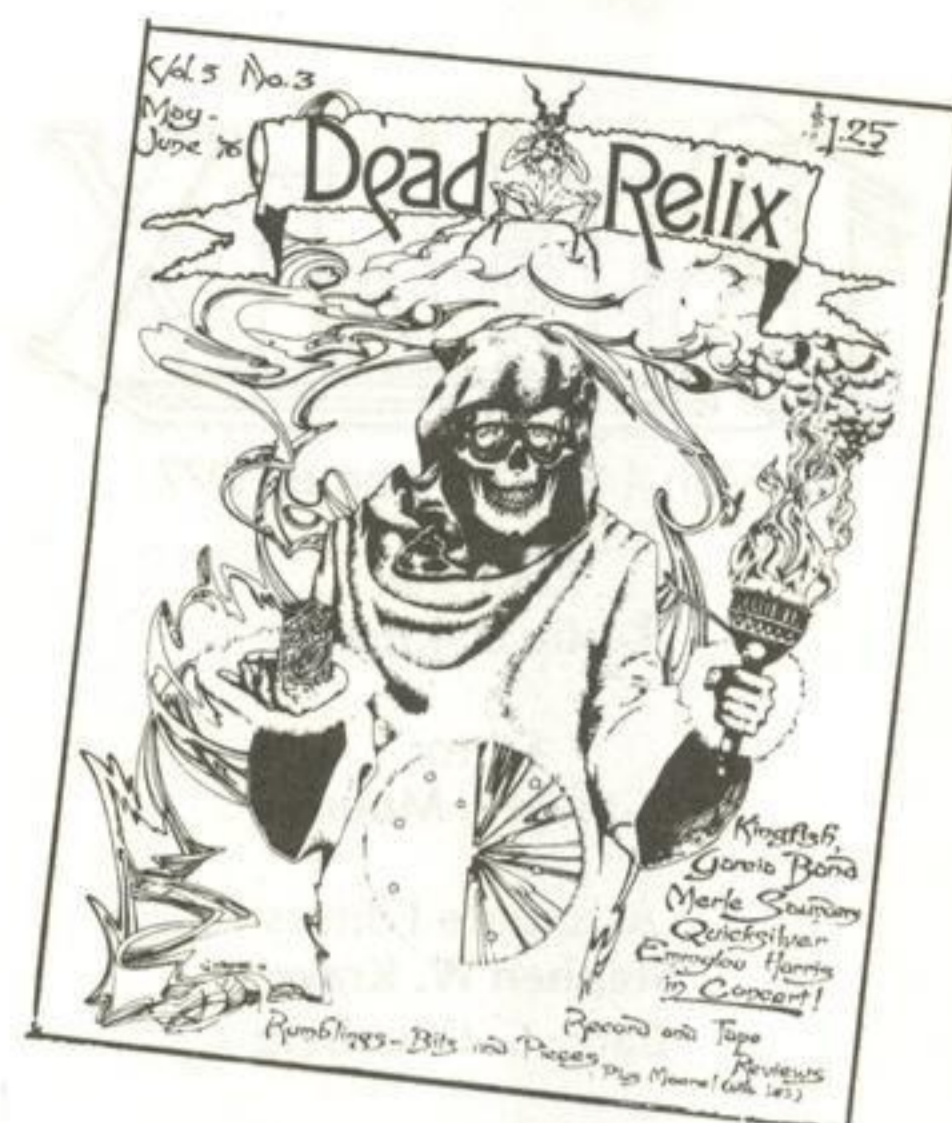
First, and most importantly, we believe it should be the artist's privilege to determine which material is going to be commercially released. Every new disc on the market puts a recording career on the line, so we feel an act should maintain control over their recorded output.

Second, any money realized by a bootleg album lines the pockets of

people who have no relation whatever to those who made the music. The band never sees any of that money.

The first two points have no real affect on the record buying public (that's you, folks). The last point, however, has a very real impact.

All but a very small percentage of bootleg releases are deplorable quality. Either the performance itself should never have been released, or the recording sounds like it was made in a bathtub in the Sahara during a sandstorm: or possibly both. The words I have heard used to describe bootleg sound quality include: muffled, hissy, noisy, boomy, tinny, fucked, horrible . . . and so on. The point is that bootlegs generally sound very bad indeed. Very few are stereo, most have a very limited frequency response and/or very audible sound problems; distortion and high noise levels are the rule; and most are pressed on vinyl little better than sandpaper.



In summary, we consider bootlegging a muchfucked up practice. We would never consider undertaking it, and we most sincerely recommend that everybody else forget about it too.

On the other hand, we enthusiastically support the recording and free exchange of live concerts. This rips nobody off, and can only help stimulate interest in an artist's regular releases, by getting new material more widely heard. One freak with a quality portable tape recorder and microphones, as well as a second deck for copying, can keep himself and all his friends supplied with live tapes. Using the right equipment, it is possible to make amazingly good tapes. The approach to take then is to copy freely, but not to sell. We have been advocating this for years. We believe that, if everybody had a couple of decent tape recorders, the bootlegging problem would vanish for good. Because of our attitude toward this, some people seem to think we are pushing bootlegs. Not so.

Right now I'm looking at that bootleg, and it has our name on it. The cover sheet for this record is lifted from the cover art for our vol. 3 #3 issue, and there are some cover blurbs, also lifted from our magazine. Though we have nothing to do with this disc, naturally we will get the blame. This pisses me off mightily. We revile bootlegs and bootleggers, and here some asshole is taking things from our magazine and putting them on the cover of his shitty product. When we track down the people responsible for this, we will cheerfully do our best to help put them out of business. In this case, we have been ripped off as well as the Grateful Dead.

We have two favors to ask you, our readers. First, that you not buy records of this type; and second, if you find any record stores outside New York City selling this disc, please let us know about it. Bootlegging is a game that rips off everybody but bootleggers, and we would really like to see it stopped.

... Jerry Moore — Editor.

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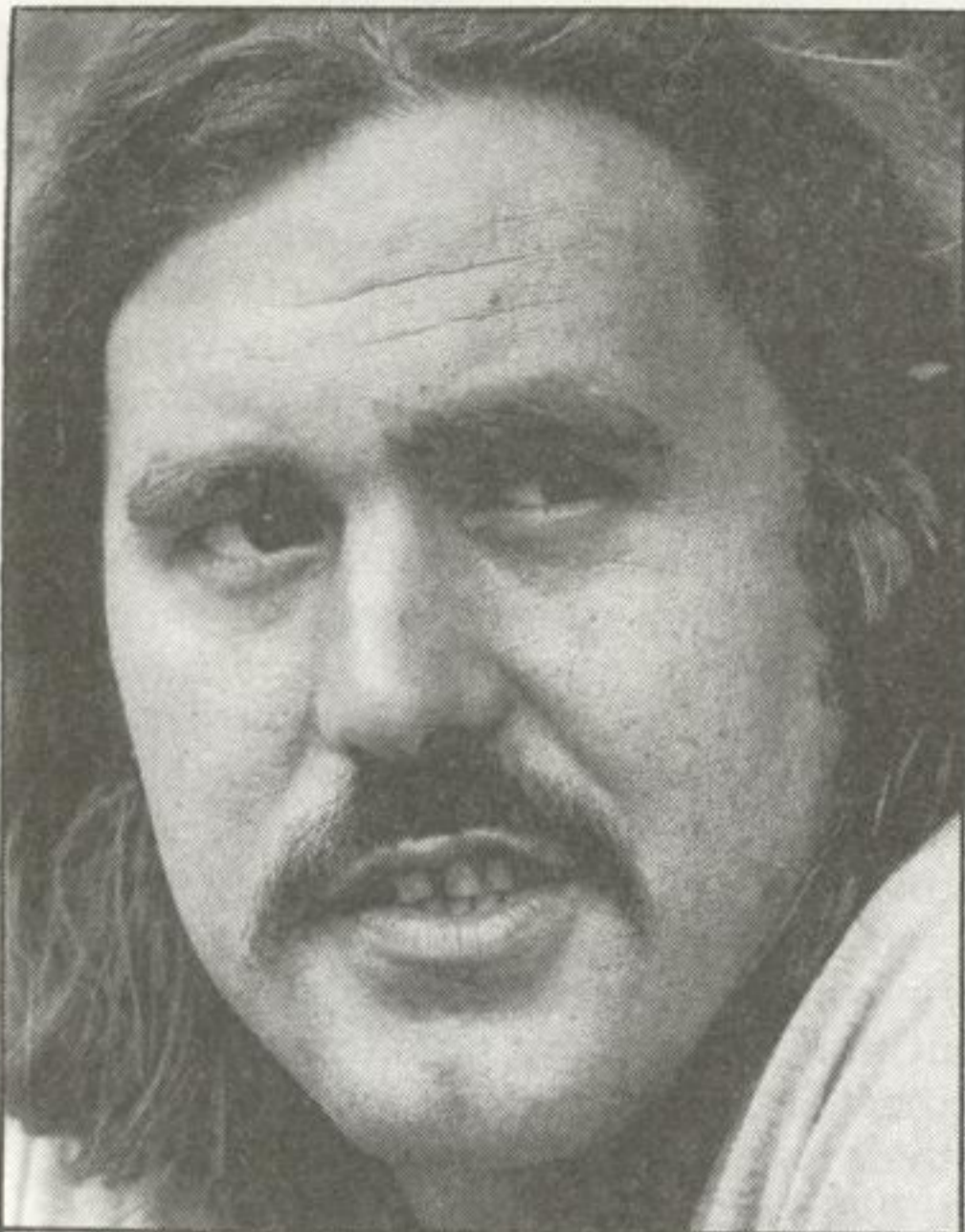
Words half spoken and thoughts unclear

By Les Kippel

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Letters

We shall overcome

I'm really enjoying **Relix**, Vol. 4 of this fanzine is really what rock music appreciation is all about. I cannot relate to the glut of punk rock zines around today. But **Relix** is an oasis in this desert of the bozart. And no bozoes are you!

But while I agree that your zine should cover more than The Grateful Dead, I think its focus has to be on progressive rock — acid and electric blues, innovative and inventive, from The Dead and The Jefferson Airplane/Starship to Jimi Hendrix and Cream to Emerson, Lake, & Palmer and Pink Floyd. Other kinds of music — folk, good MOR, soul, etc. — may and should interest the typical Dead Head. But if you devote pages to these other musical types you'll soon lose your uniqueness and special character and become indistinguishable from **Rolling Stone** and **The Trouser Press**. I see **Relix** as a vital and vitally necessary specialty fanzine, specializing in that spectrum of music I find most satisfying and worthwhile.

Joseph Werfelman's piece in Vol. 4, #2 hit home. And on the heels of the neo-disco movement is the blossoming punk rock movement — if "blossoming" is the right word for it. Yet there've been small whispers in back corridors of the rock scene about an emerging "60's nostalgia" movement. If such rumors are true, **The San Francisco Sound** may be born again all over this country. Eventually it will

be revived and attain a new popularity, probably more than once in fact. That's the pattern. Punk rock is also a revival of Merseybeat. We see 50's rock revivals every few years. And New Orleans' own Justin Winston rediscovered the Oriental fox trot, and now The New Leviathan Oriental Fox Trot Orchestra is becoming a cult group. In jazz, 50's artists like Thelonius Monk and 60's artists like Rahsaan Roland Kirk are enjoying great come backs. And I know I've heard talk of a revival of 60's-style folk music in the winds. Progressive rock will not die. It'll be more popular at times than at other times. But that's the way it goes. Still, this disco thing has been going on for a long time and shows no immediate signs of letting up. It's infesting *everything* right now. The Rolling Stones, The Bee Gees, Chicago — everybody's going disco. It's enuf to make you wanna puke! But this too will pass in time. We've been waiting for a return to the ballroom sound for a half dozen years. We can wait another half dozen years too. And most of the original movers are still around, still into the same things, and still talented and capable.

And that's what's exciting. San Francisco produced a flock of super-talents, all in their early 20's or so. Just as the similarly-aged young jazz greats of the 30's went on to individual careers that spanned the decades into the 60's and 70's (and Benny Goodman, Count

Basie, and others are still going strong as the swingingest senior citizens in music!), the generation of progressive rock giants that came out of San Francisco — Grace Slick, Marty Balin, John Cipollina, Country Joe McDonald, Barry Melton, Jerry Garcia, Bobby Weir, Phil Lesh, Steve Miller, Carlos Santana, John Fogarty, etc. — can very securely be expected to continue doing great things in music for a couple of decades at least. They started young. Their careers are far from over. Some have died (Hendrix, Joplin, Morrison, others). Some have apparently lost their musical know-how (Sly Stone and some others) or gone off into entirely different fields of music. But enuff of the prime movers are still there, still putting out that high-energy super-rock. And I expect Slick, Balin, and more than a few others to be recognized musical leaders in 1987 and 1997. The San Francisco story is far from over.

Your news items boggle my mind. The Grateful Dead on NBC SATURDAY NIGHT? And starring in their own feature movie? And swiching to the punk-rock-anchored Arista label? This is success! But why has it taken so long?

I wonder if The Dead will ever come back to New Orleans for a concert? Lightning isn't supposed to strike twice in the same place.

Sincerely
LESTER BOUTILLIER
New Orleans, La.

News of the Purple Sage

Here's a few bits you might be interested in for your next issue . . .

The NRPS played a gig for the inmates of Folsom Prison on May 15th. The gig was put together by the Hell's Angels (their brother Sonny Barger and a few others are there). The Hell's Angels supplied three topless dancers from North Beach; one of the dancers turned out to be one of the Tubettes. Needless to say, the inmates had a great time with no bad incidents.

Last Saturday, they did a autograph signing session at half time during a tennis match between the New York



The incredible centerfold from our May-June issue is now a colorful, big (20" x 30") poster. Individually numbered, these are sure to become collectors items. Only a limited number will be printed, so order yours now!

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Apples (Billy Jean King) and the Golden Garters. The New Riders at a tennis match?

Marmaduke had a slight mishap while trying out his new customized skateboard and ended up with a broken foot. Hence, John has taken to performing from a stool and making his way around on crutches. He claims he'll be right back on his skateboard as soon as his foot heals . . .

One final note . . . a fan informed us that since the New Riders were on the radio while she gave birth to a girl, they baby was appropriately named Sage.

RUBY
N.R.P.S.

P.S. That's Shanahan not McShanahan, and Buddy Cage sure looked different in that last issue . . .

Yeah! Didn't he? Sorry about that, deadline time often catches us with our wires crossed.

Hear a voice calling

. . . I would like to correspond and trade LP records with some American rock fans. Everyday, I listen to American & British radio stations and I would very much appreciate having some U.S. and G.B. LPs in my record collection. They are not available here behind the Iron Curtain and I have no possibility to get them any other way.

MILAN HLUBUCEK
Podlesi 547
463 42 Holkovice n/Moh
okres Liberec
Czechoslovakia

Feedback = Concerts, Good times or bummers

On reading the article about problems with the fans at some concerts I felt myself agreeing and sympathizing with Jim's sense of disillusionment. He expressed my sentiments exactly. Some concerts seem to be mere booze busts rather than musical entertainment. It's also amazing the kind of crap that is being served up by so called "major groups" and being eaten by the crowds. Sometimes you feel that they'd like anything that was loud, raucous and famous. Half-way serious listening and appreciation for an artist's talent seems to be fading.

One concert particularly comes to mind. Eric Clapton played Roosevelt Stadium a few years ago when he started changing his style from intense guitarist to more mellow. The fans wanted to hear the Clapton of old (Cream, Derek & the Dominoes) but he wanted to give more exposure to his band (with Carl Radle, Yvonne Elliman, etc) which was excellent. So he did not take the limelight during every minute of the show. During the concert there was a lot of catcalling and throwing of numerous projectiles on stage. It was

sad because there was no reason for it. The concert was not a rip off because Clapton was drunk, or played terribly, or what have you. In fact it was very tight and professional. The simple fact was that the fans disliked his new style and vented their emotions by hurling bottles on stage.

At last summer's Dead concert things were also thrown onstage during the chimpanzee/comedy act. John Scher had to come out and tell the assholes to

cut the shit. Is it a different crowd going to concerts these days or what? I really don't know. I guess the Woodstock nation isn't at many concerts anymore. We had something back then at concerts. The love & peace values were great ideas then and still are. We should have some of that at today's concerts and maybe we could concentrate on what we go to concerts for: to hear good music.

RICHARD BRAUNSCHWEIGER

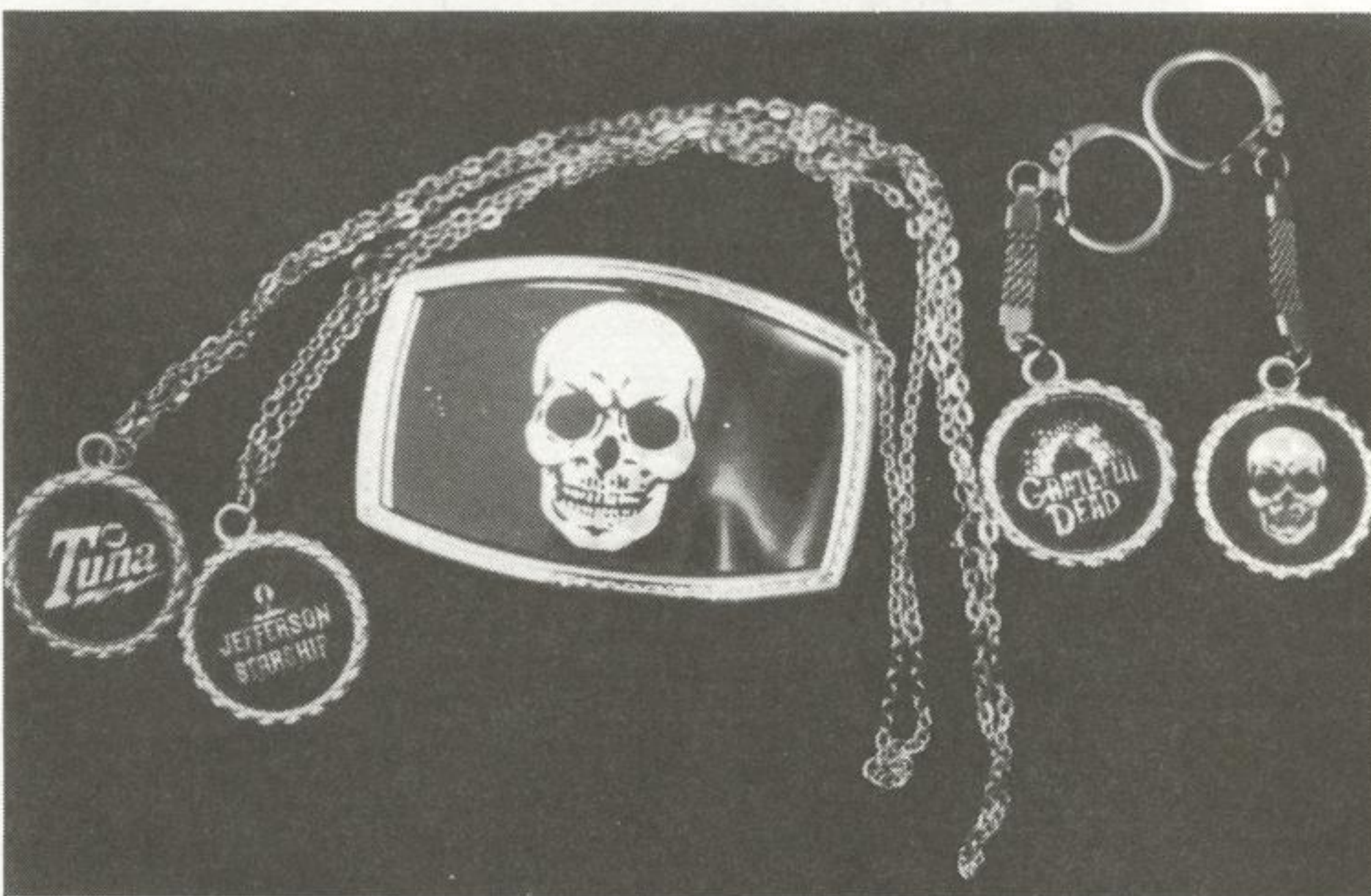
Publisher's note:

Unfortunately, **Relix** has to become a heavy, and lay down some rules. We hate rules, probably as much as you do, but we have to do it.

