

The Capricorn Caper

Back in January, *Circular* revealed the consummation of a "mysterious relationship" between Warner Bros. Records and the Capricorn label. Now more than two months later, confusion has given way to enlightenment, thanks to a recent Beverly Hills meeting with Capricorn President Phil Walden and Executive VP Frank Fenter. The two personable execs also volunteered much information about Capricorn's special role in the recording field, along with a large helping of what they termed "Capricorn's philosophy."

As you should know by now, Capricorn is the conscientious little recording company whose studios are situated in moderately underpopulated (200,000) Macon, Georgia.

Memphis (Stax/Volt) and Miami (Atlantic) are the musical eminences of the southeast, but Macon is not without claims to distinction. It is or was the home town for a number of modern day musical forces, among them James Brown, Little Richard, Wayne Cochran and Otis Redding. But, until recently, Macon was a locale more noted for its soul than its rock and roll. Recently came the establishment of the Fenter and Walden organization, however, and today the city abounds with musicians, their representatives and other longhairs—because Capricorn has brought rock studios to the South.

The organization was created in 1969 in order to record an untapped (and untaped) Southern group, the Allman Brothers Band. "The Allmans," Fenter says proudly "were our flagship." In those two-and-a-half years since, the Allman Brothers Band have grown to become Capricorn's mainstay, the public having granted the group a gold record for their *Live at the Fillmore East* LP.

That album was the last Allman record distributed by Capricorn's former business partner, Atlantic.

Jonathan Edwards began his career on Capricorn, where he created his mellow self-titled LP, which includes the hit single "Sunshine." Because of Capricorn's change of distributors, (and contractual obligations) Jonathan Edwards stays with Atlantic Records. The brother of Kate, James and Alex Taylor—Livingston—is another familiar Capricorn performer. The young man has conceived two albums: *Living-*

The Allman Brothers Band

Eat a Peach is the group's latest release, a two-record set gleaned from studio work and a Fillmore East appearance. The album's selling like hotcakes with spindle-holes.

Dicky Betts has ably taken over at lead and slide guitar, a position that he had shared with Duane Allman before Duane's fatal motorcycle accident last October. Besides Betts, the band's personnel consists of: Gregg Allman, organ/piano/lead vocals; Berry Oakley, bass guitar/vocals; Jai Johanny Johanson, drums/congas; and Butch Trucks, drums/tympani.

Sometimes good news travels slow, and for the longest time the Allman Brothers Band had a small coterie of fans—most of whom resided in the eastern half of these United States. Their fans have followed the group since the beginning; recognizing earthy, rocking blues in *The Allman Brothers Band* and *Idlewild South*. The band is still building up steam, even now on top of gold records, while it continues to be one of the busiest touring acts in sight.



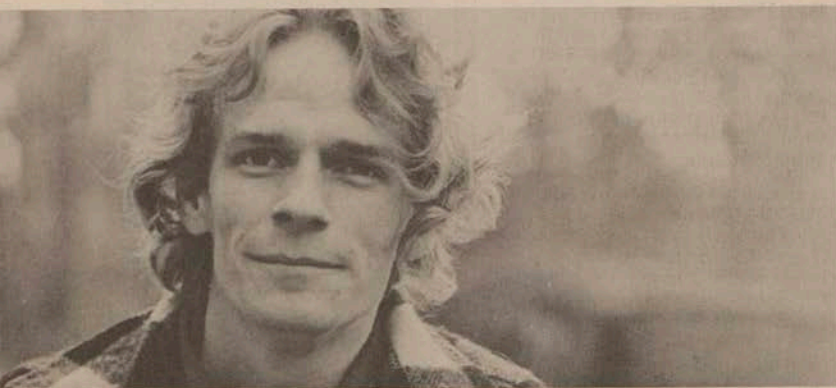
Allman Bros. Band



Livingston Taylor



Alex Taylor



ston Taylor and Liv, both substantial chart items. Older brother Alex, along with a host of less exposed (but not less talented) new artists help fill out the Capricorn bill.

