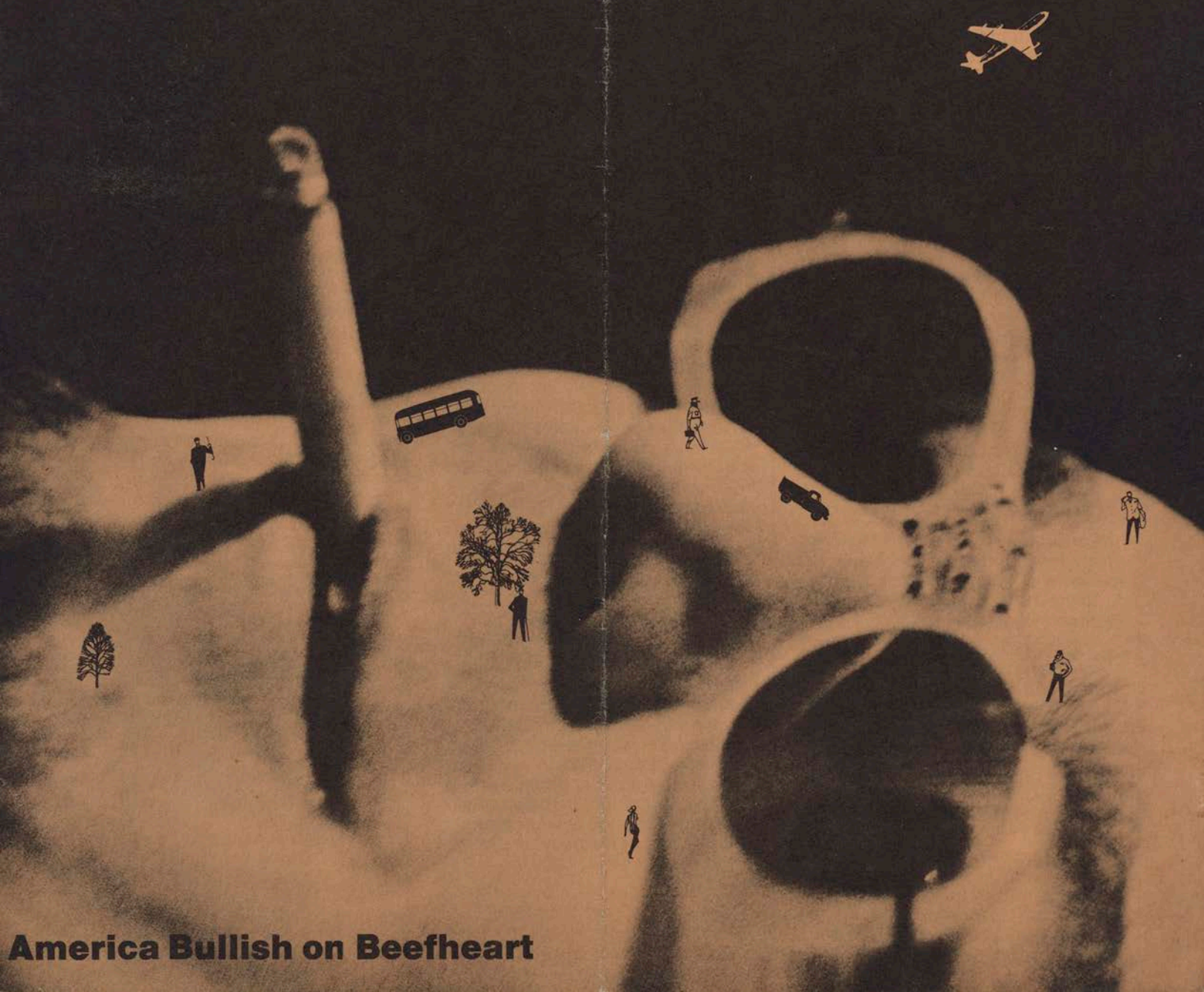


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# circular



**America Bullish on Beefheart**

## America Is Bullish on Captain Beefheart



"Back here you get the black snow outside and the pink aerosol in the room," rumbles the good humored voice on the phone. The voice belongs to Captain Beefheart. The view belongs to a Cambridge Holiday Inn where the Beefheart family and band is poised between concerts. "The rug is so thin compared to the plush ones you get in other places," he continues, enjoying the feel of the words, "that you jump and jar your brains when you take a step."