All issues of **Relix** returned to us by the post office as "unforwardable" or "undeliverable," will not be remailed without a service charge of 75c. The reason for the service charge is as follows: A returned issue costs us 35c, and remailing costs us 28c. The extra pennies go for the label, etc. We can not afford to pay for your mistakes, so please send us your change of address 6 weeks before you move (a coupon is provided for your convenience, elsewhere in this issue). Remember, the post office will not forward magazines unless you tell them to forward all your mail to you.

As we go to press

It has just been reported to us that Mickey Hart, one of the Dead's two drummers, has been involved in an auto accident, thereby rendering an imminent tour by the group unlikely. Our sources tell us that he has suffered a punctured lung and several fractured ribs; we at RELIX wish him a speedy and complete recovery.



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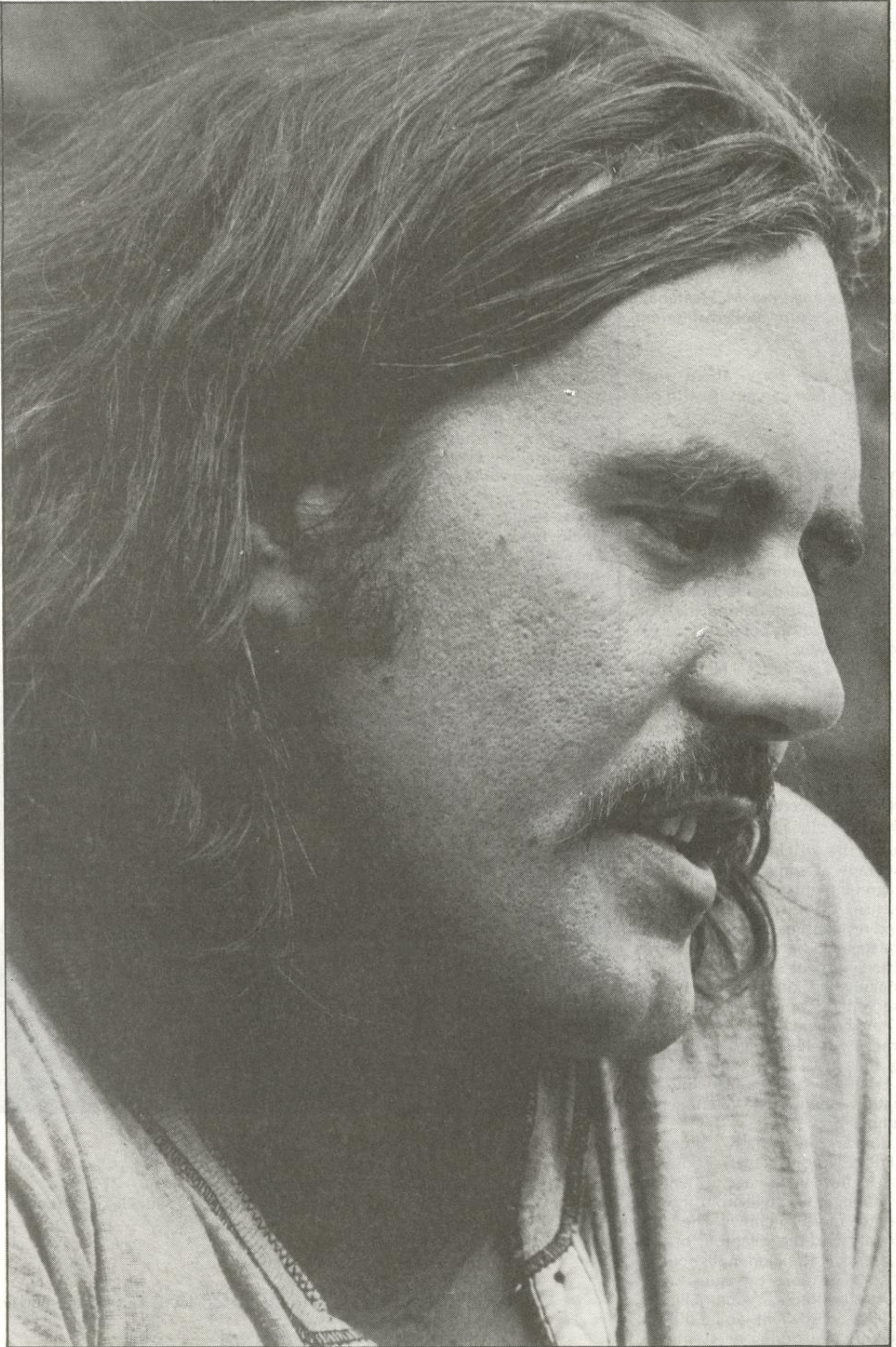
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photo: Dave Patrick



The following is a transcript of a somewhat inebriated hour we recently spent with George Frayne, who has attained a respectable degree of notoriety as Commander Cody. George was kind enough to let us run this interview, scandalous gossip and all, so we'd like to extend him our thanks. We'd also like to put in a plug for his new Arista album, since the new material we've heard him doing onstage is great. The new Commander Cody Band [consisting of Darius Javaher — lead guitar & vocals, "Buffalo" Bruce Barlow — bass & vocals, Bobby Black — pedal steel, Cisco G. — sax & vocals, Fred Meyer — drums, Nicolette Larson — vocals, Charra Penny — vocals, and, of course, George Frayne — piano & vocals] is a genuine rock and roll monster.

We'd like to again thank "Eppy" of My Father's Place for the use of his facilities, and for extending the courtesies which made this interview possible. For the benefit of our more distant readers, we'd like to point out that My Father's Place is a club on Long Island, which somehow manages to present good shows all year round. Also, the bar is better than at most rock and roll clubs. This interview was conducted at the club, on a quite balmy May evening.

The questions in this interview were asked by Les, our publisher; Jerry, our editor; and most ably by Ralph M. Newman, editor of the rock and roll mag **Time Barrier Express**; herein collectively identified as "R". The answers are by George, the "old commander," Here identified as "G".

And so we proceed to the interview. May you enjoy it as much as we did . . .

R — Let's start with the Airmen.

G — Okay, let's start with the Airmen, now defunct over a year and a half. We'll talk about the past.

R — Then and now your repertoire is old Ray Charles, Merle Travis . . .

G — The only old stuff in our repertoire is "It should have been me," Ray Charles, 1952, which I did, and I consider to be my song; and "Smoke that Cigarette," Merle Travis, 1948. I'll tell you why we have to do a smoking song. I became Commander Cody by default, because our first steel guitar player, The West Virginia Creeper, wanted to be "the Commander," but everybody said no. By proxy, I became the Commander, so I had to come up with something to do. I couldn't sing real good but I could talk real fast, so I picked up "Cigarette" and "Hot Rod Lincoln." On my first hit of Acapulco Gold in 1967 I got turned on to the great Bob Wills. I went "are you kidding

me?" I would have played Bob Wills if I'd known what the "A-hah" was all about. If anybody is stoned, it's those guys. From what I understand, the guys who used to play with the Texas Playboys are high as a kite. Those guys are crazy; they'd eat speed; they'd smoke dope. They'll do anything.

R — How did you initially get turned on to oldies?

G — I started off in a band that didn't do original material . . . in a frat band. I was constantly hunting for easy

The Old Commander George Frayne

An Interview with the Midnight Man

by

Ralph M. Newman,
Jerry Moore
& Les Kippel

material to do without having to practice. Just pick up something using the standard chord changes, and run it over one time and do it. We were different from every other band by not doing Chuck Berry material, which everybody was doing in 1962-63. I started digging in 50c bins at that time, through throwaways, to get one song that was good. The first group I was in was Tichy's rock and roll group. "The Amblers." Then I was with Tichy and

the West Virginia Creeper in "The Fantastic Surfing Beavers."

R — Then you were in a long Island band, lifeguards . . .

G — Yea, in the summer, of '67. Jerry Margolis, who is now Mary Kay Place's lawyer in L.A. was the lead guitar player and I was the piano player in "The Lorenzo Lightfoot Athletic Club and Blues Band." Our symbol was the winged foot, and we played in a place called "Bill's Meadowbrook Lounge," in the Inca Room. They had this plastic Inca sitting in a corner.

R — Did any of those groups ever do any recording?

G — Oh, Fuck, No!!!

R — Where was the first Lost Planet Airmen group?

G — The first Airmen were in Ann Arbor. We were a very, very art rock band; it was very far out. I later found out that at the same time the Fish were doing "Please don't drop that H-Bomb on me," I was doing the same thing. I picked up on the Mingus record the same way Melton did. I had 34 pieces, a five piece kazoo section, and a girl in black bra, panties, black boots and a whip, who sat there and did nothing. I had Pat, The Hippie Strippie, who took off all her clothes, and the band would be chugging along, doing all this bizarre bullshit, we had a 200 lb. girl doing jumping jacks wrapped in an American flag and we would be showing slides of dental extractions. It was very, very far out. It was way ahead of its time. Nobody dug it. We played one concert gig (with Canned Heat), and nobody dug it. They had no idea what the fuck was going on.

R — Whose idea was the identity, "Commander Cody and his lost Planet Airmen?" Who came up with the name?

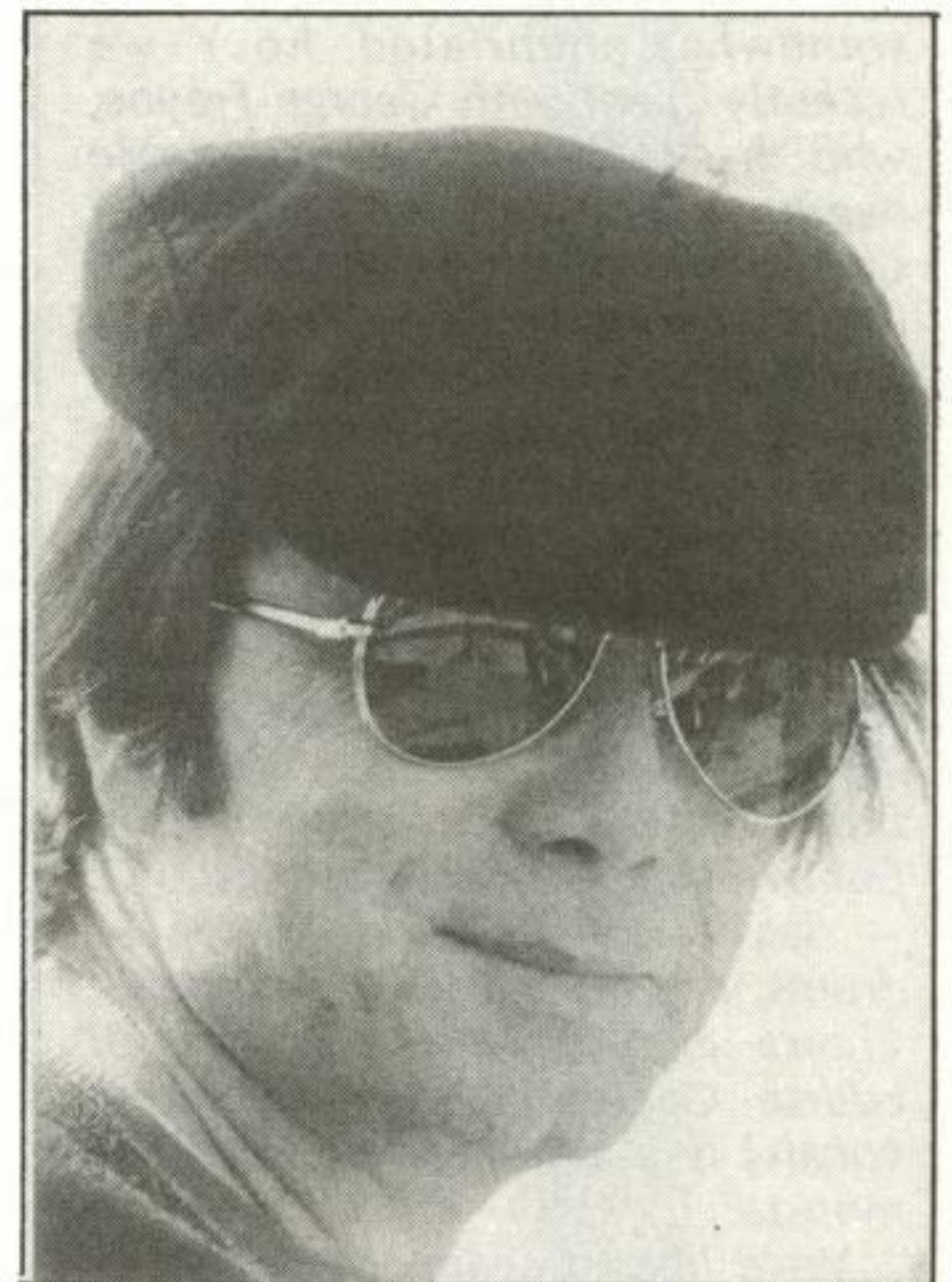
G — I myself, in a drunken moment. I came up with Commander Cody while I was watching that rocket guy (Kommando Kody). Every band was "The Chocolate Covered Extension Cord" or something, so I said "that would be good." Also, **The Lost Planet Airmen** was a grade B movie, a Republic featurette. The only thing the two had in common was the guy who wore a bullet shaped helmet, a breast plate, and a rocket pack in the back with two controls. One said "Up-Down," and the other said "Fast-Slow." When I saw that I went "all right!!!" Total identification with the bullet shaped head . . . totally metallic . . . trotted around to take off, and flew through the air going up-down or fast-slow. That was it. I changed it to "Commander Cody." Later I found out that he was the Sky Marshall of the Universe and, in fact, put the Ozone Layer around the earth to protect it from the deadly cosmic rays. So we worked out the "Ozone." The Ozone is as far out as you can get before you are gone, you know what I mean, the Purple Layer. You are kind of there, kind of not there, kind of in the at-



FRED MEYER



CISCO, G.



BOBBY BLACK



DARIUS JAVAHER



NICOLETTE LARSON

mosphere, kind of in outer space. I got the "Ozone" from the Commander Cody thing, and Billy C. wrote "Lost in the Ozone." That was the theme song of the old band and I still use it. I end every show with it, because I feel I am that character.

R — Have you ever felt lost in the Ozone?

G — I'm most continually lost in the Ozone. I insist upon it. Contrary to popular opinion, I stay very high. That High Times photograph was my back yard. I had 52 female plants, and a housekeeper. I was very fat. That was three years ago. I was making some bread, I was doing fine. My housekeeper took care of my house and grew my garden. It had mylar across the back. It was beautiful. That dope kept me high for a year, best dope, kona seeds, planted in Stinson Beach. Whooo!!! Now that the picture has come out I live somewhere else. You know those brown DEA helicopters with no markings? I see them cruising around a lot looking very suspicious, but that scene is cleaned up now. Everyone in Stinson Beach talks about how my place used to be. They thought I was growing it in the bathtub. I cured it in the bathtub and a lot of dirt fell in, and the chump I gave the 60 bucks to for cleaning the place up, didn't. So where were we?

R — Anyway . . .

G — Don't mind me, I'm under the influence of drugs. I've been drugged. Whoever's listening . . . help, help!!!

R — What made you go to California?

G — I was at Wisconsin State University the year before, teaching. I got my Master's degree, two years before that. I was playing in bands on weekends. I had to make a decision, whether to be a musician or an artist, so I tried to hang on to both. You know, do



CHARRA PENNY

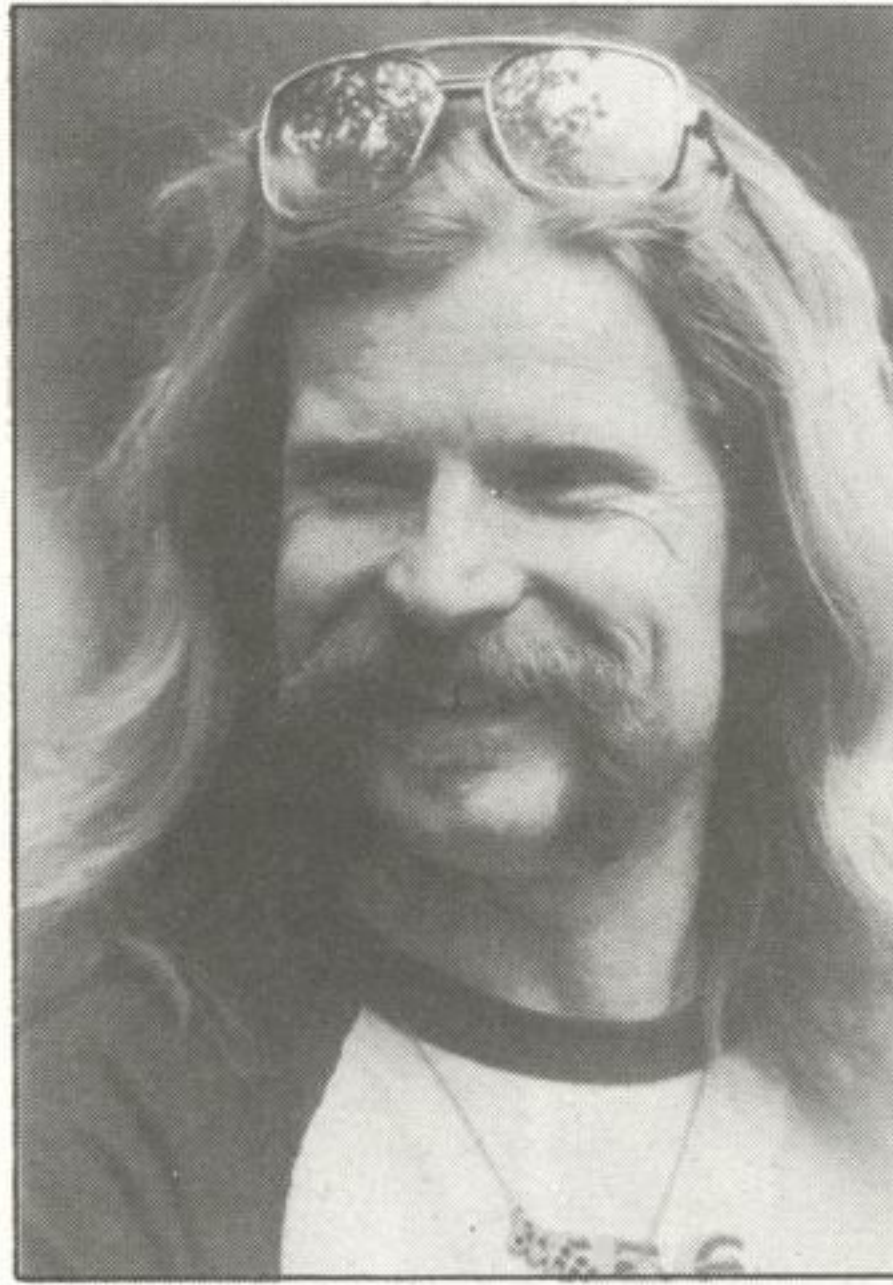
the musician on the weekends and the artist during the weeks. I took a teaching job at Wisconsin State University in Oshkosh, and it turned out to be really obnoxious. They rang bells; they made me take attendance they ostracized me for not being there during final exam week . . . we did not get along. If I didn't take attendance they'd get pissed, so I decided fuck this. I don't wanna be a teacher, I don't wanna do that route to be a famous artist. Music was more fun. I got off more, the people were friendlier, and all my buddies were doing it anyway. A couple of people had split for California. They said, "hey, I'm going to wait for him, he has commitment till the end of the year, starving in Ann Arbor, you know got to do something." So the Kirchen said "Come on California." Billy C. and Tichy found Lance and Bruce, and I San Francisco July 1, 1969. But we had the first remnants of a band together.