They are all privileged to record at studios that Frank Fenter de-

Alex Taylor

Alex Taylor is not about to be outdone by his talented kinfolk. He has made a new long playing platter called *Dinnertime*, a follow-up to his deep Southern-fried *With Friends and Neighbors* LP. The current effort features tunes written by such diverse talents as Jesse Winchester ("Payday"), Randy Newman ("Let's Burn Down the Cornfield") and Stephen Stills ("Four Days Gone"). Bob Dylan's "From a Buick Six" never sounded more exciting.

Alex admits that he waited until his brother James was successful to jump on the recording bandwagon, but it's no crime to be cautious. Alex prefers to match up a whole lot of heavy rhythm with a light-hearted touch of blues. The combination is a natural for Taylor's easy, assured delivery. That cool confidence is especially evident on "Change Your Sexy Ways," co-authored by Alex himself.

3

Inspirational Verse

I'm itchin' like a bear
On a fuzzy tree

— Elvis "All Shook Up"



scribes as "the most modern in the whole South." Indeed, Capricorn is equipped for 16-track recording and can be converted to 24-track "within a day's notice." Somewhere around 30 people are involved in the Capricorn setup — including, according to Phil and Frank, a dozen permanent staff members.

The "mysterious relationship" with Warner Bros. Records turns out to be rather simply explained. For reasons of autonomy, Capricorn believed that its interests would best be served if Warners handled only the manufacture and distribution of its records. Under the agreement reached, Capricorn has complete artistic control — who they record, how they master the recording and what appears on the album cover. But, the label benefits from an association with Warners' vast distribution outlets. "We want to be that 'small, personal label,'" Walden explains, adding, "Warner Brothers offered a better avenue for us to fully develop that concept." A wholly unsolicited endorsement.

According to its principals, Capricorn is, at this moment, the only major rock and roll recording studio in the South. Walden asserts that Capricorn has an "open door policy about auditions," which is a particularly benevolent stand. Fenter is even more outspoken on that subject. "All you have to do is take 35 minutes out of your life and say 'Hey! Here's your chance!' Wet Willie (now a Capricorn band) was in that category. They drove in from Mobile, Alabama."

When Capricorn was created, the two executives felt that they should concentrate on the album market. They agreed that for the investment they would have to make as a record company, they had better be serious contenders. After all, they were no strangers to the strange business of record companies. Walden had been the manager of Otis Redding, Percy Sledge and other r&b acts; while Fenter had

New People on Capricorn

On their recent trip to L.A., Phil Walden and Frank Fenter signed on their newest act, Captain Beyond. The group is a hard rock outfit reportedly composed of two former members of the Iron Butterfly, one ex-constituent of Deep Purple and a fellow from Johnny Winters' band. The Allman Brothers Band discovered Captain Beyond and quickly told the Capricorn execs about their find.

Longer on the Macon label is White Witch, a five-piece group from Tampa, Florida. They're playing several dates with Alice Cooper, an obvious test of their endurance.

Maxayn (pronounced max-ann) is a band from the West Coast. Paulette Parker, once an Ikette, is one of Maxayn's personnel. The group has its first LP scheduled for April release.

Singer-composer Les Moore calls New Orleans his home. He made it up to Macon recently to begin recording his first album and to arrange a tour of East Coast folk clubs.

Also due to go public in April is the debut album of a Texas blues band which has been transplanted to Atlanta, a quartet which goes by the name of Eric Quincy Tate. The group's debut album is titled *Drinking Man's Friend*.

Not yet scheduled but quite intriguing is the work of an ensemble known as Marty Mull and the Mighty Midget Band, a Boston-based combo made up of, yes, midgets. He and they are, somewhat surprisingly, quite impressive in the advance tapes which have circulated thus far through Burbank.

been Atco's European Representative. "Capricorn's got a good reputation now, largely because of the enthusiastic response our records have received from FM stations. We don't put out a lot of albums, so we get immediate airplay. In fact, we've never had a record that wasn't favorably reviewed."