He's specific about vague things and vague about specific things this evening, relishing details and avoiding vistas in the midst of the most successful tour of his career.

*Circular:* I heard New York was just sensational.

Beefheart: I wish you could have heard it. I did "Black Snake Blues." I dig that song.

*Circular:* You did some things a cappella, didn't you?

Beefheart: Yeah. My voice is really there.

Fortunately for lovers of the long view, this publication is not without its New York contacts, one of whom furnished this report of Beefheart's Gotham triumph:

"Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band made a rare concert appearance in the Big Apple and performed a truly magic set before a sell-out audience of Beefheart connoisseurs."



"After an exceptional performance by the great Larry Coryell, the curtains in the old but funk-filled Anderson Theatre rose to the apocalyptic bass solo of the one and only Rockette Morton. Morton was shortly joined by the Captain, Zoot Horn Rollo, Ed Marimba and Winged Eel Fingerling who, as a collective unit, proceeded to work.

the Citizens for Beefheart (sponsors of the concert) into a veritable frenzy with their blues-flavored excursions into the outermost reaches of the cosmos.

"After providing the audience with an hour-long high, the Captain responded to the pleas of the cheering throngs ('More! More!') with an encore of—what else—'More,' which he whistled, unaccompanied."

Further affirmation of CB's impact on New York may be found in the fact that his management found it necessary to schedule a *second* concert in that city, an appearance which, they were pleased to report, had to be added because of popular demand. That date is set for Feb. 18 at the Academy Theatre in New York City.

Most of this would hardly be news except for the fact that it's taken Beefheart something like six years to reach this heady plateau, not six comfortable, reassuring years, but six years of privation and discouragement, six years during which anyone less original and less tenacious than Don Van Vliet, for that is the Captain's private name, would have given it all up for a newspaper route.

*Circular:* What did you do today?

Beefheart: Today? Today I had a lobster. I love lobster. Don't you?



*Circular:* Where did you eat?

Beefheart: I ate at (*aside to Jan, his wife:* What's the name of that place?) Jimmy's. A big lobster place. By the way, I spent five days with Ornette Coleman in New York. He showed me some gorgeous movies that he took on his African tour of him playing with people right in the street. The sounds those guys were getting! It was one of the heaviest things I've ever heard.

*Circular:* Is Artie enjoying the tour. (Artie Tripp, AKA Ed Marimba)?

Beefheart: He loves it. He's been

playing pool. He made \$100 the other night. He's a pool hustler.

*Circular:* Are people coming backstage and talking to you?

Beefheart: Oh God yes. I did a lot of interviews and they all remember me and they all bring presents.

*Circular:* Are they asking you good questions?

Beefheart: Yeah. I've been talking against hard drugs.

*Circular:* Somebody said that the opening act for at least one of your concerts was some chimpanzees.



Beefheart: Yeah, the guy's name is Sabu. Isn't that it, Sabu, Jan? And he has this *huge* chimp and the thing, he says, is as smart as a 14-year-old child. It trained a *leopard*. That's their natural predator in Africa. The leopard preys on chimpanzees. But this thing has got this leopard together. He's a big chimp.

*Circular:* What does it do when it comes on stage?

Beefheart: To be perfectly truthful, I haven't seen it. I have seen it from behind the stage and I can't figure out what it *is* doing. I can see these hairy hip silhouettes from behind the curtain.