R — Paramount, of all labels?

G — They were the only people who would have us. They gave us a thousand dollars for our tape. They leave it, kids. (Note: the first money on the 1st album was \$17,000.)

R — "Hot Rod Lincoln" . . . What was your reaction to having a major A&M hit?

G — I thought Jesus Christ, what a hit! "Hot Rod Lincoln" a hit, of all things! Now people are going to say I'm a novelty act, and for a fact while that's what it was. But I had a feeling for records. I'm a record lover. I'll tell you something that will break your fucking heart. I had a lot of Sun 78's. I got drunk and sat on the whole fucking collection. Every damned record before I could tap it. The rest of my records burned up in



BRUCE BARLOW

Cadillac. The whole back seat was lined with treasures, like Roy Orbison on Sun. Anyway, when I finished lifeguarding in 1968, I was driving to Wisconsin to take my first job, in my pink 1953 Cadillac, painted just like Elvis' pink on the bottom, black on top. It was loaded down with everything I owned, including a back seat full of treasured, priceless records. It makes me sick just to think about it. I was flying down the New Jersey turnpike, right outside Harrisburg, at 85 miles an hour, when there was an explosion near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. A Cadillac there was an explosion.

bought out by ABC.

R — Why, then, did you leave Warner Brothers?

G — I didn't leave Warners. They didn't want to pick me up. It was a four album deal, and the double album fulfilled my contractual obligations to them. When that ran out, you see, the band had broken up. To pick up anybody, they would have had to pay the same price they would for the whole band, after the option period ran out, which was \$250,000. As far as they were concerned, I had stiffed three albums. Three records had come out and stiffed, sold 100,000 copies each. 250 K to pick up the option for me? Who are you kidding? HA, HA, HA, HA, HA,

R — Why did the band break up?

G — Because of money. We were 75 grand in the hole, 10 weeks behind in salary. Everyone was broke, and starving, and we all said, all right, stop. You know, "I could have done this on my own," and "I could do better than this alone" they said, and Lance had an offer to play with somebody for real money. We weren't paid actual money for a long time. I don't know if that was my fault, or the corporation's fault, or we had too much shit. We had a bus, we had too much crap, and we were over our heads with inflation. You see, in 1973 we were making five grand a gig. We were doing very well, and then all of a sudden inflation hit, and the records were not happening, and I had to do twice as many gigs to make the same amount of money. The money wasn't



promise. So now I'm with Arista.

R — As of when?

G — Actually, it was in September . . . a long time ago. I told everybody in the record industry I was available. I stopped performing and went on a tour, did 8 lectures. I made 4,000 bucks. Got a place on the beach that was relatively cheap and laid out. After a certain time I'd written a bunch of songs and I wanted to give it a shot, to see if anyone would be interested in my own 100% original material.

R — What did you lecture on?

G — The function of the subconscious mind, the idea that musicians and people who create, create basically while their unconscious mind, the subordinate part of their brain, is allowed to act, by stopping the thought process. It's the same thing that EST and TM charge money to teach you. It's a simple thing. I can illustrate it for you. Driving your car, the last thing you're thinking about is driving. Your body is driving, not your mind. You should have a little dictaphone. Hoyt Axton turned me on to that. Put a tape recorder in your car, because ideas will come if your mind is drifting and you have no real thoughts to limit your mind. You can do the same in the one moment before you go to sleep; that one moment when you should have a pad and pencil by your bedside when you come up with that killer idea that you will not remember in the morning.

R — What made you decide not to form a new generation of Airmen, to change the whole identity?

G — I am not a person for living in the past. In 1969 I was unique in what I did. Now there are a lot of bands which do what that band did, so I thought the best thing I could do was go back to what I know, which is boogie and roll. I wrote some real simple songs and returned them over to some publisher to arrange for me, and we came out with the album. My boogie is a scam. It is a wonderful scam, the best scam I know. My job is making people happy. What's the scam is that? Some people in the business do not appreciate that. They're not getting paid for making people happy. The only way to make people happy is to be happy, and the music I'm making makes me so.

R — Where did you come from? I've seen you sing with Bruce and Bobby, and I've seen you sing with Larson, who I've seen sing with other people, where did the rest of the band come from?

G — Everybody else came from a bar in Nevada called the "Sutro Symphony" Orchestra, notorious bar. Go to northern Nevada and ask about them. They were with us, fuked out.

R — What are the new songs in your repertoire?

G — In my regular set there are four songs from the new album. I open with "Where were you," which Craig

Chaquico did the guitar solo for on the album. I do "Midnight Man," "Stealin' at the 7-11," and once in a while I do "Rock and Roll Again." I haven't done "Rock and Roll Widow" in a while, because my voice is fucked. It's really hard to sing that one. Imagine, I'm learning. I used to play rhythm guitar. I'm relearning my Keith Richard rhythm, so I can do that and sing at the same time.

R — How did you come up with "7-11?"

G — A friend of mine has a really cute 17 year old daughter, and one night I asked him, "hey, uh, what's your daughter doing?" He said, "oh, she's down at the 7-11, stealing." So I checked it out. Seems that's what people in California do . . . they go down to the 7-11 and steal stuff . . . somebody run out and steal me a beer.

R — Have you kept track of what happened to the other people in the Airmen?

G — Lance Dickerson is playing with David Bromberg. Andy Stein did the score for the latest David Carradine flick, and he's jamming now and then with Asleep at the Wheel and Emmylou Harris. Billy C. Farlow has his own band, and he's up for the lead in a movie about Buddy Holly. Bill Kirchen has his own band, called the Moonlighters, and just signed with Amherst Records. They play progressive country music, and they're very good at it. John Tichy is teaching physics.

R — Do you ever think of getting the

Airmen back together, money permitting, or are you happier with what you're doing now?

G — I don't want to play that fiddle truck driving music anymore. Because we brought that music to our group. You've all been turned on to that music by myself, or by the Riders, or somebody similar. Once you've heard the real thing our role becomes negative. We're not that important. That truck driving CB thing is blown out of proportion. That's not happening

now. I want to go on to something else people aren't aware of. People aren't aware that I write funky rock and roll songs.

R — How is your painting going?

G — Pretty well. I'm trying to get a gallery in New York, and a regular show in the Fall. Something for a real concept. a one man show.

R — How many records do you hold, besides eating hamburgers?

G — There's some bizarre ones. There's the beer drinking record at the Ar-



photo: Les Kippel

l. to r. : Nicolette and Sara & George Frayne

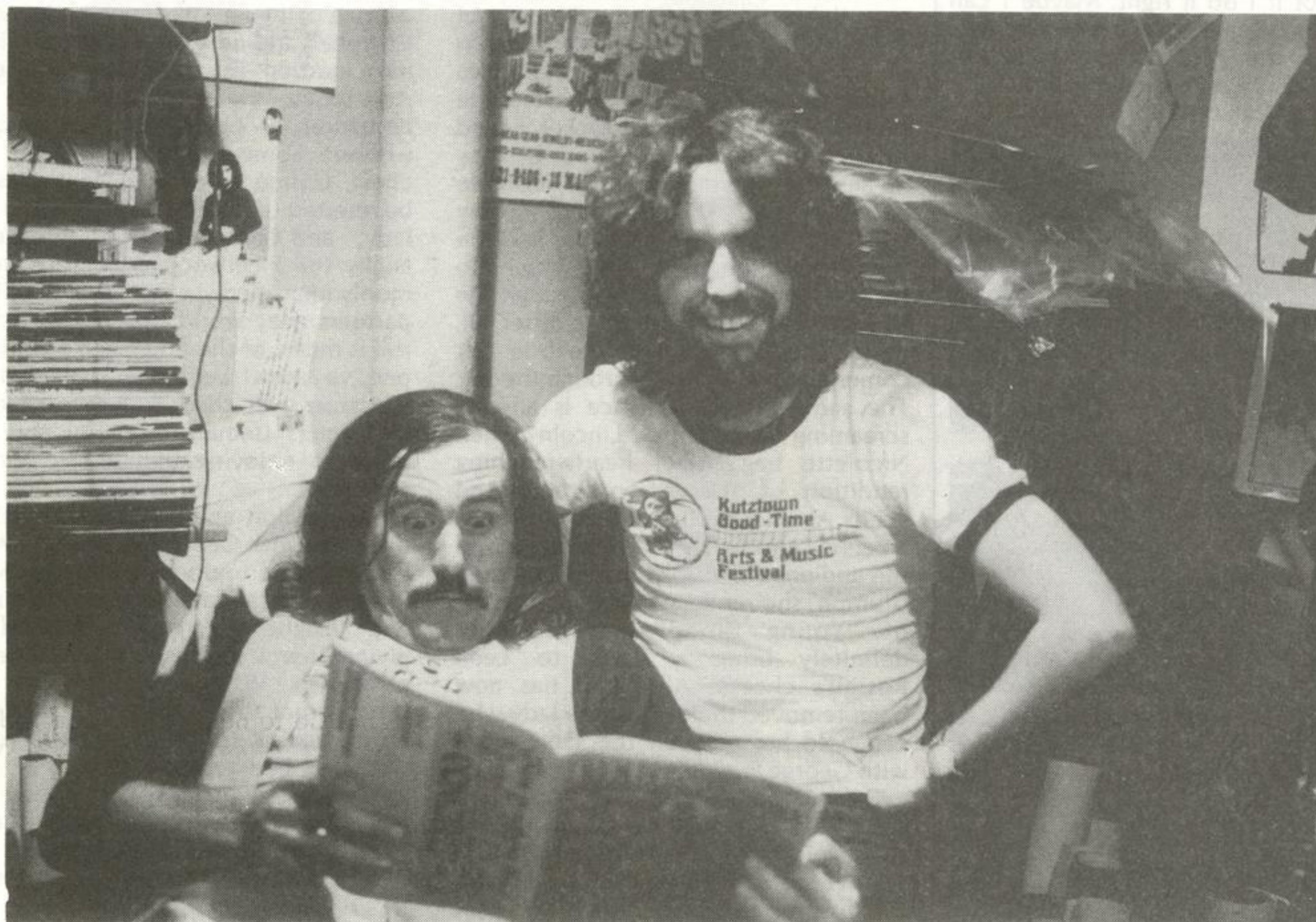


photo: Suzanne Newman

The Commander and our own Jerry Moore

madillo. They're all totally arbitrary. Somebody decided I held the whiskey drinking record at a place in Ann Arbor, and I don't remember the other dubious achievement awards, (whale riding and what not).

R — How did you and the Airmen come by your reputation for being drunks? Did you just fall into it, or was it intentional?

G — When we first hit the big time, we came right out of the bars into the concert circuit. Consequently, instead of just going to a gig at a bar and getting gradually drunk, we would get drunk, and then go out and do a show. So, we were drunks. Actually, I was quite known for being very low, many times. Me, Billy C. and Bill, we hit the sauce quite regularly. I still have a few beers, and a few tastes of this and that, you know. But I don't sit around with a pint of Jack Daniels sipping heavy, and finishing the whole fucking thing. I'm just not as self destructive as I used to be. Every once in a while, of course, a little macho . . .

R — After the Airmen, did you think of giving up music totally?

G — Absolutely. I stopped, took it easy, took up surfing and basketball again, got in shape, but after about 8 months I started twitching on Saturday nights. I'd be at the Old Mill Tavern, and some of my friends would be playing funky music, so I'd start jamming a bit. Then I did a gig for a bunch of skiers in Squaw Valley, and it worked. I said, well shit, I can do this, and maybe I won't even get into debt if I do it right. Maybe I can learn from some of the mistakes I've made in the past. I'm certainly not going to try to revive anything, but let's see where I can take it from here. Δ

photo: Suzanne Newman



Nicolette Larson

Exactly what we need!

one woman's opinion by Suzanne Newman

The most noticeable difference between the New Commander Cody Band and George Frayne's former Lost Planet Airmen is the presence of two very talented ladies at the front microphones. Here we find Charra Penny, a tall slender blond with such fine facial features as one would sooner expect to find on the society pages than in a rock & roll band, and Nicolette Larson, a somewhat shorter lady with dark tresses cascading down her back and with a voice at least as large as My Father's Place (Roslyn, Long Island) itself.

Although these ladies sing back-up and help out on percussion, do not take them for the fluffy "girl singers" we commonly find singing behind R&R bands these days. Not there simply for gloss and glitter, Charra and Nicolette are full-fledged members of the New Commander Cody Band and just as essential to the band's sound as any of the other musicians. As we watch them on stage and this situation begins to sink into our consciousness, Nicolette assumes the lead on a rocker called "Rhumba," not an easy song by any means but carried off to absolute perfection (it's still humming in my head!). Later, as she takes the lead on "House Of Blue Lights," one begins to feel the confusion rippling through the audience. Weren't they here, after all, to see the Commander? The true test comes about two thirds through the set. The semi-zonked audience is already screaming for "Hot Rod Lincoln" when Nicolette begins her heartwrenching rendition of "Down To Stems And Seeds Again." By the end of the song, an eerie calm hangs over our heads and the audience is visibly moved. In a final triumph, she renders a raunchy version of "Young Blood" which would definitely bring a blush to Leon Russell's cheeks! All doubt has now been removed that this is one lady who can hold her own on the same stage with George Frayne!

Rock & roll has long been lacking on the distaff side. Yes, we had Janis, but she's long gone and the world *still* doesn't seem to realize that she was not the first or the last of the "red hot mommas." Most of what we have now

are the very softly feminine women, singing more folk rock than rock & roll and those who (following their male counterparts) rely heavily on costumes and gimmicks. While I certainly enjoy their music and appreciate the variety, what I long for is that good old rock & roll, of the type George Frayne is preserving, honestly presented. And I find myself wondering if the world is at last ready for the true rock & roll woman.

Of course, one could cite the many who fall into this category: Maria Muldaur, Bonnie Raitt, Bonnie Bramlett, Kiki Dee, Maggie Bell, etc., etc.; but, who can honestly say that they sell as many concert tickets and records as their talents would suggest they could. Looking back, we see that even Brenda Lee, with her string of hits, was driven into country music because people didn't want to hear a white woman singing like that. Jo Ann Campbell and Julie Driscoll were driven into married life for similar reasons. And today, one rarely hears a DJ announcing a Linda Ronstadt record without some comment about her chest, Donna Godchaux continues to be referred to as "the piano player's old lady," and Christine McVie and Stevie Nicks (of Fleetwood Mac) are commonly identified via their choice of bed partners. Hey world, wake up! Rock & roll is music of the body, and we all got one, ya know! Let's stop making such an issue over the sex habits of rock performers (female or male) and get down to enjoying their music for its own sake!

After Ralph and Jerry finished their interview with George Frayne (above), I had the opportunity to briefly chat with him. I congratulated him for the guts and insight which he displayed in giving Charra, and especially Nicolette, a chance. When asked whether he thought that the world was ready for a female rock & roller, especially a white woman, he replied that he was anxiously looking forward to the day when Nicolette would front her own band. "And," he said, "I think it's *exactly what the world needs!*" I hope he's right. Δ

Bits by Les

All you freaks out there must know about the **Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers**. We just got hold of "Freak Brothers Comix #5," and it's great. I can't recommend it enough, so run out, get it, get zonked, and read it. As we told you a while ago, a movie of the Freak Brothers' adventures is still in the planning stages at "Intergalactic Audio-visual Systems of San Francisco." This piece of high drama is to be called **Gone with the Weed**.

One juicy rumor is that **Linda Ronstadt** has agreed to pose for *Hustler* magazine for a million bucks. We'd like to see that issue.

Peter Tosh is now planning his summer tour, so look for dates. **Bob Marley's** summer assault on the United States is already mapped out. Look elsewhere in this mag for the tour dates. A current rumor says that there will be a traveling reggae festival this summer.

Word is that the **Dead** will be laying back to relax for a couple of months following their current tour. No dates planned. Their rest was well earned.

On May 16th, a Federal Grand Jury convened in Philadelphia for an in depth investigation of the music scene there. They're particularly concerned with **Electric Factory Concerts**, due partly to a lawsuit by a New Jersey company. **Willow Weep** who contend that EFC is monopolizing the music biz there. The grand jury is also interested in dealings with certain New York and west coast promoters, and bookings of Steve Miller, the Dead, Elton John and

It must have been the roses

We at **Relix** wish to congratulate our friends Monte and Marla who on June 12 became Mr. & Mrs. Dym.

The happy couple has been inseparable since they met, a year ago, at a Dead show in Boston. The social highlight of the wedding day came when a bunch of the couple's friends were nabbed by the bride's mother, smoking dope in the bridal chamber.

We wish them continued happiness and a long life together. Δ

Kansas. They are *not* investigating the bands, just their bookings.

Kingfish, following a rest period, is back with us, with new members Barry Flast (keyboards), Dave Perper (drums), and Michael O'Neill (lead guitar) joining founding members Dave Torbert (bass) and Michael O'Neill (lead guitar) joining founding members Dave Torbert (bass) and Matthew Kelly (rhythm guitar/harmonica). At recent area appearances at **My Father's Place** and **The Bottom Line**, they proved themselves to still be a good old rock and roll band. The nearness of our deadline prevents us from giving them the review they deserve, but we really like 'em. We had the chance to interview Matt Kelly, and that interview will be featured in our next issue.

CONCERT DATES:

Bob Marley.