Walden feels that Macon is just far enough away from the main centers of the music industry (L.A. and New York) to offer an alternative for recording artists. "In the major centers, everybody's sitting around within the industry hyping themselves. They're not really talking to anybody. Doesn't have anything to do with all those *people* out there. I mean, everybody sits around and says 'Oh man, I got a *smash!* Number One in Buffalo!' They tell *each other*. It's a lot of wasted hours. Sitting in places like Martoni's.* We can avoid that. We don't have a Martoni's in Macon, and hopefully we never will have one."

Capricorn believes, musically speaking, that "if it's good, it's valid." Meaning that they go for the type of artist whose material would be adaptable to other forms. If a song's good *musically*, Capricorn reasons, it is equally good as country, classical or rock. "You start with people who have talent, and create the best product that you can. You've got to genuinely be able to play your product and say 'wow!'"

Yes, the folks at Capricorn have a lot of integrity. They have an authentic sense of purpose in the running of their business. Moreover, they can recognize talent before it walks over and introduces itself. A requirement for artists on the Capricorn label is that they should be able to perform as well as they record, a stipulation which insures their well-roundedness. "Versatile performers have a better chance," says Fenter.

— Mike Harris

*Martoni's is an L.A. restaurant/hangout, whose clientele includes a large number of "Under Assistant West Coast Promotion Man" types.

New Singles

South in New Orleans

Hungry Chuck
BSV 0004

So loose it's tight, this rhumba-beat love song from Hungry Chuck, a group of ungrizzled veteran musicians who enter the Warner Bros. pipeline through the good orifices of Bearsville Records. The song bears no relation to anything you ever heard Freddy Cannon do, nor is it a near relative of any magnolia-scented standards. The song is



subtitled "(Doin' the Funky Lunchbox)," a crazed new dance (or was that new dance craze?) which Hungry Chuck explicates colorfully during the fade of the record. The group, named for a contemporary cartoon character, numbers six versatile musicians, all of whom have brushed fame with other groups and other circumstances, all of whom are quite happy together now, thank you.

Moon Shadow

Labelle
WB 7579

The last year or so has seen a fascinating reversal of a once onerous tradition: the pop "cover" of a rhythm and blues hit. Nowadays

any sizable pop hit is apt to be converted into soul chart status (and back into the pop charts in its new guise) by a corps of able performers. Add Labelle to the lists as they renovate a delightful Cat Stevens song into a live-sounding gospelly bounce. The treatment works admirably, offering Patti LaBelle and her harmonic helpers a likely shot at hitdom. This scaled-down version of the 10-minute future album cut is available in two convenient lengths: 6:15, for those with seconds to spare, and 4:05, for those whose hearing is affected by the ticking of a clock.

Dunrobin's Gone

Brave Belt
REP 1083

It has a country background and country harmonies lurking beneath a gleaming city slicker veneer, this offering from the gents of Brave Belt, a cut from their recent *Brave Belt II* album. Word has it that this cut is prospering in the group's native Canada, and south into Detroit. It sounds likely, so attractive is the song. Chad Allan, who left Brave Belt during the course of the second album, can be heard on keyboard and vocals in this particular selection, which was written by himself and the enigmatic B. Ericson. Rounding out Brave Belt are C. F. Turner and Randy and Bob Bachman, as everyone knows.

Good Times/Peace Song

Jesse Colin Young
WB 7581

A comforter from Jesse's good-sounding *Together* album is this two-sided disc, the "Peace Song" surface of which is on its second or third go-round as a single (each time enthusiasm mounts—maybe this'll do it). Assuming that you readily remember this column's prior comments on "Peace Song," the flip becomes the focus of today's remarks. "Good Times" lives up to its title with lyrics dwelling on the comforts of life and a full sound built from a klatch of friendly guitars and

some low profile horns. The over-all impression is similar to that of a joyful Van Morrison work—both artists are able to translate euphoria into wondrous music.