*Circular:* Is it just one chimpanzee or is it a group of them?



Beefheart: No, there's (to Jan: How many chimpanzees are there?) . . . one big hairy hump and three little hairy humps. It signed an autograph for us, the big chimp. It's really hip. He takes care of the whole show plus training that leopard.

*Circular:* How's the band doing?

Beefheart: All I know is that this group is playing better than I ever heard a group in my life. Sounds like Howlin' Wolf back in '54.

Elliot (Ingber, AKA Winged Eel Fingerling) has just gotten so good and he's really in with the band now, with Bill (Harkleroad, AKA Zoot Horn Rollo) and Mark (Boston, AKA Rockette Morton) and Artie. Artie is on. You should hear them now. They've loosened up and they're playing really flat down on the table. Copper floor stuff. 

*Circular:* What are your audiences like? Can you see them at all?


Beefheart: Oh yeah. They're all really nice. They come up and apologize for any hecklers that

might be in the crowd and they say that they're sorry that I have to play under such conditions, the P.A. and what-not. Because the P.A. isn't that good. It's really too bad.

*Circular:* Are you playing any instruments on stage now?

Beefheart: Yeah. I'm playing the harmonica an awful lot. And I'm playing the horn very briefly at the end of the performance, with Ed Marimba. The name of the song we do is "Spitballs Scalped the Baby." It's a funny thing. The kids like it because it reminds them of school.

Beefheart: *Singing Ink*, yeah. I'm going to put that out. I'm looking for a backer on that. I want to make sure it gets out and I get some money for it. It's a book of poetry. And there's a novel called *Old Fart at Play*. I already have it written. Now I'm working on a book, but I'm not sure of the title yet. The novel is really good. It'll replace *Tom Sawyer*. Not only that, I've got 10 more full-length novels written. I wrote 40 pages a day for about five years. I could fill your office with the stuff.

*Circular:* What else should we talk about? 

"I wrote 40 pages a day for about five years. I could fill your office with the stuff"

*Circular:* Is it an instrumental?

Beefheart: Very bluesy and kind of open and strictly an instrumental, but recently I've been . . . You know that commercial on television? Artie starts out and he plays kind of hoofbeats and it says, "Merrill Lynch is bullish on America," so I recite that through my horn. That's all I say other than an instrumental thing.

*Circular:* What are you doing with your time off? Is it all interviews? Beefheart: Yeah, and I'm writing. I wrote the new album last night on the way over to MIT, I mean on the way over to Yale.

*Circular:* In a car? You wrote the whole album?

Beefheart: The name of it is *Brown Star*.

*Circular:* Is there a song on it called "Brown Star?"

Beefheart: Yeah. I've got that written and I've got . . . Let's see, what else did I write? I can't remember the names of any of them. They're sure good. I've written about 60-70 pages for a new book. Just a very odd one—a snatchy thing.

*Circular:* There was talk of a book of poetry.

Beefheart: Well, you might mention Ornette's album. And that I might do a tour with him. He wants to do a tour with me and I think that would be excellent. The name of his new album is *Science Fiction*. I've heard it and it's fantastic. It'll be out real soon.

The conversation dwindles easily into good wishes and stray remarks, both of which Beefheart invites and fosters (and P.S., please pay attention to his fine new album, *The Spotlight Kid*, because he and *Circular* both think it's his best yet and he's an artist of incomparable bests), when he remembers an incident which closes the interview on a pure Beefheartian note and which will similarly end this piece.


Beefheart: I'll tell you one funny thing that Winged Eel said. We were driving along, going into Worcester (Mass.) and all of a sudden he—he doesn't talk much, you know—pops up with, "I wonder what those lights are suspended on?" And it was oncoming traffic that he thought was a string of lights. Doesn't that sound like a bluesy thing to say? It's so far back. If he talks like that when he does talk I can't complain. 