7/8+9 Miami — Gussman Center
7/10 Lakeland, FL. — Civic Center
7/12 — Atlanta — Fox Theater
7/15 Univ. of N. Orleans
7/16 Houston, TX — Astrodome
7/17 Dallas TX
7/12 Denver, Red Rock
7/22 Vancouver, B.C.
7/23 Seattle — Paramount
7/24 Portland — Paramount
7/29 Berkeley — Greek Amphthet.
7/30 Santa Barbara
7/31 Hollywood
8/1 San Diego — Civic Center
8/4 Minn — Northrop Hall
8/5 Chicago — Aud. Theater
8/6 St. Louis — Keil
8/8 Detroit Masonic
8/9 Toronto — Maple Leaf Garden
8/10 Montreal — Forum
8/11 Boston Music Hall
8/12 Capitol Center — Wash, D.C.
8/16 Poughkeepsie Civic Center
8/17 New Jersey — Asbury Park
8/18-19-20 + ?? N.Y.C. — Palladium

Joan Baez

7/1 Spokane — Opera House
7/2 Portland — Paramount
7/3 Seattle — Paramount
7/5 Vancouver, B.C.
7/7 Salt Lake City — Snowbird
7/9 Berkeley — Greek Theater
7/10 Santana Barbara — Bowl
7/12 San Diego
7/13 Phoenix — Celeb Theater
7/15 Tuscon — Auditorium
7/16 Las Vegas — Adadam Theater
7/18 + 19 + 20 LA Univ. — Amph.

Doc Watson

7/3 Cosby, Tenn — Smoky Mt.

It has been reported to us, that **Steve Love** "broke out" with something, and has not been playing with the **New Riders**. Instead, the Riders have gone back to using **Skip Battin** as their bass player. We have no idea how long Skip will be playing with them.

Commander Cody has 15 dates set in the West in July, before heading east in August. And, **Arlo Guthrie** is planning a tour in July heading west.

Rumors have the **Jefferson Starship** at the July 4 "repeal Marijuana laws rally" in Washington, D.C. And, a summer tour for the **Grateful Dead**, followed by a late-summer, early-fall **Jerry Garcia Band** tour and a fall **Bob Weir Band** tour.

Hot Tuna is off to Europe for speed skating and a tour. Δ

Bluegrass Fest.

7/9 Vienna, Va — Wolftrap
7/16 Harrisburgh, Pa. — The Racetrack
7/17 Toronto, Ont. — Ontario Park
8/7 Ionia, Mich. — Ionia Fall Fair
8/9 Norwalk, Del. — U. of Del.
8/11-13 N.Y.C. — Bottom Line
7/7-8 Wash., D.C. — Cellar Door

New Riders

8/26 — Lenox, Mass.
8/27 — Shaboo Inn, Mass.
8/28 — Calderone, L.I. (with David Bromberg)
8/29 — Asbury Park, N.J.

Dirt Band

7/2 — Intl. Freedom Fest, Windsor, Ont.
7/11 — Corowinds, Charlotte, N.C.
8/10 — Great Allentown Fair, Pa.
8/12 — Country Fair, Bad Acts, Mich.
9/20 — Amarillo Tri State Fair, Tx.

Dead Movie

7/2-24 — Washington D.C.
7/17-31—L.A.

Jerry Garcia Band

7/9 — Asbury Park, N.J.

Commander Cody Band

7/9 — Calgary, Alberta
7/22 — Billings, Mont.
7/23 — Red Rock, Col.
7/23 — Northrup Aud., Minneapolis, Minn.
7/29-30 — Chicago, Ill.
7/31 — Falmouth, Mass.
8/5 — Washington, D.C. (with Jerry Jeff Walker)
8/6 — Asbury Park, N.J. (with The Outlaws)
8/7 — Lenox Hill, Mass.

SPECIAL DEAD TOUR SECTION

Spring Tour Again

by Jerry Moore

Another Dead tour has come and gone, leaving me, as usual, a little shellshocked. Right now I could use about ten years worth of rest, but I'd cheerfully give up that fantasy for another Dead show. The east coast portion of the tour began on April 22nd at the Philadelphia Spectrum, and ended five weeks and well over twenty shows later at the Hartford Civic Center, on May 28th. In between the two extremes they packed five shows in New York City and three next door in Passaic, a few shows in New England and upstate New York, some midwest and a number of southern shows, and a show in Baltimore. This evening (June 4th) they are due to play the Los Angeles Forum, and they will wrap the whole thing up soon, with three nights at Winterland. Between the end of the eastern tour and the few California shows, the movie opened in New York. It has been a very busy month and a half for the Grateful Dead.

We have a review of the first two nights, Philadelphia and Springfield, elsewhere in this issue. I think that review is reasonably comprehensive, so I won't mention them, except to say that I thought the ending in Philadelphia was perfect. "Terrapin" ended so suddenly, and the Dead disappeared so fast, that the whole place was left hanging in shock. A great finish . . . totally unfinished. The show was like an uncompleted musical work, one end left dangling to be picked up another night. The effect would have been totally spoiled by an encore. I was entranced by the first night, but more because it was the first Dead show I'd seen in a while than because of any intrinsic musical worth.

For one reason or another, I missed the shows in Passaic. Oh well . . . I got to see all five nights in the city. In New York, the Dead played at the Palladium, first three nights, then a night off, then another two nights. Except for the two

shows at the Beacon last June, this was the first time the Dead had played in the city since March 1972, when they played for six nights at the same theater, then known as the Academy of Music. There were a couple of great shows in that batch, so I had high hopes for the Palladium shows.

The atmosphere at the Palladium was good from first night to last. In fact, it felt much like the '72 shows. The air was smokey, the lights dim, and the audience crackling with almost visible energy. Entering the lobby the first night, my hopes got even higher. People were milling all around, and confusion was rampant. So things felt good. Grateful Dead concerts work best with chaos . . . they organize confusion. All that chemical energy is balanced close to the edge. On their best nights the Dead strike me as being a little dangerous, like a kid sitting on a barrel of gunpowder, playing with matches. I sometimes worry that they'll drop a lit one.

The first two nights at the Palladium they came close to blowing the place up a couple of times. They started very hot the first night, with "Help on the Way"/"Slipknot"/"Franklin's Tower." The whole thing was delivered at overpowering intensity. The rest of the first set never caught up with it. They played well enough, but weren't able to come close to that energy level until the second song in the following set, "Sugaree." That is one tune I got tired of a while ago, but they had added two quite melodic new instrumental breaks which totally transform it. "Sugaree" feels like a brand new tune. It segued right into "El Paso," the first of a number of odd little medleys the Dead were to do on the tour. After a couple more songs the jam began, with "Scarlet Begonias," notable in that it didn't go into "Fire on the Mountain," as at every other show on the tour that I know they played it at. Instead it went



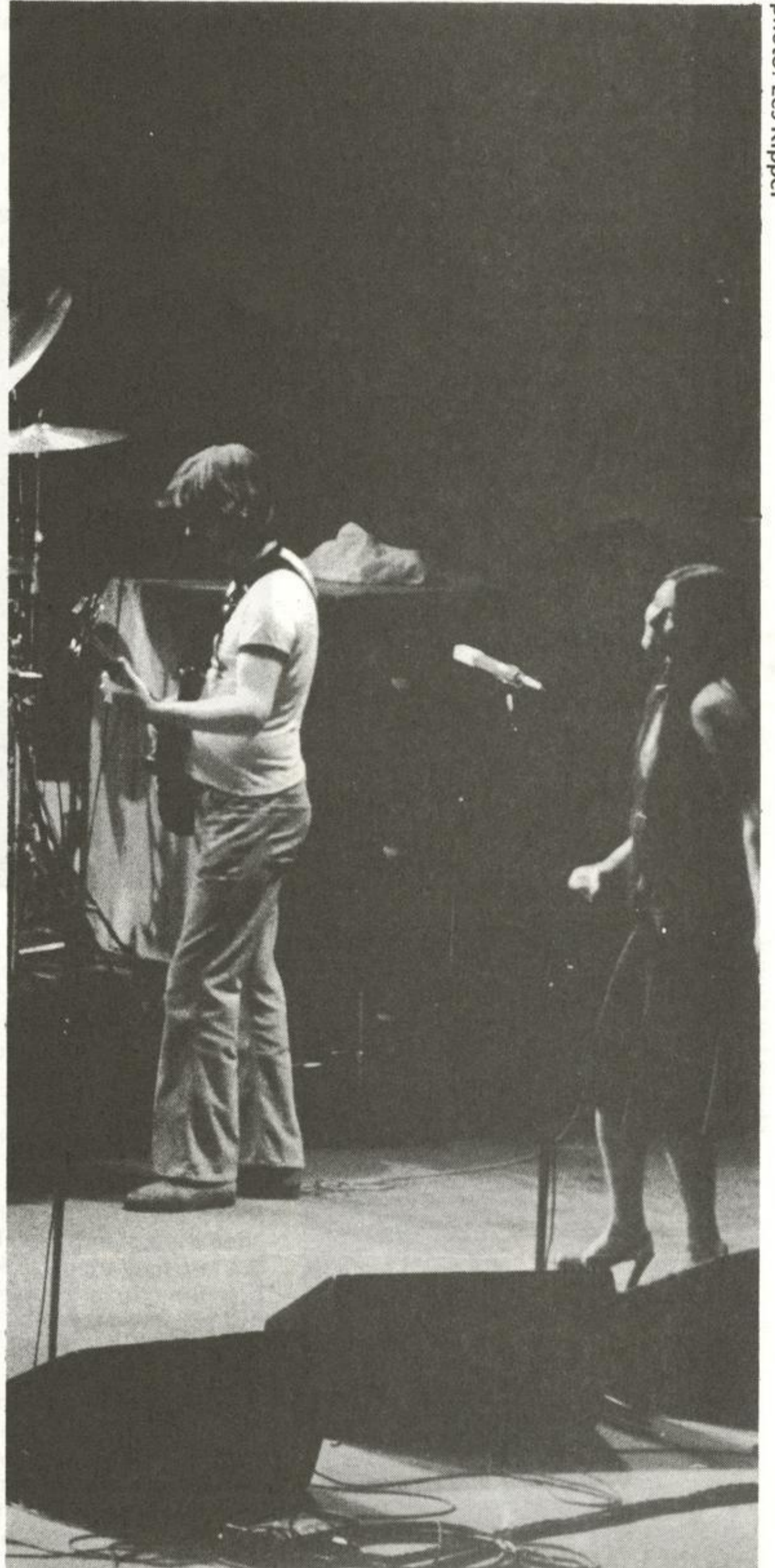
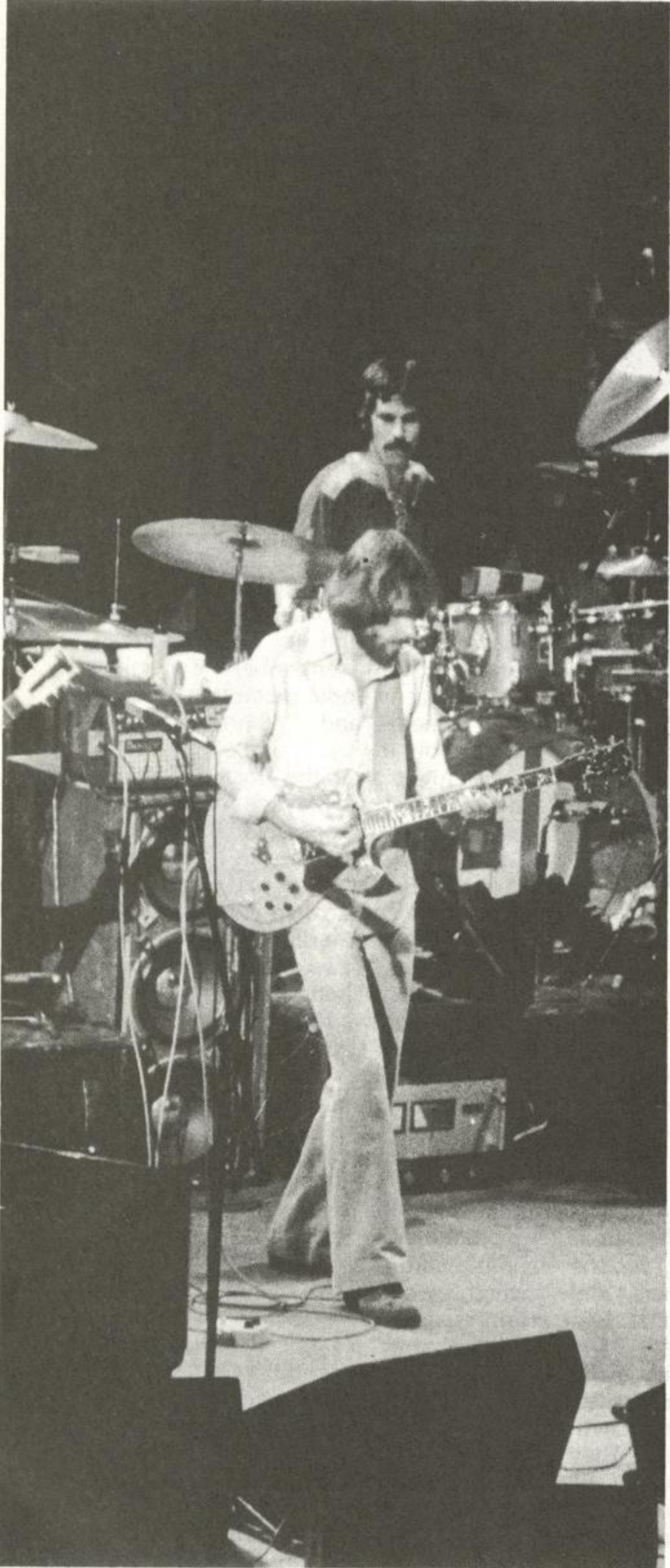


photo: Les Kippel

into "Going down the Road," and on through a few more tunes. The encore that night was "Uncle John's Band," which somehow everyone felt coming.

The second night was the peak at the Palladium. From there, it was a slow slide down. The first set was highlighted by a medley of "Mama Tried" and "Me and my Uncle," and by exceptional treatments of "Fenario" and "Mississippi Uptown," both of which were done quite well throughout the tour. The second set was the best they would manage for a number of shows to come. It began very strongly, with "Scarlet Begonias," which once again went into "Fire on the Mountain," which, in its turn, plowed into "Good Lovin'." A classic triad that, and very well received. They had done the same thing a couple of nights earlier at the Capitol, but at the Palladium it came out more organized, without ragged edges. This set chugged along with "Friend of the devil" and "Estimated Prophet," Weir's new song. Then, the best jam of the five nights . . . a long discussion, with the silence broken at last with "Saint Stephen," for the first time on the tour. The song has regained most of the drive it once had, lost in the version the Dead were playing in 1976. The instrumental break led into a hammering version of "Not Fade Away," which in time rippled into a peaceful "Stella Blue." That faded into a quiet jam, which gained volume and increased tempo until it once more was "Saint Stephen." It being the right night of the week, they came out of that with "One more Saturday Night." The encore was "Terrapin," as complex as if it were in the middle of a jam, and as loud, driving, and hammering at the end as any rock and roll encore. "Terrapin" is a perfect blending of opposites: the involved and quiet first half, and the thundering end. As an

encore at the Palladium, it was at its best. Lesh shook every seat in the house, even up in poor man's heaven, the top of the upper balcony. This is all the more amazing considering they took away one of his two bass cabinets halfway through the first set the first night, not to return it till after New York.

The following three nights were a bit anticlimactic, but each had its moments. The third night they played Donna's new song, "Sunrise," for the first time, near the end of the first set. It has a very pretty melody. The second set was quite fine, but rather noticeably short. It opened with a medley of "Dancing in the Streets" and "Brown Eyed Women," which was good, if a bit indecisive sounding at the transition point. "Brown Eyed Women" got the biggest hand of the evening. Phil vanished from the stage for a while following that, something he was doing

photo: Les Kippel

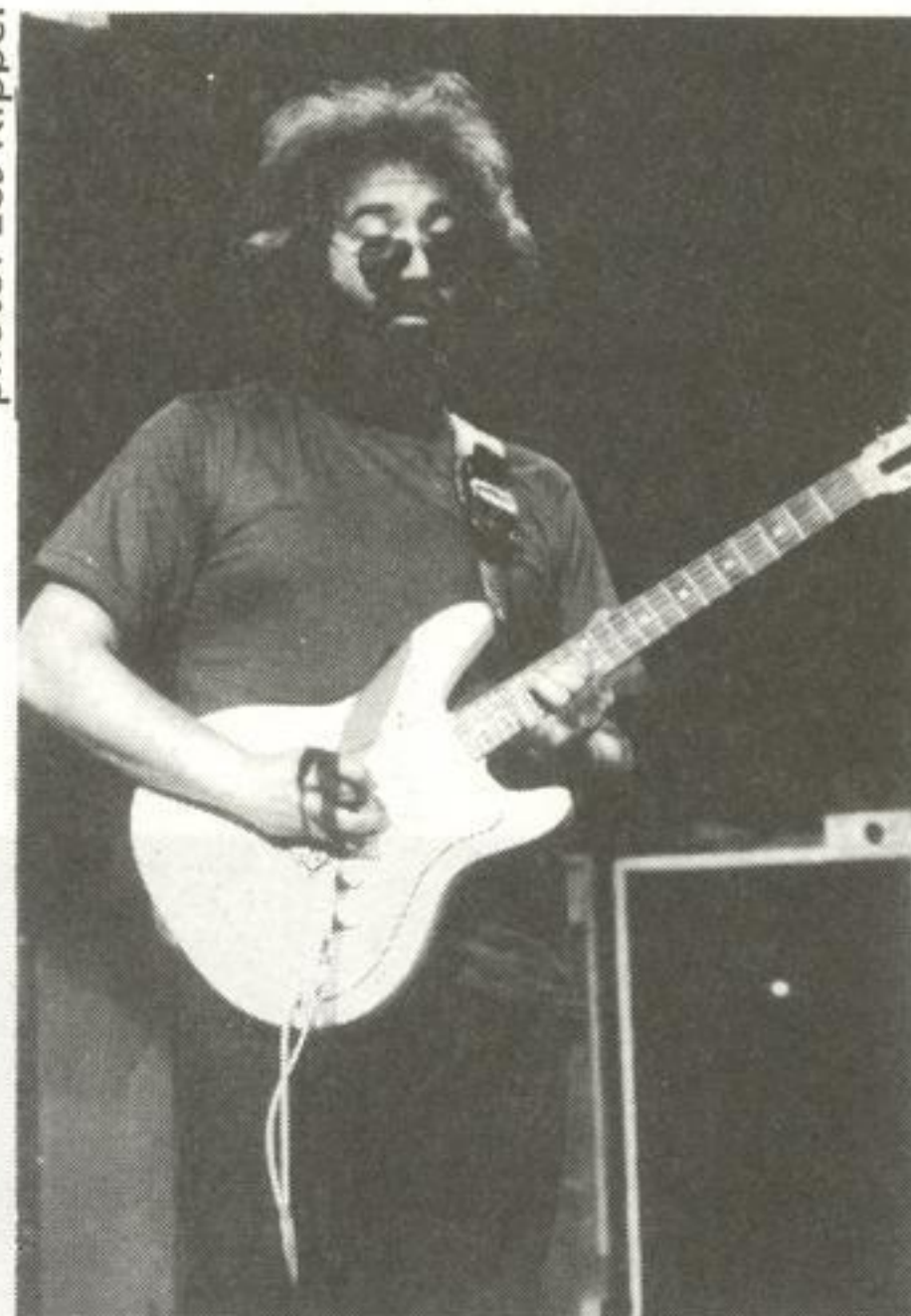


photo: Stanley Wagner



sometimes they don't.