Johnny B. Goode

Jimi Hendrix
REP 1082

The pyrotechnics of Jimi Hendrix' guitar artistry light up Chuck Berry's rock and roll classic with the sheen of a new wax job applied to a 1958 Chevy. This track was recorded at Berkeley Community Center in nearby California, a concert which saw Mitch Mitchell on drums and Billy Cox on bass. The single clocks in at 3:55, pared down from its 4:45 length on the *Hendrix in the West* album. It's a favorite from that much-played LP and bids fair to finally grant Jimi Hendrix the single hit he's never had. Backside is Jimi's own "Lover Man," recorded at the same concert with the same personnel from the same album.

Top Ten

1. *America* (BS 2576)
2. Neil Young/*Harvest* (MS 2032)
3. *Malo* (BS 2584)
4. Jimi Hendrix/*Hendrix in the West* (MS 2049)
5. T. Rex/*Electric Warrior* (RS 6466)
6. *A Clockwork Orange* sound track (BS 2573)
7. Faces/*A Nod's as Good as a Wink* (MS 2574)
8. Gordon Lightfoot/*Don Quixote* (MS 2056)
9. Kinks/*Kink Kronikles* (2XS 6454)
10. Ry Cooder/*Into the Purple Valley* (MS 2052)

Top Ten is an uncopyrighted feature of *Circular*, carefully compiled from scraps of yellow lined paper delivered weekly by the Warner/Reprise sales department. Chart positions are determined on the basis of conversations with an IBM computer and the echoed shouts of men in the streets. The number 10 is a purely arbitrary selection by a biased panel of judges.

Items

Conquering the Charts

★ Lodged last week in the record trade paper hit charts were some 26 Warner/Reprise produced, manufactured and/or distributed albums, according to researcher Joe Smith, who gleefully said it was a first for the company. He also said that the number represented the lion's share of the chart action,

26

hoisting the company to tower momentarily over the stiff competition of such as Atlantic, Columbia and Arhoolie. So fevered was the pitch of Warner/Reprise sales that *Record World* identified Donny Osmond's "Puppy Love" (which they ranked as the Number 2 single) as a Warner Bros. record. Actually, of course, it's a product of Loma.

The Game of the Name

★ There has been some confusion recently at Warner/Reprise over telephone calls pertaining to Dionne Warwick and calls concerning Dion, family name DiMucci. A study has been made to determine how Warner/Reprise secretarial, promotional and other personnel are to differentiate between the two phonetically similar given names. After much consideration, the study committee has recommended that whenever a caller says that his or her business involves someone named "Dee-ahn," the recipient of the call shall be instructed to inquire if the artist in question ever made a recording of "Runaround Sue."

Birthday Bonanza

★ This week's celebrations include the following musical notables: Doris Day (April 3), Elmer Bernstein (April 4), Gale Storm (April 5), Charles Wright (April 6), Percy Faith (April 7) and Bobby Bare (April 7).

The Dark Ages

★ Thirteen years ago this month Warner Bros. made its bid for the popular market with the following LPs: *Gongs East* by the Chico Hamilton Quartet, *Power Packed Trombones* by the Trombones, Inc., *Ruby Bruff Goes Girl Crazy* and *The First Jazz Piano Quartet* by various artists.

You're a Hit, Toad

★ *Cash Box*, the record trade paper, has been noting Todd Rundgren's success story in a column titled Additions to Radio Playlists, the March 25 edition of which found four ways to spell his name in four references — Todd Runtgreen, Todd Rundegon, Todd Rundgreen and, at last, Todd Rundgren. All spellings referred to airplay for "I Saw the Light," his current single.