Photo by Bob Gruen

## John Stewart Writes from the Queen Mary

*(The following manuscript was washed up on the shores of Burbank, apparently some hours after it was flung from the side of the Queen Mary, one of Southern California's many odd tourist attractions. Not coincidentally, the Queen Mary was the site recently of the Los Angeles segment of WB's ring in the new year sales presentation held under the banner of "It's Better in Burbank.")*

*(Authorship of the document is not certain, but references to the Lonesome Picker suggest that it might be the work of John Stewart, a Warner Bros. artist who kindly consented to entertain the troupes aboard the Queen Mary, a man of reputed literacy. Sections of the manuscript are stained and blurred by salt water—either tears or ocean brine—rendering it fragmented and curious.*

*(What remains legible is, however, sufficiently interesting and informative to warrant its publication. Here goes.)*

She was once mistress to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Cary Grant. Now the Queen Mary lies berthed like an enormous Jim Thorpe in Long Beach Harbor, a freak for conventioners and tourists to gape at, an unmoving deck for them to walk and a lot of walls for them to defile with their wasp graffiti.

Tonight, however, the Grand Ballroom has been rented by those bastions of taste and integrity, Warner/Reprise. A "Get Your Ship Together" banner welcomes the black-tie, top hat, granny dress gaggle of first-nighters. They are here because the lungs of WBR, the men who keep life going in and out, have somewhere decided that to get more in, naturally, everybody has to put more out.

The Warner executives all look more like art school drop outs or well dressed SDS members than they do businessmen, but businessmen they are. They are going to show the West Coast they are winners in the oldest of American traditions: spending money. Go someplace bizarre, out of the city, out of the too-familiar surroundings that have been boring Hollywood for years and spend it.

*(The MS here bleeds into illegibility for a page, in which only the phrase, "you don't just buy an elephant, someone has to run the circus," can be discerned.)*

A man in an Uncle Sam Suit had called me and asked the Lonesome Picker to appear at this series of spectacles in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Denver. The Picker hesitated as he had done

many of these for a previous label and they were always disasters. But this is Warner Bros., the people who know and believe in Pickers, and since the gent had promised a first class good time, I signed on. (Later while I was checking our Mill Valley record store, Jane, the owner, showed me her invitation

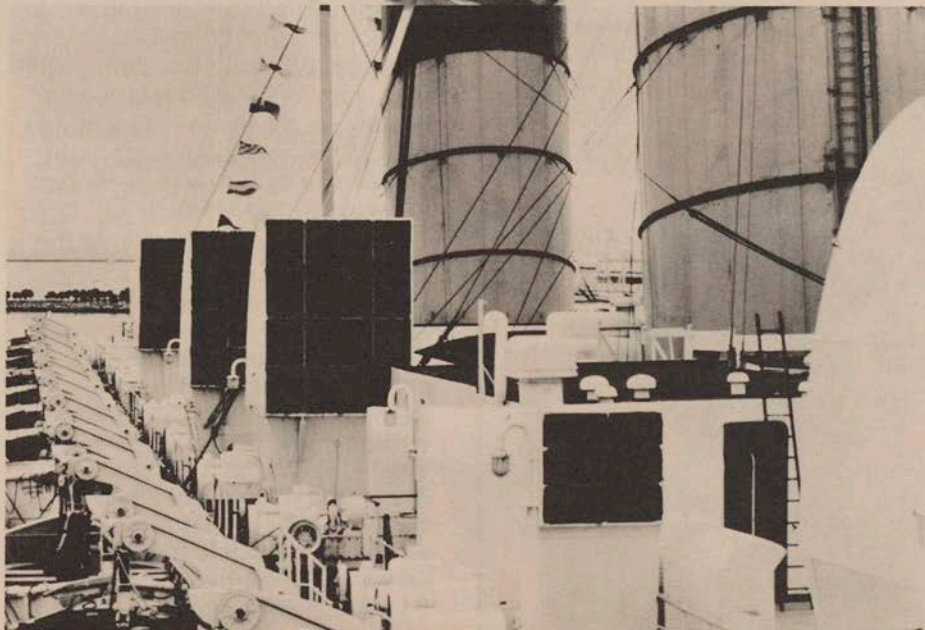



Photo by Ed Thrasher



for the San Francisco pilgrimage to Port Costa. Called "It's Better in Burbank," the dinner was called "Dinner" and the Lonesome Picker was referred to as "Entertainment.")