Whether they had it or not, the Palladium was a five day blast. It got the stiffness out of some of the material, and it was a multiple night party. A medium sized hall is perfect for warming up, and the shows which followed the New York City shows made them seem just that — a warmup. I skipped New Haven, feeling almost drained, and rejoined the tour in Boston, after two day's rest.

I remember the Boston show as being great, but I was so zoned that I don't remember enough to write about it coherently. I remember "Terrapin," and a great melodic piece that bridged "The Wheel" and "Wharf Rat," but that's about it.

The night after the Boston Gardens show, the Dead played another concert palace, this one being Barton Hall, Cornell University, over in Ithaca, New York. I'm really fond of Ithaca, even though it seems to rain every time I go there. This time it didn't rain. Instead we ran into a snowstorm, dressed in our summer best. When we got in out of the cold and wet, we thought the show was fine. It was a strong candidate for the best of the early part of the tour. The first set was quite together, though a list of the songs played wouldn't look very amazing. The second set once more led off with the "Scarlet Begonias"/"Fire on the Mountain" medley, which grows on me more with each hearing. Then it was time again for "Estimated Prohpet," which by now was beginning to sound impressive. After a lot of putzing around, they played "Saint Stephen," with an amazing rendition of "Not Fade Away" sandwiched in the middle. This was, I think, the best I heard this time around . . . it seemed like the intro lasted forever. The last notes of "Saint Stephen" blended with the opening of "Morning Dew," a tune that is too rare a treat. This version reminded me of the

quite frequently on the tour. His kidneys must be going. The long delay while he relieved himself go to be a bit of a drag. The jam which followed was unremarkable, except for a fairly well structured little instrumental break, rather jazzy sounding, after "Comes a time." The encore, "Brokedown Palace," was the biggest treat that night.

The last two nights nothing really stands out in my memory. Correction . . . one thing stands out. The night before the last they tried "Jack Straw" for the first time in a couple of years, and fucked it up royally. The final two nights weren't bad, but the band sounded a little tired, and they made more than their usual share of mistakes. That is the way it often goes with multiple night stands by the Dead. They start out well, but peter out toward the end when the energy they threw into the first couple of nights begins to tell on them. Sometimes they have it,

photo: Les Kippel

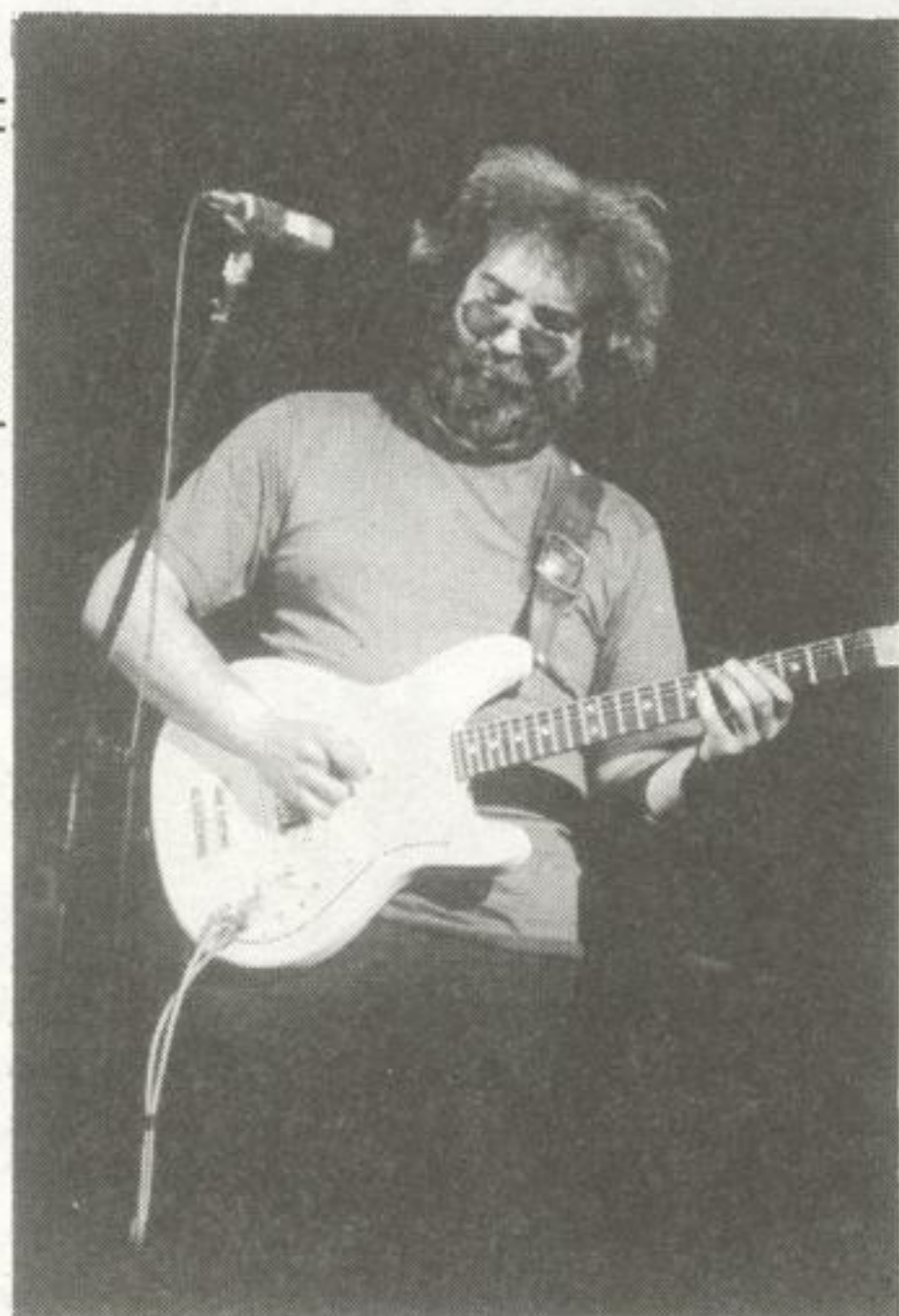
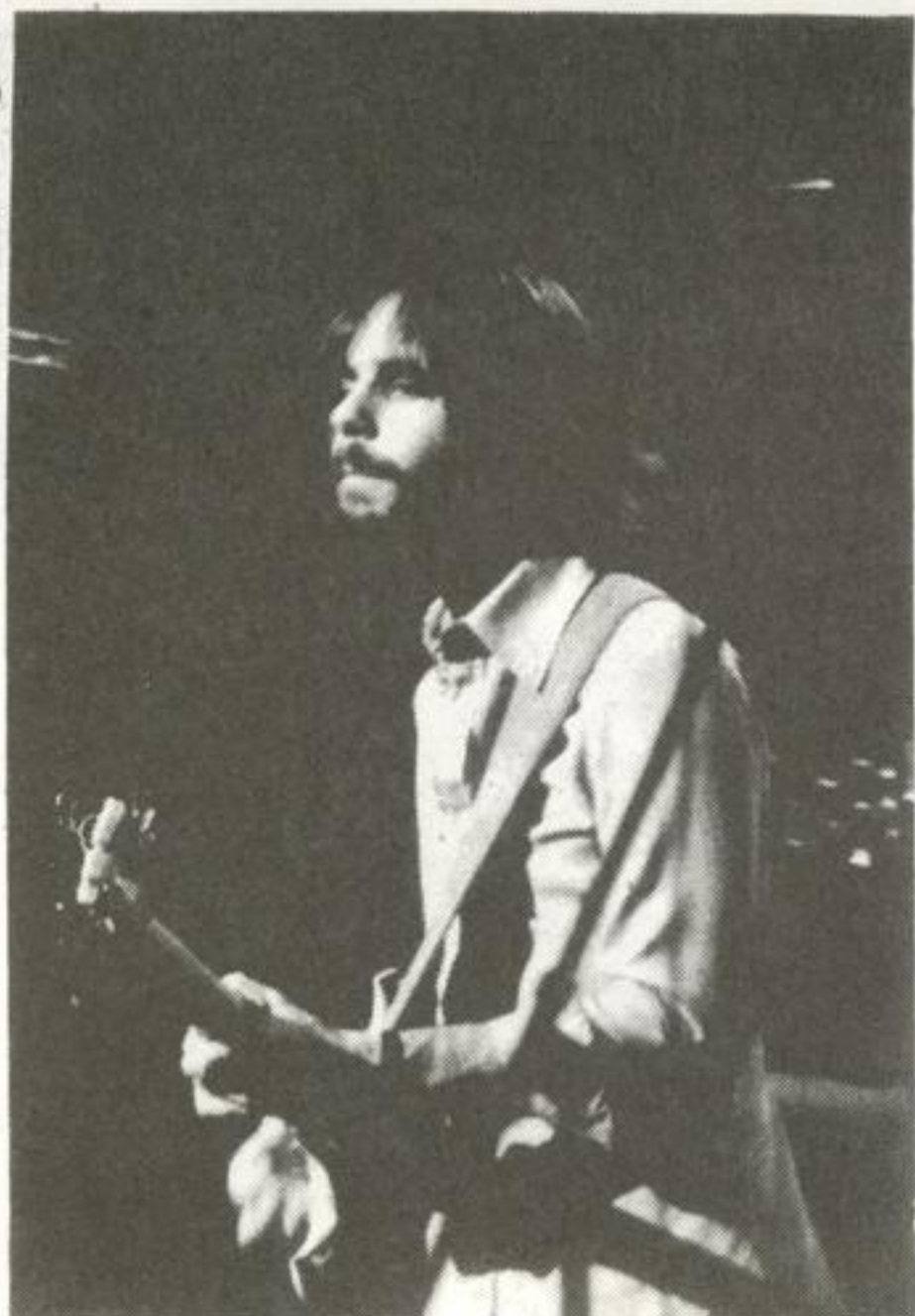


photo: Stanley Wagner



one they did last New Year's Eve, and I thought that one to be about the best I'd ever heard. The encore, "One more Saturday Night," I could have done without.

At the Buffalo War Memorial Auditorium the next night there were a couple of goodies, notably the revival of "Mexicali Blues" and a medley of "Bertha" and "Good Lovin'." They went into a jam from "Estimated Prophet" for the first time, but hardly the last. Since Buffalo, "Estimated Prophet" has come to occupy the position "Truckin'" once held, slot number one in the jam more often than not. It works well in that spot, since it ends with an instrumental stretch flexible enough to adapt to almost anything.

I got a good deal of rest before Hartford, since the tour plowed on through distant territories, leaving me behind. I understand that the shows I missed included all the best ones. So it goes, you know. There's always next time. Hartford, though, was no letdown. It opened with a three song powerhouse medley: "Bertha," "Good Lovin'," and "Sugaree." That must have lasted close to a half hour: it just seemed to flow on and on. The other highlights of the first set were "Candyman" and a new Bob and Donna duet — you pick a title for it. I lean to either "Passenger" or "The Only Game in Town." The second set boasted an outstanding and extremely lengthy jam, featuring both "Estimated Prophet" and "Terrapin." After Hartford, alas, the tour once more left me behind. I envy those in L.A. tonight.

I have only a few comments to make about the current state of the Dead, based on the few shows I saw. They are playing, in my opinion, better than they have in at least six years. I arrive at the six year figure by taking 1970, which I think was quite a good year, and counting forward. They are being in-

ventive, and are taking chances. The shows are looser than they were last year. While the Dead still tend to fall into patterns from night to night, they are pulling some surprising little moves to break out of the patterns. It is once more possible to say that you can't tell exactly what they will do next. Sometimes they have me wondering I think that's a good sign.

What they are playing, they are playing exceptionally well. The Dead sound rehearsed, and together. Things are flowing more easily for them than they have been for a while. They have tightened up some of the lazy spots where they used to doodle, and rearranged a number of songs that were beginning to get stale. Their new material is already classic Dead. "Terrapin" represents Robert Hunter at his creative peak, and the melody that accompanies the lyrics is in turn both plaintive and commanding. I dote on it.

photo: Les Kippel



Right now I would rather listen to "Terrapin" (or mayhap it is "Terrapin Station") than anything the Dead have ever recorded. This is a piece of music that is a totally radical departure for the Dead. It sounds more like a suite by the Incredible String Band than a Garcia/Hunter composition, and has the feel of a modern day Childe Ballad. This perhaps is because it builds itself around a classic parable. "Estimated Prophet" is also a worthy effort, not so much for what it is now, but for what I think it will be with a couple of years work.

I am quite content that the Dead are creating new music for the first time in a while, rather than recycling their history. Also, they are cleaning up the oldies. The direction is good, and I think things are going to get even better when the album comes out. They'll be back, with luck. Maybe I can get some rest before then. Maybe the Dead can even get some. I think they deserve it. Δ

A Dead Scenario:

The making & breaking of a rumor

by Les Kippel

April 27 . . . Knowledgeable sources claim that the Dead will come back to Passaic (where they are this evening in the middle of a three night stand) to do three extra shows over the Memorial Day weekend. One of these will be videotaped, and will feature special guests: Dolly Parton and the New Riders. The ticket sales are to be announced over WNEW-FM the following night, during the live broadcast from the Capitol.

April 28 . . . The live broadcast comes and goes, with no mention of additional shows. John Scher, however, announces ticket sales for the long delayed Dead movie.

April 29 . . . When we ask our sources what the fuck happened, we are told that the Dead have not yet made up their collective mind about the shows, but they still want to do them.

May 4 . . . The last Grateful Dead show in New York ends without an encore.

May 5 . . . Tickets for the movie go on sale, for all dates but June 1st. This

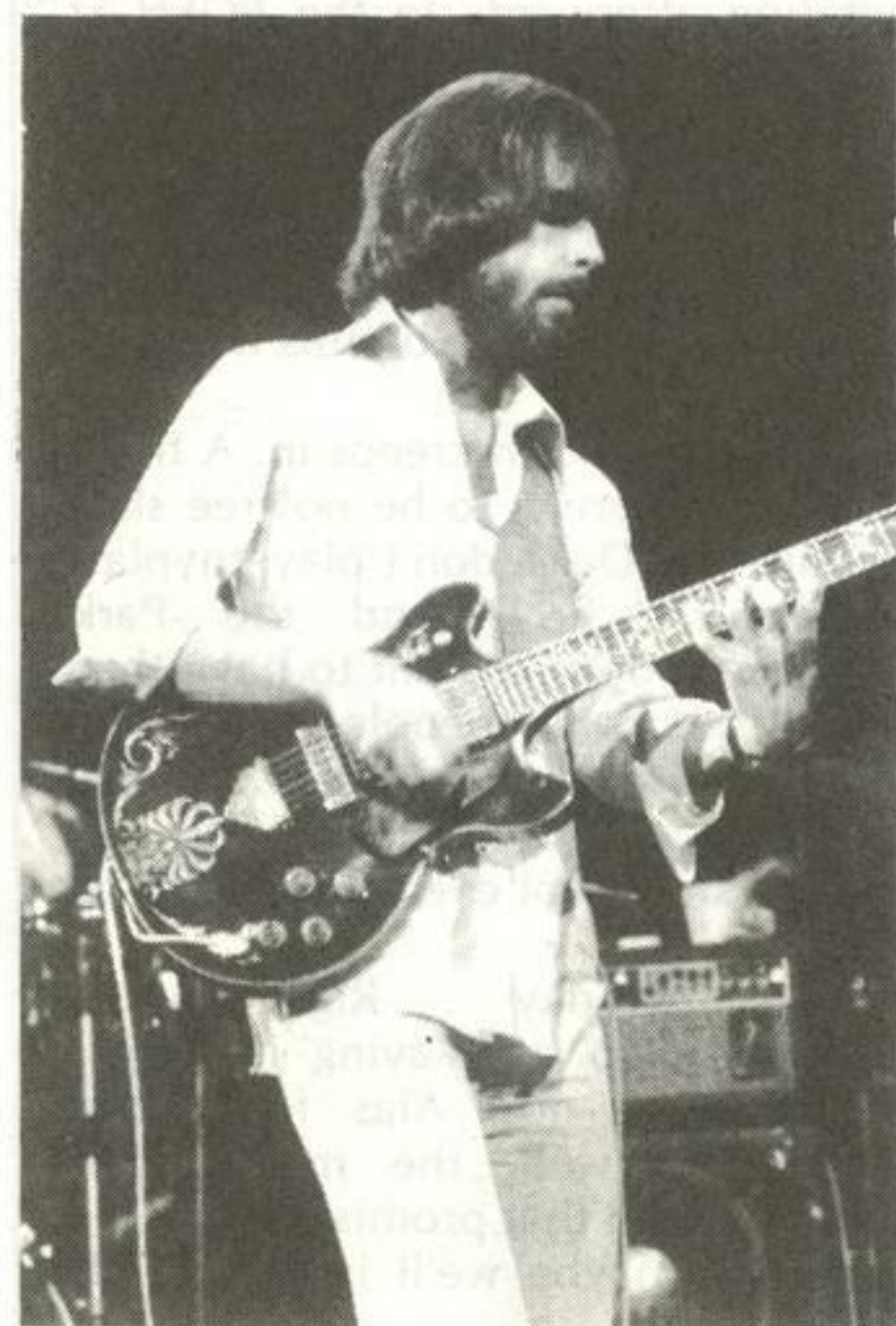


photo: Les Kippel

leads to some speculation concerning what is happening that day. Later that day we are told that the Dead are playing in Central Park on May 31st. We are most sternly warned not to tell anyone. However, by the end of the day at least five people have told us about it. How word *does* spread.

May 6 . . . The New York City Parks Department, having received a bunch of phone calls about the prospective show, including a call from Chicago, wants to cancel the permit. Ron Delsener, John Scher and Scott Muni inform the Parks Department that, if the show is cancelled, they will support Percy Sutton for Mayor, instead of the incumbent, Mayor Beame. The show is on!!!

May 8 . . . Another story . . . it seems there will be a Billboard convention in New York at the same time the movie is due to premiere. The June 1 date is to be a private "industry" showing for the convention. The movie was rushed to completion for this event. Also, the taping at the Capitol is still planned for T.V. and there is still to be the park freebie for the people. Memorial Day weekend looks like a rather busy time for the Dead.

May 18 . . . Three additional dates have been added to the Dead tour; May 25th in Richmond, May 26th in Baltimore, and May 28th in Hartford. Word has it now that the free show won't be in Central Park, but it may be switched to somewhere else, possibly Flushing Meadow Park.

May 24 . . . The first showing of the movie being by invitation only, we at Relix have been extremely privileged to score two tickets to the event. Now we hear that the free show has been shifted back to Central Park.