Todd Rundgren

Religious Work Dwarfs Circular

★ Accompanying this issue is an act of faith and vinyl! titled *Something for Mary*, created by a body known as the Credibility Gap. Indeed, so pervasive is the power of this audio document that *Circular* has shrunk this once to accommodate it, losing something like an inch and a half from its two major dimensions to bundle in the same envelope with the record. Further elaboration may be found on the record package.

Seeing the Light

★ Events involving Todd Rundgren are rampant, what with the glee and abandon which are greeting Todd's new *Something/Anything?* album and its new-hatched sleek single, "I Saw the Light." Take Hartford's WPOP, for instance, which is sponsoring a contest revolving around *Something/Anything?*, involving swaps of something for anything and an ultimate drawing for a motor vehicle. Meanwhile, over in Philadelphia, WB's local promotion person, Joe Fiorentino, is mailing 75-watt light bulbs to anyone conceivable and if you need to ask why you should re-read all your *Circulars*, looking particularly for references to horse give-aways and mailings of canned hams. Not to be outdone, New York's own Mike Shavelson is doling out those magic light bulbs which glow in one's hand (how about a phosphorescent pressing of the single?). Meanwhile, Todd made his first public appearance in eons at last week's Intercollegiate Broadcast System confab in New York City, making a monumental splash accompanied by the Hello People and a band consisting of Stu Woods, bass and vocals; Jim Colgrove, guitar and vocals; Mark Klingman, piano, and N.D. Smart II on drums. Todd wore a red velvet outfit with a leather cummerbund and red and silver boots. The Hello People did some miming and some funny stuff, like a song titled "A Horse with No Legs." Smasheroo.



HEAVY WEDDING. Reportedly the world's largest twins, Billy and Benny McCrary, left to right, weighing in at 640 and 660 pounds respectively, were married in El Paso, Texas, by Justice of the Peace Hector Enriquez, Jr. The brides are Danilee and Maryse. The McCrarys, both professional wrestlers, will take their brides with them on a wrestling tour of Mexico.

Export Music

★ The Burbank-based Warner/Reprise international department has just finished canvassing Europe to hear what gives over there, to eat snails and to reaffirm treaties. Upshot of the traveling is that foreigners soon will be privileged to hear an album which knows no boundaries, an international sampler titled *Fruity*, containing a variety of potentially universal artistry. As a flustered international spokesman described it, the title means flavorful in alien climes.

In the Center Ring . . .

★ Late this month sees the launching of the Faces' rock and roll circus, billed as the world's first, at the Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis. The 21st is the date. The circus features, according to sources who would prefer not to remain nameless but will, a Big Top, clowns, trapeze artists, flying motor cycles, jugglers, Fleetwood Mac and, of course, Faces their very selves. Further dates will be found in *Circular's* itineraries at the appropriate time.

The Reports Are Greatly Exaggerated

★ Alice Cooper cancelled some dates in Blighty because of permit problems and the closing of a major club there. Which cancellation sparked British rumors that Alice's snake had died and that he was too grief-stricken to perform. Which rumors were true in neither respect.

Stay Tuned for Further Developments

★ T. Rex are working on a new album, for which they have recorded something like eight or nine new songs, but that album may not be their next release in this country. It seems T. Rex' last English label, Fly, is releasing an album titled *Bolan's Boogie*, comprised of a number of single tracks which have not been released on albums in Europe. Said album *may* be Reprise's next release here, depending on a complex equation involving legalistics, aesthetics, logic and obligations. If so, it would be soon. If not, not.

Pursuit of Fame

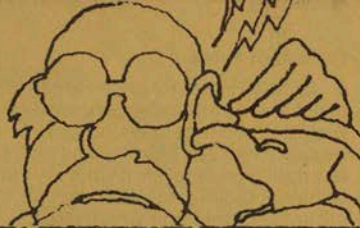
★ Goldie Hawn, Reprise Recording artist and Academy Award winner (listed in order of importance), recently visited New York as part of her nationwide promotional tour in behalf of *Goldie*, her first ever album (original title was *Butter*, which she explained to Johnny Carson on his show was "soft, warm and mushy"). After taping the Carson show (she left early so she could catch "The Godfather"), she



was escorted through a menacing throng of autograph seekers by her manager, producer Andy Wickham and East Coast artist relations ace Alan Rosenberg. The lady and gentlemen hurried into a waiting limo but were pursued for over seven blocks by a die-hard autograph hound. When the limo made a stop, the hound shoved his book in the door but was so winded he couldn't ask Goldie for her John Hancock (which in her case reads "Goldie Hawn"), but just stood there panting. Does Alice Cooper have to go through this sort of thing?