Entertainment is now on board standing with the striped man himself—the same sleepy-eyed congenial guy who points from the huge invitational buttons in an Uncle Sam suit. Tonight, however, he isn't dressed as Uncle Sam, but wears a conservative tuxedo with a tasteful gold lapel pin that reads simply "Fuck."

*(What appears to be a coating of mashed potatoes mixed with cheese here obscures several paragraphs of the narrative.)*

The January album presentation begins. It is a slide show. There are Burbank jokes and a Fraud album we all have to watch for. The volume at the front tables is to the point of brain damage. Nonetheless, Neil Young's new songs are the best yet. Some beautiful slides of Neil, at home in Half Moon Bay, are shown over "Heart of Gold," a song I would have written but Neil thought of it first. More Burbank jokes. Ry Cooder with some funky dead center grooves on "Money Honey" and "Billy the Kid." I am sold on Cooder and am pleased to hear the announcer steering clear of any "coming through the Ry" jokes during the presentation. There are more Burbank jokes, then the legendary Beach Boys and *A Clockwork Orange* soundtrack with some inevitable beaver shots.

Then comes time for Entertainment. My lady, Buffy Ford, looks

visionary next to me on the stage as she tries out her shakers and tambourines. I haven't played in public in a couple of months and I am a bit nervous. We are doing a lot of new songs. They are all too fast and my hand keeps sticking to the guitar. I can't hear anyone laugh when I tell them about the time Capitol had me play the Titanic. Soon it is over.

*(Once again salt water has eradicated the desperate scrawl, this time for keeps. If the conclusions are less than obvious, they are at least more than equivocal.)*

## New Singles

### Suavecito

Malo  
WB 7559

People galore have been shaking their tailfeathers in excitement over the new *Malo* album, source of this prime cut. Its music is multiply rhythmic, its harmonies manifold, its charm readily apparent. David Rubinson produced it and reduced it into format size, trimming it to 3:25 from its original 6:36 length. If you're behind in your bio reading, Malo numbers about 10 pieces under the baton of Jorge Santana, brother of Carlos. Its geography is San Francisco, its orientation Latin.

### School Teacher

Kenny Rogers and The First Edition  
REP 1069

A slice of the unified work which is *Calico*, KRATFE's two album conceptual adventure, "School Teacher" features Kin Vassy on lead vocal while good ole Kenny steps back to play a solid bass line. The melody is repetitive, attractive and well punctuated and no fewer than scads of radio stations have pegged this as the single to continue the group's sizzling sales streak. It was written, as were all songs in *Calico*, by Larry Cansler (KRATFE keyboard man) and Michael Murphy (indie singer/guitarist) and it clocks in at something less than 4 minutes.

## Items

### Now That's a Company Man

★ A hot San Francisco rumor would have *Circular* believe that Pete Marino, flamboyant SF promo man for WB, was led astray one evening—to a tattoo parlor, where his right shoulder was emblazoned with the Warner Bros. logo. In color.

### Hancock Happenings

★ Herbie Hancock, jazz pianist extraordinaire, whose latest album *Mwandishi* was named one of 1971's top ten albums by no less an authority than *Time* magazine, will perform at a February 25 benefit for the



National Committee to Free Angela Davis and Other Political Prisoners. The benefit takes place in San Francisco. After that Herbie and his ensemble do a non-benefit gig at New York's Village Vanguard, then embark on a European tour in March.