May 27 . . . Our invitation has arrived. It contains two Ticketron tickets stating "premiere performance," as well as an invitation afterwards to the POSH St. Regis Hotel, for a reception on the roof. Everyone under the sun is getting ready for the Dead show in the park. The action looks good. It doesn't look too good for the shows at the Capitol, as they were supposed to be this weekend. No shows.

May 28 . . . A worm creeps in. A friend insists that there is to be no free show after all. The Dead don't play anyplace but Central Park, and the Parks Department doesn't want to have them and 150,000 other people there. Also, he claims that a couple of band members are going home after the Hartford show, not even waiting for the premiere.

May 30 . . . today . . . Right now the Dead ought to be playing in Central Park. They're not. Alas for broken dreams. Ah well, the movie starts tomorrow, and that promises to be fun. Next time maybe we'll ignore all the rumors.△



photo: Stanley Wagner

First Daze on the East Coast by Audrey Fine

Spectrum — Phila., Pa. + Springfield Civic Center

Well, the Dead returned once again to show the east coast who's number one . . . and I must say they proved it well this time. The magic was in the air the moment I stepped out of the car and into the Spectrum in Philadelphia, oddly enough the first stop on the tour. Remembering the June '76 "Mini-Tour," I'd say that the Dead do not enjoy playing Philly, due to the *only* promoter in the city, Electric Factory Concerts. It's been years since the Dead played the Spectrum, and it's too bad they played there this time around.

The show was hot, and even though it was the Spectrum, the sound was great. The first set, one of the best I've heard in a while, knocked everybody out. It opened with "Promised Land," loud and fast, and then "Mississippi Half Step" tore the place up. "Looks like Rain," "Deal," "El Paso" and "Tennessee Jed," all songs I've heard played countless times followed, and all sounded better than ever. The sound is louder on this tour than on the last few, and those vocals are so sweet now. Everything sounds a bit funkier than before, and there are new licks all over the place. Next in line came a new Weir tune, "Estimated Prophet," a catchy tune with great lyrics. I imagine that one will become a single. "Fenario," real sweet, and "Playing in the Band," featuring a great jam, ended the set. They broke for almost an hour, one of those "short breaks. . ."

The second set was good, even though it didn't raise the intensity as much as it should have. "Scarlet Begonias" into another "new-old" song, "Fire on the Mountain," opened the set.

"Fire on the Mountain" was originally supposed to be the title track of Mickey Hart's second solo album, which was never released. It's a beautiful song, Garcia's vocals as excellent as the three part harmonies. Following that was "If I Had My Way," changed a bit. Weir phrases the verses differently, and the chorus is shouted out in a stiffer way than before. Nevertheless, as always, it was great. Garcia slowed things down at this point with "It must've been the Roses." Then the tempo picked up with "Dancing in the Streets," a Philadelphia favorite. In the jam, Weir sang a snatch of an old Muddy Waters tune, "Mojo." It was real short, and really good. Things progressed into "The Wheel," and then into the best (in everybody's opinion) new song yet, "Terrapin." It's a really heavy piece. It's also amazingly versatile, and they use it almost everywhere in the shows. That ended with a blast, in mid-note, as it were. Remember that we were in Philly. It was midnight; the show was over. "Terrapin" was a great ending, but a cliffhanger. Everybody wanted more, but there was no encore. For every 15 minutes a band playing for Electric Factory goes past midnight, there is a \$250 charge. Union fees, so I'm told. Larry Magid, chief honcho at EFC, leaves it to the band to pay the fee. No way the Dead would do that, since there are a lot of old gripes between them. Also, the crowd booed extremely loudly when the lights went on, another reason not to come back . . . So, unless they had ended their second set by at least 20 to 12, they couldn't do an encore. Even without a comeback, one of the best shows of the tour; and so, on to Springfield. . . .

On the road again & rockin' through St. Louis

by John Idoux

. . . Saturday night at the Springfield Civic Center, a cold rainy night, but the Dead warmed things up quite well. Garcia opened the show with "Sugaree," excellent as always. He loves to play that song, and as an opener it's hot. It brings things up to that high level we all love so much. Then it was Bobby's turn, for "Cassidy," played better than ever. We heard a bit too much of that one last year, but it's a lot higher now. Then followed "Loser," "New, New Minglewood Blues," and "Row Jimmy," all, like the night before, done better than ever. Next came a nice surprise. "Me and my Uncle," played for the first time since 1975. "Ramble on Rose," "It's all over now" and the "Scarlet Begonias"/"Fire on the Mountain" medley ended the first set. A nice first half, high, loud, and fast.

Another "short break," and we were rolling again. This time they picked up the intensity, to top the level of the first set. This set opened with "Estimated Prohpet," a perfect beginning. Love that new stuff . . . "Bertha" was next, a little slower than before, and with a nice new vocal curve added to the ending "anymores . . ." "The Music never stopped" then followed, but Donna's first lines weren't amplified enough. Fortunately Healy caught it the next time around. And then . . . "Help on the Way"/"Slipknot"/"Franklin's Tower," *incredibly high*. They kept going back into "roll away the dew;" it seemed Garcia just didn't want to stop singing it . . . That drifted into "Around and Around," winding into "Going down the Road," and so into "Not Fade Away" to end the set. Naturally, since it was Saturday, they returned to do "One more Saturday Night" as an encore.

Everybody on stage sounded great for both shows; all the practice they must have had over the winter in the studio was very evident. Phil's sounding great, and Mickey and Bill go together well on everything. Keith's improved lots too. He provides many new electric sounds . . . in some places it sounded like a harpsichord (but it wasn't). Donna's sounding sweeter than ever, and as for our favorite two guitar players . . . beautiful! They both still blow the lyrics all over the place, but we're all used to that . . .

The Dead never cease to amaze me, always coming up with new ways to improve upon their old songs. The first two shows demonstrated that they were not going to perform similar sets every night, as was the case last year. I couldn't say which was better, since they had very different high points. Each show is a new experience. And so, the opening weekend of the tour was over. As we wound back down the highway to New York in the rain, I felt exhilarated, my head filled with new licks, new lyrics, and excitement over the shows still to come. I'll see them so many times, but I'll never get enough. Δ

Sunday Evening, May 15, 1977: a hot, unairconditioned night at the Arena in St. Louis.

This was the Grateful Dead's first concert in St. Louis since 1974. They just bypassed the place on recent tours. Surprisingly, only about 12 to 14 thousand filled the arena, which is no small cozy hall.



Photo: Les Kippel

Throughout the show the audience was subdued and quiet, there being many older Deadheads around instead of lots of 13 year old kids. Fortunately, there were very few screams for older songs. There was never a rush for the stage, as the security folks kept virtually all the fans out of the aisles and in their seats. It was nice that the crowd wasn't rowdy, but too bad it was so difficult to dance . . . still, the three jesters/clowns waltzing around the main floor were nice to see.

As for the Dead . . . The music, starting with a rather laid back "Bertha" that segued speedily into "Good Lovin'," was different. The Dead have started anew, redefining their musical horizons, and pushing past the posted boundaries. Gems from the past are much less relaxed than they were a few years ago. The beat, a syncopated rhythm, kept the place moving and rocking. Bob's shouting into the mike, the band's driving and rocking, and the resurrection of forgotten songs (such as "New, New Minglewood Blues") and

their wealth of new material all made for a very good evening. There really is nothing like a Grateful Dead concert.

Older songs are being reworked, some sprouting new riffs, such as "Tennessee Jed," which had a new two line riff added near its end to mess with people's minds. "Dancing in the Streets" closed the first set-what a way for the Dead to close! Starting with slowly pacing drums, at first it was almost unrecognizable. We couldn't perceive it as "Dancing" until Bob and Donna started singing. It had a more rhythmic beat . . . catchy enough to dance to . . . with lots of bounce. At the end, it fell into a vocal part accompanied only by drums, which went on forever . . . for just so long . . . it was great. Dancing on the seats, for sure.

All the new songs played were well received, and recalling the Dead's past leisurely pace, it was surprising to hear them rocking so hard and playing so fast. The crowd appreciated the unfamiliar songs enough to stand and applaud for them, and this was no polite gesture. Songs like "If I had my way" and "The only game in town" hit as hard as a bolt of lightning. The new songs had power, an almost speedfreak rush. All the jams in Saint Louis were based on newer compositions. This night there was no need to rely on pieces of **Anthem**. The interesting melodic changes and runs in this new music are a breath of air, and I hope this progression continues. I love to hear the old songs too, but it is nice to hear a band changing evolving and searching, extending expanding and creating, as they again probe for new music.

The Dead rocked, but not in a heavy metal way. They just weren't as laid back as in the past. They still have the complexity that characterized them in the beginning, the precision they have picked up along the way, and a crop of new ideas. Not least, they're playing harder. Indications are positive for musical growth; progression is evident; and the Dead's wheel is turning fast again. Δ

Footnotes . . . It sure was hot — we drank over a gallon of water from a milk jug we brought in . . . a definition of "Deadhead" I got from a dictionary goes . . . no shit . . . Deadhead; n. one who obtains any privilege without paying for it . . . from your correspondent lost somewhere in the Midwest . . . roving around, wondering where we parked the car this time . . . hey, is that it, no, is that it . . . is that it . . .

Something to Dream On

by Bob Grappone

April 25, 26, 27, 30
May 3, 4 . . . at the Capital Theatre in Passaic, N.J., & the Palladium, N.Y.C.

Eventually this article had to be written. I mean, I put it off for two weeks; but the feeling is still all over me, and I just can't seem to get that music out of my head. The Dead have come and gone, you see; but having spent six nights being gently swayed, softly cajoled, pummelled, pushed and finally shot through a cannon, it's a tough maneuver to function normally.

Naturally, you don't need to be told all this. Anyone who has attended even one show knows that special magic, that glow in the eyes, that buzzing feeling as you hit the street after the Dead have methodically built their particular mood for the evening. And even when they're not up to their best, there's always that moment which may come at any time and send you out of the park. It always happens; granted it needed to be found at times, and often it was too long in coming — but it always came, and it sure felt golden.

The Capital theater would make a fine airplane hanger. As it stands now, it resembles a large suburban living room. At one end there are two huge television screens, which do a pretty good job of monitoring the action on the stage, without detracting from it. The sight lines are no problem and it becomes increasingly easy to sit back and stare at the video ghosts. Indeed it is just like home, for you see airplane hangers don't exactly carry sound all that well, especially since someone must have forgotten the extra speakers back in the truck.

Despite all this, the Dead came out scorching on Monday night. From their opener, "Minglewood Blues," the band immediately inhabited the stage. The appearance of the much awaited new music was soon upon us: Keith playing synthesizer with Jerry on wah-wah pedal as Weir barked out "Estimated Prophet" (something friend Larry described as early detective movie music); the opening beats of "Happiness is Drumming" from Diga led into "Fire on the Mountain" which has a chorus and tempo that sticks like the first time you heard "Eyes of the World," "Terrapin Station," a lilting melody which sneaks "from the northwest corner of a brand new crescent moon," and finally crashes as the train comes screaming around the bend. . . .

But the highlight of the night was a high energy version of "Brown Eyed Women" . . . just when everyone is getting tired of it — all of a sudden you're on your feet and you can't seem to recall just how it all happened. But better things seem to be in store: Keith's playing the organ, Jerry is dancing, Bob is growling and the drums are thumping; however, Donna still looks like a secretary and where is Phil's mike?

Tuesday was oldies night, with rather lackluster performances of many standards. Nice versions of "Eyes of the World," "Me and my Uncle", and "Sugar Magnolia" . . . but everything seemed to trip rather than race along. The evening did bring about an interesting bit of Dead elitism, though. My jaded friends and I were discussing all the negative aspects of the show

during the ride back to N.Y., when the lovely Rhoda, experiencing her first Dead show, finally broke in and wanted to know why we were all badmouthing the best concert she had ever seen in her life. Sheepishly, we all shook our heads and realized she was right: it was the best she had ever seen, and the Dead really had managed to do it again after all.

Wednesday night was radio broadcast night, and the best of the Jersey performances. A standard first set was highlighted by a plaintive "Loser," but the Dead's opening sets have become rather sluggish and short. It's become a rare night when things really get off early. This night was no exception, although at times we found them attempting to break new ground . . . A beautiful synthesized "Row Jimmy" was an example.

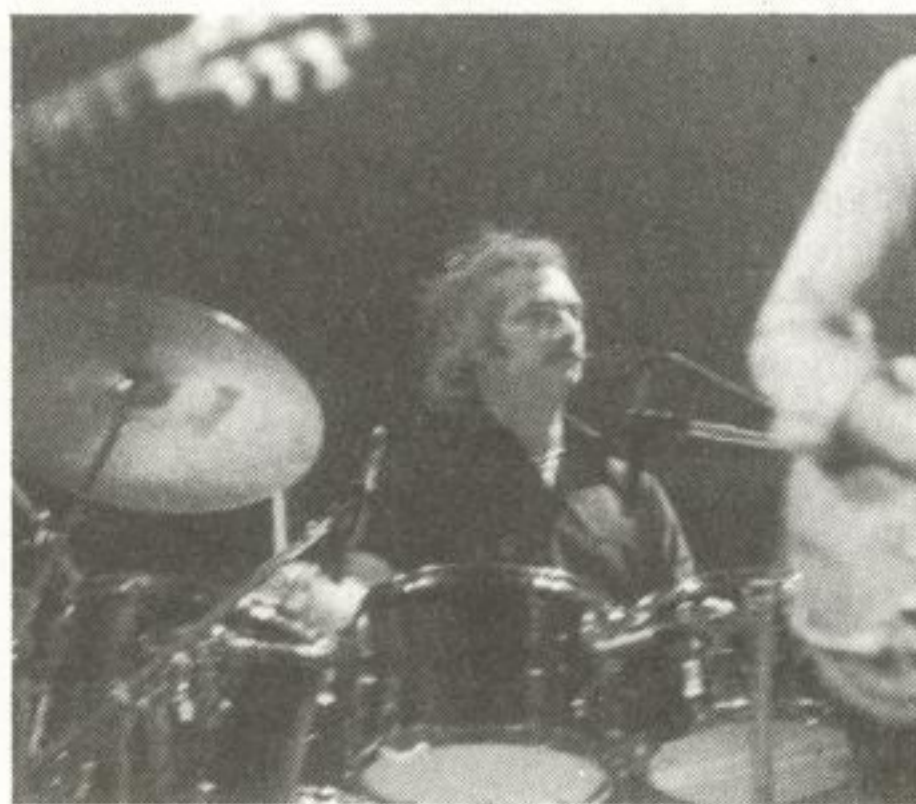
The second set however, was indeed something very special. "Estimated Prophet" led into "Scarlet Begonias," which easily sailed into "Fire on the

In Line

It was a stormy Friday afternoon. I had just woken from a restless night's sleep. Upstairs breakfast was being served: bacon, tea and toast, not bad for a bum who can't afford a cup of coffee. Soon I was out in the car, off to Saint Joe's college, where I was to meet my girlfriend. A strange urge was building inside of me. I didn't know what it was, so I continued my journey. There she was, a runnin' toward the car, books in hand, a smile on her face. Off we went, though I still had something eating at me. Inspiration! Said I to her, "let's take a ride to the Spectrum, seeing as how we're already in Philadelphia." A good idea, I thought, and she agreed.

We talked of nonsense on the ride. I wondered aloud how many crazies would be camped out. She laughed that I was out of my mind, but the ride continued. The conversation advanced to the point of insanity. I talked of crowds and shows, as she called me a madman. The wheels kept turning, and our goal came into sight. I laughed. There was a tent, there were sleeping bags, and two cars full of people to boot. If I was crazy, I wasn't the only one. I got out to see what was happening, and walked toward the main office, passing a guy who looked like he was there for the same reason I was. He said to me: "talk to the guys in the Javelin." "Why," asked I, "I only came to see about tickets." "Talk to the guys in the Javelin," said he. I was convinced. Knock, knock, knocking on the car window I attracted the attention of five guys, all pretty loaded, who looked at me as if I was the one who was nuts.

photos: Les Kippel



Mountain" and a great new arrangement of "Good Lovin." "Ramblin' Rose" and "If I Had My Way" followed beautifully, while "Terrapin Station" blasted on for good measure. Finally, the opening chords of "Morning Dew" broke the air and Jerry found that stairway to the stars on which he has his personal mark. The ending crescendos ran, jumped and leaped from the stage, as Jerry announced to massive agreement, that it really *doesn't* matter anyway. The encore, "Johnny B. Goode" seemed an unnecessary afterthought, for they had found the night's peak.

With a thankful goodbye to Passaic, I anxiously awaited Saturday night at the Palladium, a mere eight blocks and six years after the Dead's last Fillmore East gig, which still is nestled fondly in many a local Dead freak's heart. While the Jersey shows were entertaining, Saturday night's show became a work of art

A surprising and outstanding first set

by Marc Koff

The guy nearest the window rolled it down to ask if I was there for tickets. I said yes. He said, "staying the night?" I allowed as how I was. "Sign the book," said he. Ahah! Number 17. I signed. Still rather lost, I wandered back to the car.

After a long, intense Friday night, loud voices penetrated my light sleep. "Roll call!!!!" exclaimed my buddy, and I was up in a flash, shoving my boots on my feet, out into the cold, cold air, and into line. The guards had some fantasy of putting over a thousand people into line, single file. It couldn't be done. After a few minutes of attempting the impossible, one of the guards went inside and got a bunch of numbers on separate pieces of paper. Each person then got a number equivalent to the number they had signed their name next to coming into the parking lot. Ticket distribution soon became very orderly. It was good for everybody, especially the people who busted their asses to get there two or three days early.

Tickets went on sale at nine a.m. Saturday, with the usual insanity. All those cold, tired, and stoned people hooted and hollered as each group of five people climbed the steps to the ticket office. It turned out that I was number fifteen, because numbers twelve and thirteen had given up. I got my tickets, in rows twelve and thirteen, after waiting since early Friday afternoon (not to mention numerous side trips from my house to the Spectrum starting Tuesday). It was all well worth it. I have my tickets, good seats, and I'm going to see the Dead one more time. Δ

included Weir's gutsy interpretation of "It's All Over Now," a reggae "Bertha;" Jerry's beautiful "Fenario," and a great coupling of "Mama Tried" and "Me and My Uncle." The band seemed ecstatic, and each song was played to the hilt. Naturally, this was aided greatly by the boosted sound system. Each and every note was crystal clear, and it often appeared that they were literally shaking the ancient theater's foundations.

This night's second set included all the new material, plus a marvelous uplifting jam of "St. Stephen," "Not Fade Away," "Stella Blue," and "Saturday Night." Here was truly one of the finest of all Dead shows, and the crowd that jammed 14th Street afterwards hummed with a surge of exhilaration that seemed to spread out into all the avenues of the town, and I'm sure lit a few lights in the ramshackle vacant theater eight blocks away, in which the Dead had so many times won our hearts.