### Thank God It's History

★ 13 years ago this month Warner Bros. made its bid for the popular market with the following LPs: *Halls of Ivy* by the Gene Lowell Chorus, *The Chico Hamilton Quintet with Strings Attached* by Chico Hamilton, *Soft and Subtle* by The Guitars, Inc., *Plays with Matches* by Ira Ironstrings, *The World's Ten Greatest Popular Piano Concertos* by George Greeley and *The Signatures Sign In* by the Signatures.

### Birthday Bandwagon

★ This week's celebrations include the following musical notables: Mario Lanza (Jan. 31), Don Everly (Feb. 1), Stan Getz (Feb. 2), Dave Davies (Feb. 3), Maxine Andrews (Feb. 3), Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (Feb. 3) and Fabian (Feb. 6).

## T. Rexpectations

★ Fourth in the string of behemoth T. Rex English singles is "Telegram Sam," just released over there. It's what they call a maxi single, containing three tracks altogether, the others being "Baby Strange" and "Cadillac," all of which were recorded by Marc Boylan in Denmark. "Bang a Gong (Get It On)" is still



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burgeoning big on these shores, but its eclipse should see the prompt release of at least two of those sides here. Meanwhile, as Marc says, T. Rex is gearing up for a short but sweet tour of seven nifty towns and places: Hollywood (the one in California), Philadelphia, Detroit, Alexandria (the one in Virginia), Chicago, Boston and New York. The tour starts Feb. 15 and wends through Feb. 27. More dates will probably materialize, most likely Cleveland.

## Organ Honors

★ If the Hollywood trade papers can be believed, Phyllis Diller has been named honorary chairman of the Vital Organ Transplant Assistance Fund of Southern California, an (ahem) organization dedicated to aiding kidney and "assorted organ" surgical swaps.

## RaccooNews

★ Northern California is humming from the energies of the Raccoon crew of artists, beginning with Jesse Colin Young, whose first modern solo album, *Together*, is expectable Feb. 15. The entire Youngbloods will soon be represented by a new single, "Light Shine" backed with "Together," drawn from their best-selling *Good and Dusty* album. High Country have completed a second album, yet to be scheduled for release by Raccoon/Warners. And, not least, Michael Hurley is migrating from Massachusetts to Pt. Reyes, California by the miracle of automobile. He will regale the locals and record a second album, says *Circular's* far-flung reporter.

## Purple Power

★ Deep Purple have finished a new album, titled *Machine Head*, complete with a new single. The album's coming in March, presumably preceded by its single. The Purples recorded the LP via the Rolling Stone's mobile unit in Switzerland, where the group transformed the lobby of a hotel into a studio. Deep



Purple are just finishing a sold-out tour, a recent moment of which found them packing 14,000 hysterical bodies into the Sports Arena in Bloomington, Minnesota, for a \$27,000 box office take, the second largest in that institution's history. Another U.S. tour kicks off March 17.

## Beach Boys Bulletins

★ At this very moment Brian Wilson and assorted Beach Boys are in the studio making a single, the first Beach Boys song specifically designed as a single since 1968. The title of the new single song is either "Marsella" or "One Arm Over My Shoulder," written by Brian several months ago. They started working on it in late December. Mike Love and Al Jardine are off to Majorca (that's an island near Spain) for 2½ months of the advanced course in transcendental meditation. The Beach Boys will converge on Amsterdam February 24 for a mere 24 hours because they've agreed to perform in the Dutch television annual extravaganza, "Gran Gala du Disaue."



## More Beach Boys Bulletins

★ Come March and April the Beach Boys will tour 25 American cities—their longest tour in four years, and it will include three nights at Carnegie Hall. One of those mysterious things called a spokesman said that the group will do two-hour concerts with one intermission and in most cases will appear with no supporting acts. And, continued the spokesman, they'll do material from their upcoming album (so far untitled) and songs from the legendary unreleased *Smile*. Not to mention *Surf's Up*.