Tuesday night became the most varied and unique of the week. The Dead seemed to be relaxed after a night off, and played their longest and possibly most energetic show of the series. The extended first set included such favorites as "Deal," "Good Lovin'," another beautiful "Row Jimmy" and "Fenario" and a terrific "Music Never Stopped." Everything was played "up" and strung out as far as it could go. A nice touch was the reappearance of "Jack Straw," although it was obvious that the tune needed some further rehearsal, for many verses were off cue, words were forgotten, and harmonies were non-existent. But it was interesting to see them actually trying out and working on a new arrangement on stage. I'm certain, in a week or so, it all got ironed out.

The second set this night, was a throwback to 1974, in its long jam of "Eyes of the World." "Wharf Rat," "Not Fade Away" and "Around and Around." A surprising "Sugaree" turned into a Garcia extravaganza, as each verse was accented by a power drive into the stratosphere. As always, the most amazing thing about the Dead is their ability to do this to virtually any song when they care to; a fact that is truly

amazing in itself, but makes you wonder what could happen if they did it on every one! As it stands now, it becomes a cat and mouse game with the audience, for you just never know when they will strike and pulverize a crowd with great waves of sound. This night's show ended with a happy, sloppy version of "Uncle John's Band," which succeeded in sending us all home delighted and ready for one last time.

Wednesday night's show was a bit of an enigma, taken as the ending of a week long series of shows at one theater. We like to think that a bunch of shows in one hall should all relate to one another, but this is not always the case. Each night is a separate mood, and the creation, buildup and sustaining of the particular mood is the only objective each night. This show seemed odd as a closeout, but as a singular experience, it was quite satisfying.

An unusual first set began with a coupling of "Mississippi Uptown" with "Big River," which has become an echo of "Cumberland Blues," especially in its opening. It also included some nice versions of older tunes like "Must Have Been the Roses," "Cassidy," "They Love Each Other," "Ship of Fools," and ended with a long "Dancin' in the Streets."

Part two was short and simple. All the new music was first, followed by an extended space jam, which occurred during "Playing in the Band." After some long cosmic detours Jerry crooned out "Comes A Time," and roared to a close with a return to the original chorus, and that was it. There was no encore, and we were all left with the feeling that we had, as usual, seen merely the tip of the iceberg.

So what can one say after all this? We, the Dead, and the times have changed since it all began. Still there remains that rather special feeling of community, sharing, energy dispersion, and (dare I say it) love; all of which has seemed so sorely missing of late. The Dead represent it, the audience responds to it, and it is in this electrical give-and-take that we find the essence of what the experience is all about. We're still *all* playing in the "heart of gold band." Δ



photo: Les Kippel



photo: Stanley Wagner



Chris Hillman melts his athletic frame clad only in track shorts into the motel's easy chair and hiccups through a chorus of "Strangers in the Night". He then explains the tattoo on his naked arm may look like an eagle ["Glen Frey put that there"] from several feet away, but it's actually a parrot and he loathes it. He's one ex-Byrd who's been given the bird.

"Yeah, I've been screwed just like every other musician", he gets solemn. "You name me one who hasn't and I'll call him and tell him he's a liar".

Hillman's past is a series of crumbling associations: Byrds, Burritos, Manassas, and Souther, Hillman, Furay. Now that he's leader of his own pack, he still shuns the center ring.

"I feel confident but I'd like to get the other guys involved in doing their own things", he philosophizes on his septet. "I'd like to lead it and guide it just because I've made enough mistakes in the last 12 years to avoid those pitfalls, but I'm not after a solo thing or king of the mountain or trying to compete in that arena because there's too many people better at it than me". Then with a summation of where he's been since his "Mr. Tam-

bourine Man" days as a shy bass player in the shadows, he said, "I'm a band player; I've always been a band player even though it's called the Chris Hillman Band and I'm singing a lot of my songs".

In a feisty moment, he thought he'd perform as "Tate LaBiannca" while percussionist Joe Lala suggested "Bathwater Enema Band" (already in use by Grace Slick's husband, Skip Johnson). It would make just as much, nay, even more sense for them to be called the Flying Burrito Bros. than for the current holders of that tag. Sneaky Pete is the sole survivor of the original ill-fated flock, and Hillman is enraged that they kept the name. Conversely, he holds no grudge against Roger McGuinn for retaining the Byrds' handle when he enlisted new personnel.

"Roger made all those tunes happen and he carried it on and he was basically the leader of the Byrds, although we all fought and tried to be leaders", Hillman explained. Living in Boulder, Colorado, these days, the main thing he's leading is a less frenetic life.

"If I wanted to be a rock star, man, I'd go live in L.A. and hang out at the clubs and wear platform shoes", he thumbed

his nose at the plastic mecca. "I just want to try and keep making better records and keep my show going and when it ceases to be fun, I'll go do something else. I'll sell real estate or play tennis or something — I'm not gonna get all upset over it. We'll become cult satin worshippers."

"People say, 'Jeez, how come you're still playing clubs? You've been doing this so long.' Well, if I'm having a good time, that's all that counts. I'm certainly not in this for the money. If you approach it to make money, your art is going to suffer as witnessed by the new Flying Burrito Bros."

Hillman was heading toward Burrito-style country while the Byrds were still in flight. "Time Between" and "Girl with No Name" from **Younger than Yesterday** "were the first two country rock songs ever." For **Sweetheart of the Rodeo** he called in Gram Parsons who he had met in a bank, and did a completely down home album. "Roger was skeptical", Hillman remembered when Parsons entered the group. "He thought Gram was sort of a monster in a rhinestone suit."

Though Hillman and Parsons eventually left to form the Burritos,



His pants are tight- Will it be all right?

by Clark Peterson

Hillman now wants to rejoin McGuinn for an album since they clicked so well on **The Notorious Byrd Brothers**. McGuinn has expressed interest. Hillman would also swoon over another chance at Byrd reunion part 2, hoping the public has forgotten their first try. To top that off, he and J.D. Souther and Richie Furay jokingly plan *their* reunion record in 1980.

Hillman booked Criteria Studios in Miami for three weeks in January where his follow up to last May's **Slippin' Away** was scheduled to be recorded. Engineers Ron and Howie Albert, who were on hand for Hillman last time, not to mention both Manassas albums and **Layla**, were asked in again. Watch for more lyrics about his rise and fall in both relationships and career.

"I just write what I feel at the time", he said, admitting some themes have been replayed. "**Sweetheart** was done as a concept in the sense of the musical style, but I can't even imagine writing a whole album of songs that were tied together as a concept. Some of those tunes on the solo album I saved from S.H.F. and I'm sure Richie and J.D. saved some too. After the second

album in S,H,F and I'm sure Richie and J.D. saved some too. After the second album in S,H,F we knew we would do our own albums because it just wasn't jelling as a group. We all parted company on good terms and . . . we're all having a better time on our own. The positive part of S,H,F was that it set us up to do our own things."

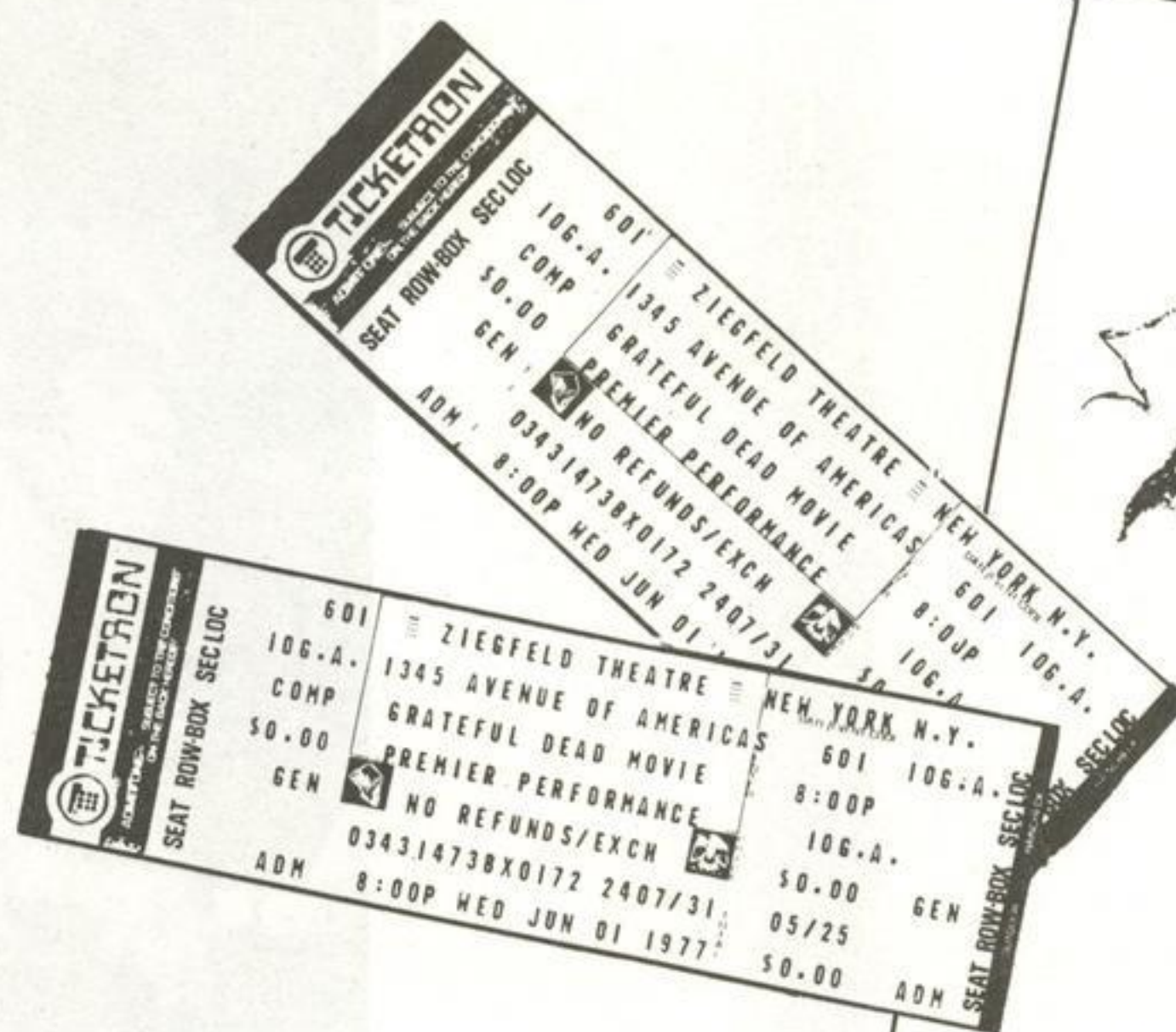
Hillman's thing is writing, singing, and playing either guitar, mandolin or base. The latter is banished to the studio when he tours.

"That's subject to change", he allowed, conceding he prefers to ply the songs on guitar since he wrote them that way. "I loved watching Paul McCartney play the bass — that inspired me but it would take me a month or two of real hard rehearsal to play bass and sing lead. There are two conflicting rhythms and one of them suffers."

And what will this 31 year-old, curly-haired (he doesn't use Dep anymore) devil in disguise do next? He answers with characteristic jocular . . .

"What I'm going to do is get a rhythm machine and a bass drum and I'll be Jesse Fuller". Δ

Review



The Grateful Dead,
Arista Records,
Monarch Entertainment and
Noteworthy Enterprises,
cordially invite you
and a guest
to attend the world premier of
the Grateful Dead Movie

Wednesday, June 1, 1977 at 8:15 p.m.
The Ziegfeld Theatre
141 West 54th Street
New York City, New York
Reception immediately following the premier
The St. Regis Roof
St. Regis Hotel
5th Avenue and 55th Street

The Dead Movie

by Jerry Moore

Last summer, as a guest of the Flying Burrito Brothers, I saw a Kingfish/Burritos show in Asbury Park. I recall a better than passable show, but the season was eventful enough to fog my memories. Only one incident from that evening comes through the haze which any degree of clarity. At one point I was in a dressing room with Kingfish, scrounging for beer and eavesdropping shamelessly. John Scher, fresh from California, came bubbling into the room. He had seen, while west, a rough cut of the Grateful Dead movie. Locating Bob Weir, he began raving about how much he loved it. I do confess that, at the time, I thought the man's senses were addled.

Now I know how he felt. The movie premiered yesterday (June 1st), at the Ziegfeld, a moderately classy midtown theater, and I was there. I love it. That's love with a capital L, absolute adoration.

My adoration isn't entirely uncritical, so I ought to dispose of my quibbles before going into why I find this film so spellbinding. First: the musical selections lean toward the commercial. I find "One more Saturday Night," for example, somewhat dispensable. There are, however, some exemplary pieces of music presented, such as "Morning Dew" and "Eyes of the World." Actually, since I was expecting a visual

presentation of **Steal Your Face**. I was quite pleased with the soundtrack. Second: the focus, lighting, and camera angles tend to be somewhat haphazard. This might turn off a reviewer for a regular newspaper, but I think it adds a certain charm, a degree of spaciness. Things never seem to be too well focused at a Dead concert. Third: the film has some ragged edges indicative of hasty cutting. Notably, some of the film splices are quite evident from sudden changes in the audience noise level. That would have been quite easy to correct with a little care. Another obvious indication of a rush job is the presence of "He's Gone" in the final credits, but not in the film. Fourth, and last: the movie was intended for 1975 release. It was, I gather, intended to be a statement by a band in at least temporary retirement. The release of such a documentary by a band currently quite active makes little sense. The film is quite welcome now, but it would have been much more of a treat two years ago. I suspect that the main reason for releasing it at this time is to recoup some of the money that went into making it.

Minor complaints or not, as I have said, I love the film. I don't really care why it was released; I don't care about the rough edges and poor techniques; I don't even care that half the songs

included paled on me years ago. I am enamoured of it not because it presents the Dead at their best (it doesn't), but because it somehow manages to capture perfectly the ambience of a Dead concert. It feels like a dead show. The usual craziness is quite graphically depicted.

The rank and file Dead freaks are the real stars of this picture, dilated pupils and all. My favorite Deadhead sequence involves a totally wired out electrician desperately trying to talk his way through the stage door, with ultimate success. Another great scenario features a paranoid who feels ripped off because he won't get any royalties for being a member of the audience. Now that he's a star he'll probably be even more pissed, if he isn't shamed into going into hiding. The frequent glimpses, through the camera's eye of blissful faces in the crowd are marvelous.

The film is full of surprises. Not only does it catch Dead freaks, it catches the poor straight people caught up in the confusion, like the guy behind the candy counter, and a couple of entertaining security guards. It catches the Hell's Angels, and it catches Bill Graham at his best. The cameras roam quite freely around the dance floor, the surrounding corridors, the stage and backstage areas, and the great out-



doors. Perhaps best of all, the film catches the roadies both setting up and breaking down that awesome sound system, and unwinding with an equally awesome tank of gas. The "tank" scenes look decadent enough to appeal to Lou Reed.

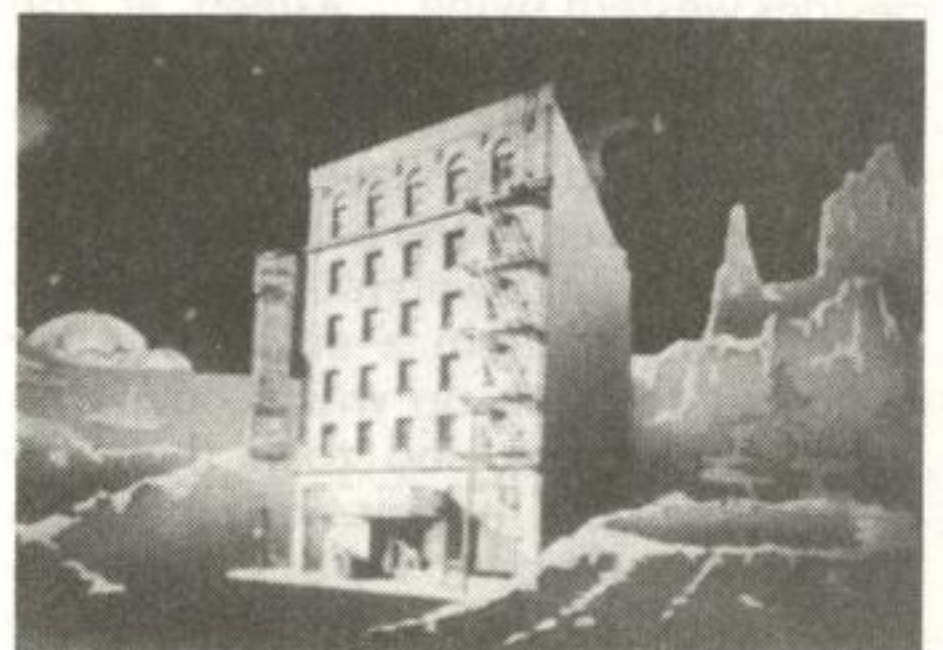
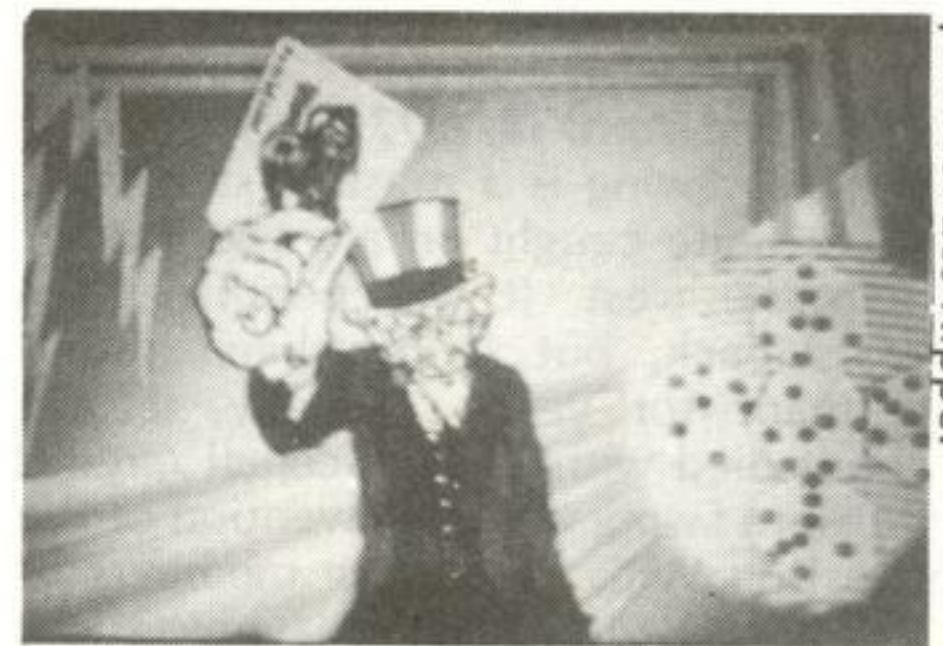
Needless to say, the movie offers some entertaining glimpses of members of the Dead: Phil Lesh's maniac laugh on finding he can make his bass feed back with the help of a movie camera: Jerry Garcia storming into the dressing room muttering "Where the fuck's the water?" The film doesn't show anybody in the band doing anything illegal, of course.