## Mac Trucks

★ Fleetwood Mac have a busy schedule, what with a tour with John Baldry and Savoy Brown winding from Feb. 25 to April 15. With barely time to slip out of their shoes, they



join Faces for a "mini-tour" of 10 U.S. dates in April, a voyage which finds them sharing the bill with a high wire act as added entertainment. Faces themselves plan three such mini-tours for 1972, one in April, one in June and one in August. Got all that straight?

## Inspirational Verse

I asked for water  
She gave me gasoline

— Howlin' Wolf



**Dynamic Duo** — Current Face Rod Stewart and former Temptation David Ruffin (the current and first, respectively, singers of the durable "I'm Losing You"), recently met up in Detroit, chatted backstage and then improvised a little duet (guess what song) for the audience.

## Double Crazy

★ It was a night like any other night in Denver, brightened by a new club, the Sound Track, and a first visit from Crazy Horse. That was the first set. For the second set, Crazy Horse was joined by Steve Winwood of Traffic and Joe Walsal of the James Gang for the *entire* set, and according to one eyewitness, "the whole place went crazy."

## The Envelope Please

★ *Circular's* melted vinyl statuette for Best Album Title So Far This Year goes to The Hoodoo Rhythm Devils for their Capitol album, *Rack Jobbers Rule*. Rack Jobbers are the warehousemen who supply chain stores and supermarkets and other big retail beings. They do rule, too.

## Another Envelope

★ *Circular's* award for Second Best or Absolute Worst Album Title So Far This Year is handed over to The God Squad Featuring Leonard Caston for a new album called *Jesus Christ Greatest Hits*.

## Todd Rundgren Knows How to Get a Dog on a Train

Heading to New York from Philadelphia, where he had been visiting his parents, Bearsville's ace recording artist, engineer and producer, Todd Rundgren, was about to board the Penn Central train with his suitcase, an armful of tapes, a stereo cassette player and a cute little black dog named Puppet.

Accompanying Todd were Bearsville executive/friend Paul Fishkin.

Photo by Bob Gruen



Baby Tara with simulated seeing-eye dog

Warner/Reprise publicity ace Jeff Samuels, Samuels' wife and their 10-month-old son, Tara.

The entourage was inches from boarding when they were spotted by a trainman, who began berating Rundgren for taking an uncaged dog on the train. Eyewitness Samuels suspects that Todd would not have been bothered were it not for his partially dyed hair (it's tipped), a touch of England which Rundgren acquired while producing *Badfinger*.

Nonchalant in the face of official bile, Rundgren retorted that Tara was blind and that Puppet was his seeing-eye dog. A big seeing-eye dog would have been too much for the tyke to handle, said Rundgren, hence the smaller animal.

The trainman gave vent to a strange look and walked away.

## December's Top 40

December, the month which many record business personalities ordinarily spend struggling over the decision on whether to wish their peers either Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas, also is notable for its retail sales.

Following are Warner/Reprise's December sales stats, brought gratis to *Circular's* holiday sales history fans.

Numbers in the little curvy things after the words represent the previous month's ranking. These stats don't include Warner Bros./Reprise's tape sales figures, because to include them would require skill at addition.

### Top Ten

1. Alice Cooper/*Killer* (—)
2. Les Crane/*Desiderata* (—)
3. Van Morrison/*Tupelo Honey* (—)
4. Jethro Tull/*Aqualung* (7)
5. "Sesame Street 2"/*Original TV Cast* (—)
6. "Summer of '42"/*Original Soundtrack* (4)
7. Black Sabbath/*Paranoid* (11)
8. James Taylor/*Sweet Baby James* (10)
9. T. Rex/*Electric Warrior* (—)
10. Grateful Dead/*(2-Record Set)* (2)

### Then Twenty

11. Neil Young/*After the Gold Rush* (8)
12. Jimi Hendrix/*Rainbow Bridge* (1)
13. Alice Cooper/*Love It to Death* (—)
14. Black Sabbath/*Master of Reality* (3)
15. Neil Young/*Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (15)
16. Seals and Crofts/*Year of Sunday* (—)
17. James Taylor/*Mudslide Slim* (6)

18. Fleetwood Mac/*Future Games* (—)

19. Jethro Tull/*Benefit* (—)

20. Black Sabbath/*Black Sabbath* (19)

### Those Fabulous Thirties

21. "Billy Jack"/*Original Sound-track* (—)

22. Neil Young/*Neil Young* (—)

23. The Youngbloods/*Good and Dusty* (—)

24. Jethro Tull/*Stand Up* (—)

25. *The Best of Peter, Paul & Mary* (16)

26. KRATFE/*Greatest Hits* (17)

27. Earth, Wind & Fire/*The Need of Love* (—)

28. Grateful Dead/*American Beauty* (—)

29. The Beach Boys/*Surf's Up* (5)

30. The Association/*Greatest Hits* (—)

### Fat Forties

31. Jimi Hendrix/*Smash Hits* (—)

32. Joni Mitchell/*Blue* (13)

33. Jimi Hendrix/*Are You Experienced?* (20)

34. Grateful Dead/*Workingman's Dead* (—)

35. Frank Sinatra/*My Way* (—)

36. San Sebastian Strings/*The Sea* (—)

37. Jethro Tull/*This Was* (—)

38. Van Morrison/*Moondance* (—)

39. Jimi Hendrix/*Electric Ladyland* (—)

40. *The Best of Bill Cosby* (—)

Of these 40, 14 are by California residents (not counting Joni Mitchell, who's up in Canada mostly), and nine by the British.

For those with the uneasy feeling that something's missing, *Circular* notes that Faces' *A Nod's as Good as a Wink . . . to a Blind Horse* came out in December itself, rendering itself ineligible for the above list.

## Artist Itineraries

JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 6, 1972

### California

#### Doobie Brothers

2/2, Civic Auditorium, Bakersfield

#### Kindred

2/3-5, R.F. Club, West Los Angeles

#### Alice Cooper

2/3, Berkeley Community Theatre, Berkeley

2/4, Palladium, Los Angeles

2/6, Sacramento Memorial Auditorium, Sacramento

#### Malo

2/4-5, Winterland, San Francisco

#### Jeffrey Cain

2/5, Long Branch, Berkeley

#### Youngbloods

2/5, DeAnza College, Cupertino

#### Seals & Crofts

2/6, Civic Theatre, San Diego

### Florida

#### Malo

2/1, West Palm Beach Auditorium, West Palm Beach

### Idaho

#### Deep Purple

1/31, Boise State College, Boise

### Michigan

#### Gordon Lightfoot

2/6, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti

### Nevada

#### The First Edition

1/12-2/8, International Hotel, Las Vegas

### New Jersey

#### Dion

2/5, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford

#### Fanny

2/5, Sunshine Inn, Asbury Park

### New York

#### Dion

2/6, Carnegie Hall, New York City

### North Carolina

#### Allman Brothers Band

2/5, Duke Indoor Stadium, Durham

2/6, Minges Coliseum, Greenville

#### Alex Taylor

2/5, Duke Indoor Stadium, Durham

### Oregon

#### Crazy Horse

2/4, University of Portland, Portland

### Pennsylvania

#### Captain Beefheart & His Magic Band

2/4, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

#### Dion

2/4, Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, Philadelphia

#### Little Feat

2/4, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

### Virginia

#### Fanny

2/4, Roanoke College, Roanoke

### Washington, D.C.

#### America

1/30-2/5, Cellar Door

### Canada

#### Herbie Hancock

1/31-2/6, Esquire Showbar, Montreal, Quebec