Most of the program revolves around the events at Winterland in October 1974, but two of the best sequences are unrelated. The film opens with a great piece of animation, which uses some of the second side of Garcia's first solo album for music, as well as "U.S. Blues," before cutting to the stage. I wish that a lot more animation had been used. The sequence which had the most effect on me was the one which closed the first half of the movie (like a Dead show, the movie is in two "sets," with an intermission in between). To a background of previously recorded tunes, "Saint Stephen," "The Golden Road" and "Ripple," the film presents a montage of old photos of the Dead, their friends, and key places from their

past: a couple of minutes of very moving history. The mood evoked is not so much nostalgia as melancholy. For as long as the sequence lasted I had the blues for a time gone for good.

One more point is deserving of mention. While the filming tends to be rough, the sound quality is superlative. I have never heard a movie with a soundtrack this clear and powerful. For that matter, I haven't even heard a Dead concert where the sound was like this. The climax of "Morning Dew" is simply overwhelming when presented in this fashion. Interestingly, when the cameras roam out into the halls, the sound changes to an approximation of what might be heard out there. Obviously a great deal of care was used in the mix.

This whole film is history, a sloppy but fascinating look at the Dead as they were at the tail end of 1974, the close of one phase of their ongoing story. It has no message to convey, and makes no effort to do anything but capture a Dead concert on film. Consequently, it is a treat for Dead freaks. I rather think it will die the death in the marketplace, since I doubt that there are enough Deadheads around to make a venture like this pay off. I doubt that the Dead movie is going to be a commercial threat to **Star Wars**. Still, I love it for what it is, and consider it a most worthy effort. Δ



Photos: Les Kippel



Concert Reviews

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL: l to r. top row: Ray Benson, Floyd Domino, Chris O'Connell, Chris York, Link Davis Jr., Tony Garnier, Pat Ryan, Bill Mabry; bottom row: Leroy Preston, Lucky Oceans, Danny Levin

Asleep At The Wheel

by Jerry Moore

Other End, April 18, 1977

Western Swing is a musical style that never quite caught on anywhere other than the west. It was popular there years back, but it has been rather dormant for years. Actually, it just about died with the dancehall circuit. Western Swing was the invention of the late Bob Wills. There are members of his band, the Texas Playboys, still playing music today, but Bob Wills, ironically, passed on just as his music was finally going national. Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen, one of my favorite bands and surely the most entertaining group that ever emerged from Michigan, were dabblers in the form, but not really serious about it.

In 1971, Cody adopted a struggling band, called Asleep at the Wheel. While Cody and the Airmen were based in a number of other musical forms besides western swing, Asleep at the Wheel played nothing else. They also had the advantage of being from the country instead of College. The original members moved to the Bay Area, where they found things weren't quite as rosy as they looked from a distance. They managed to hook up with Cody, who found them jobs and took them on tour. At the time of their first album, on United Artists, they were a six piece band, with no following. They have

since moved to Epic and then to Capitol, on which label they have a couple of albums, as well as their current one, **The Wheel**. Over the years they have moved from six pieces to an average of twelve, and have become a much better performing band than they were initially. I have seen them play a few times a year for the last few years, and they get better and better.

I heard them play most recently at the Other End, and I was most satisfied. This club is a strange place to see a band this size, for it has a tiny stage. There is scarcely room to stand twelve people on it, and the problem gets worse when some of the twelve require the assistance of amplifiers, a drum kit, or a piano to make music. The confusion on the stage was marvelous to behold, particularly over in the right corner, which was stuffed with two fiddlers and three horn men, including guest Andy Stein with his immense baritone sax. The only place on stage that didn't look too bad was the left side, where Floyd Domino had his piano to hid behind.

It was a great set. I'm sure the place would have been up and dancing if not for all the tables. The standout tunes were "The Wheel," which is an instrumental from the new album, and "Somebody stole his body," a great gospel sing along, also from the new

record. The biggest surprise of the show came when they unleashed saxophone player Link Davis Jr. to play accordion and sing on "Jo Le Blon" and "The Cajun Stripper," two cajun tunes, both, I believe, written by Link Davis Sr. Most of the bands I usually see are a little too set in their ways to consider using anything as antique as an accordion. For that matter, most electric bands stop at one fiddle, and upright basses are almost unheard of outside bluegrass. The most entertaining piece of showmanship of the evening came during "Bump Bounce Boogie," when steel guitarist Lucky Oceans did his imitation of a dancing mannikin. He put on a pair of enormous sunglasses, lurched around the stage, and finally jumped up on top of the piano, and pulled down some pieces of the ceiling.

Asleep at the Wheel put on a good show. They play music that has no pretensions, and they have learned to swing along really well. They are working fertile ground, for western swing never got as far as it deserved. The dancehall circuit is gone for good. Still, if they keep pushing it, Asleep at the Wheel may yet manage to revive western swing. I wish them well, for I have enjoyed every set I've ever seen them play. This is one band that deserves to make it. Δ

Southside Johnny

by Jim Samuel

Camden Community College,
May 11, 1977

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes in Lincoln Auditorium at Camden County Community College in Blackwood, N.J. promised to be an enjoyable show but managed to prove itself otherwise. After an initial argument with the Jukes about my tape recorder (which I lost and the tape recorder got to spend the show backstage) I settled back in my seat at Lincoln Auditorium, a small lecture hall with a capacity of about 500, to enjoy the show.

In the rock tradition, the show started one half hour late. The late start proved to be the high point of the evening. The Jukes opened with "This Time It's For Real" which, unfortunately, wasn't for real. Other songs done during their short one-hour show were "The Fever," which was done at a speed so fast that it lost all the feeling present in the original version by Springsteen as well as in the version the Jukes do on their first album; "Got To Get You Off My Mind," which was lacking all the intensity of earlier recorded versions, and "How Come You Treat Me So Bad." The latter song in concert misses the presence of Lee Dorsey, who performs on the recorded version. Southside Johnny Lyons cannot sing both parts of this song and have it come off with any level of competence. About midway through the set the band brought on their guest, Ronnie Spector. While Spector attempted to sing with a voice

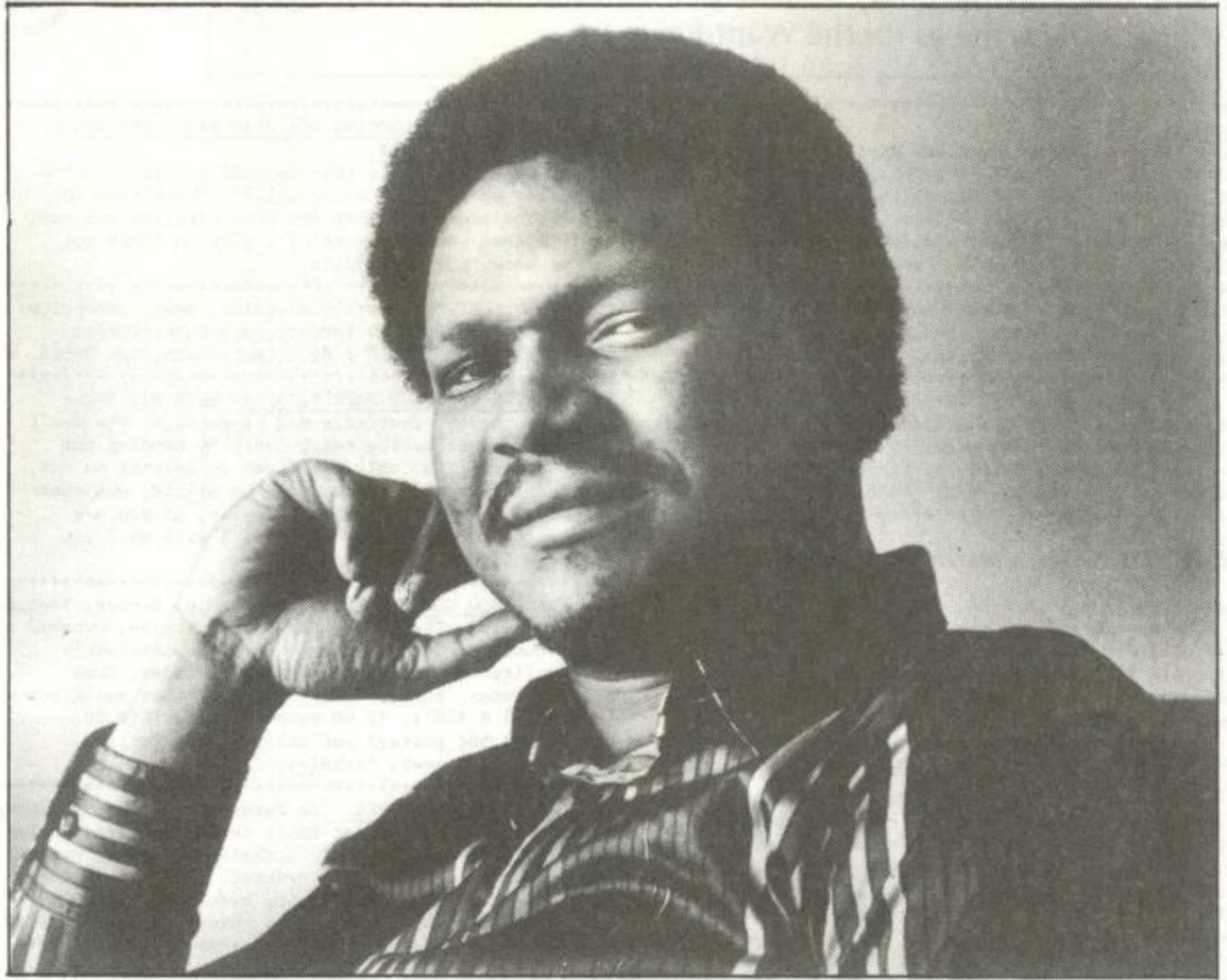
that hasn't held a note in years, the Asbury Jukes provided a backup that, at best, sounded like a poor high school band.

After a 50 minute set, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes closed with "I Don't Want to Go Home" which made me want to go home. The encore was "You Mean So Much to Me" which was marred by the presence of Ronnie Spector.

The Asbury Jukes have incorporated several new elements into their stage act, including new clothes that make

them look like a band of pimps, fancy dance steps by the horn men, bordering on the ridiculous, and sound-synchronized lighting that was the worst I've seen in years.

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes' poor performance, coupled with their corny stage act, horrible sound and overdriven volume made this concert one I would like to forget as soon as possible. Normally I would complain about a concert only one hour in length, but in this case I'm thankful. Δ



MC COY TYNER

McCoy Tyner

by Irving W. Stone

Smucker's Cabaret,
May 6, 1977

Smucker's is a new room, beautifully appointed, located in downtown Brooklyn. It is presumably intended to function in the same manner as the Bottom Line. Surely it has the same musical and financial purposes. It is currently suffering from rotten acoustics and three or four ounce cokes. Since the club is still in its infancy, hopefully there may be some improvement.

The Basic Black Band (Nat Adderley's current group without their main man) opened the show. While one of the group's leaders, Onaje Allen Gumbs, played with some very hip keyboard things, the other John Stubblefield, did little more than aggressively charm snakes with his soprano saxophone. The

band was more or less together, but their material was too bland to transcend the inadequacies of the sound system.

After a wait of about an hour, and intermittent assurances from an invisible M.C. that the Tyners would indeed get there and that the paintings on the wall were for sale, McCoy's group hit. Like always, they hit very very hard. Since last I saw this group there has been considerable turnover of personnel, all for the better. I am hard put to decide whether bassist Charles Fambrough or multi-reed man Joe Ford is more deserving of the rookie of the year award. Together, this group played an hour or so of continuously inventive, swinging polyrhythmic musical excitement, which almost totally salvaged my evening. Δ

photo: David Gahr



SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY

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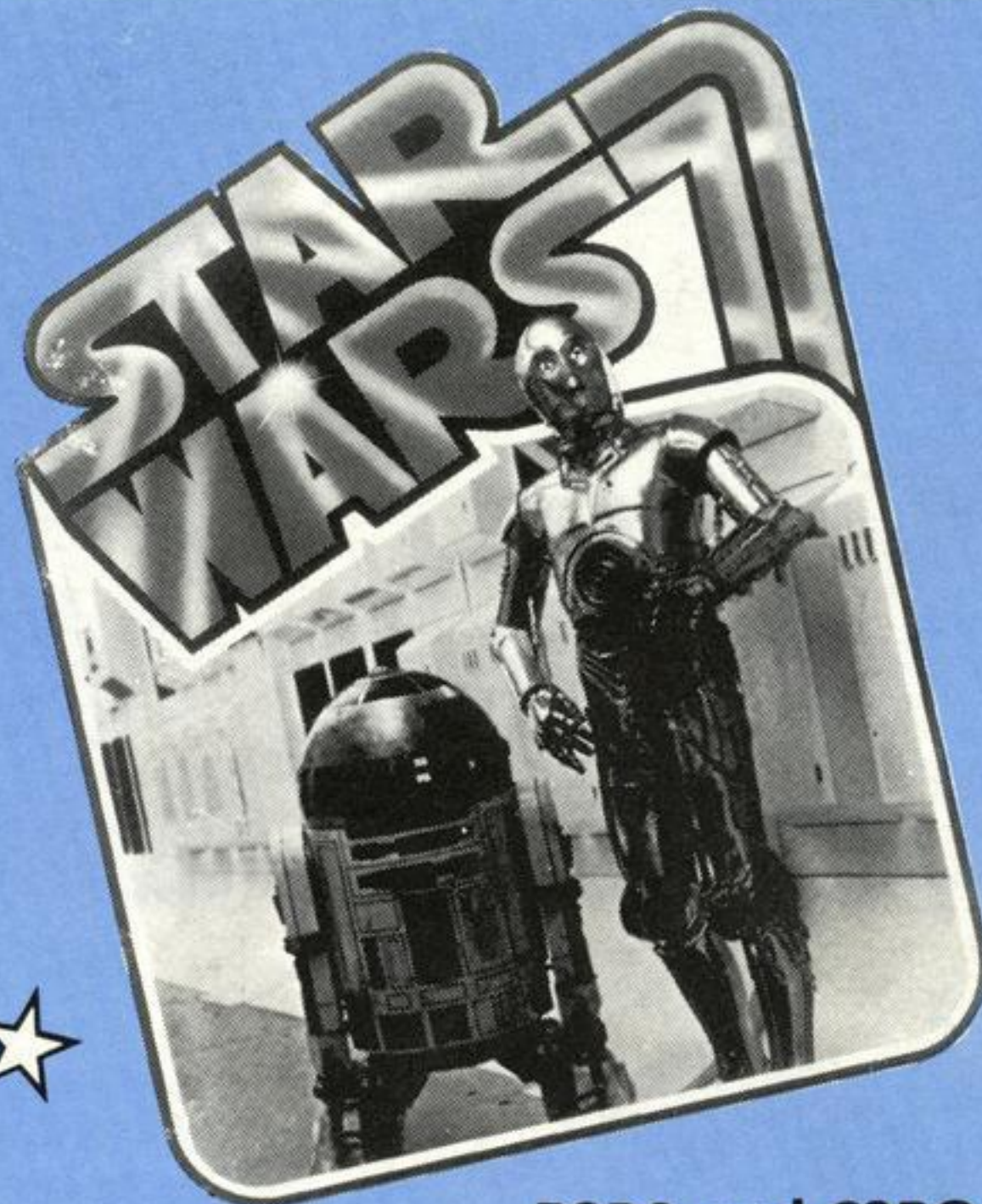
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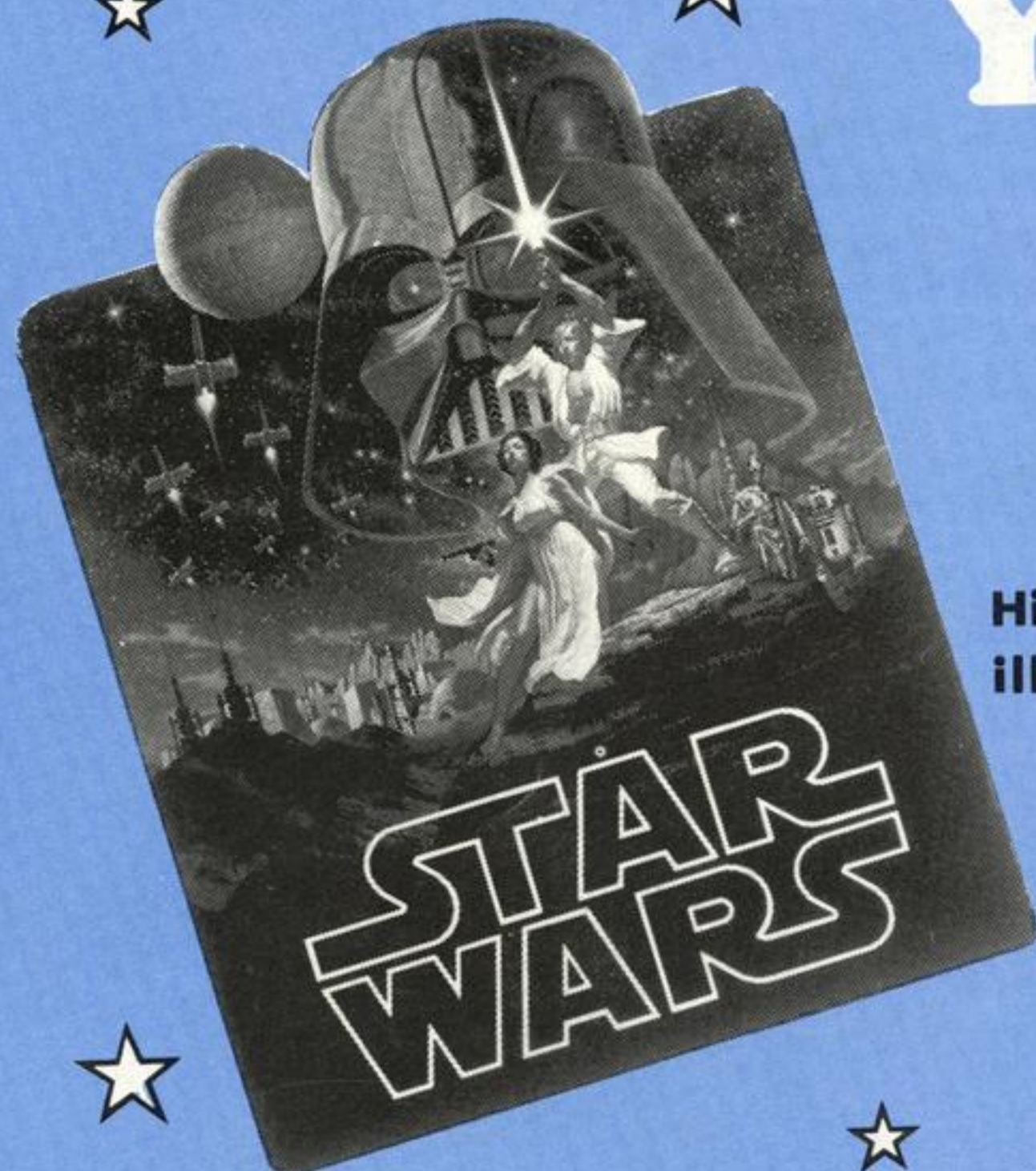
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