Stars Are Born

★ Panting scouts have hustled into *Circular's* heptagonal offices to advise the bewildered minions that Captain Beyond and Jack Frost are currently recording in assorted Los Angeles studios. One hesitates to even try to guess what sort of sounds one might have to look forward to.



Dr. Demento

Little Nipper wins again! As you know from last week, RCA made the first (unsuccessful) 33 1/2 rpm records for home consumption. In 1948, their chief competitor of the time, Columbia, introduced a considerably more practical long-playing record which rather quickly became the standard medium for classical music. RCA, though given the opportunity to make LPs from the start, decided instead to develop its own system. The little 7-inch records with the big holes, complete with "The World's Fastest Changer," were introduced in 1949. At first they were made in a different color for each kind of music (red for classical, blue for popular, green for country, yellow for children's and something called cerise for R&B). The reception of RCA's new speed was less than friendly in the trade. The battle between 33 1/2, 45 and 78 was even fiercer than the recent war between 8-track, 4-track and cassette, and record sales were seriously affected. But the battle had a peaceful ending as the youth market of the 1950's found 45's ideal for pop music, while their parents relaxed to the classics on 33 1/2. (You can see a vintage specimen of "The World's Fastest Changer" spinning at poolside during the nude scene in *The Last Picture Show*).

Question for Next Week

Peter Lewis, lead guitarist for the late lamented Moby Grape, made several fine albums in that capacity for Reprise and Columbia. Lewis, as early Grape publicists were fond of reminding you, is the son of Loretta Young. These publicists

omitted, however, to inform you of Lewis' pre-Grape affiliation with a recording group that included not only himself, but the sons of Charles Correll (who was Amos of "Amos 'n' Andy"), Dennis O'Keefe and Art Linkletter. Now, for the Warner/Reprise catalog album of your choice, what was that group?

Artist Itineraries

California

Dionne Warwick
3/29-4/8, Now Grove, Los Angeles

Seals & Crofts
4/4-9, Troubadour, Los Angeles

Nazareth
4/5-9, Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles

Stoneground
4/5, Albert Goode Auditorium, Bakersfield
4/7, Campolindo High School, Moraga

Malo
4/6 Sacramento
4/7-8, Winterland, San Francisco
4/9, Santa Clara Fairgrounds, San Jose

Youngbloods
4/7, Univ. of California at Berkeley

Colorado

Rod McKuen
4/5, Southern Colorado College, Pueblo

Connecticut

John Baldry
4/6, Palace Theatre, Waterbury

Fleetwood Mac
4/6, Palace Theatre, Waterbury

Peter Yarrow
4/6, Bushnell Auditorium, Hartford

Florida

Alexis Korner
4/4, Kemp Coliseum, Orlando
4/5, Bay Front Center, St. Petersburg
4/7, Miami Beach Auditorium, Miami Beach

Georgia

Alexis Korner
4/6, Municipal Auditorium, Atlanta

Kindred
4/7, Coliseum, Macon

Illinois

The First Edition
4/3-16, Mr. Kelly's, Chicago

Kansas

John Baldry
4/5, Levitt Arena, Wichita

Fleetwood Mac
4/5, Levitt Arena, Wichita

Louisiana

Alexis Korner
4/8, Warehouse, New Orleans

Maine

Peter Yarrow
4/7, Univ. of Maine, Orono

Massachusetts

Peter Yarrow
4/5, Boston Symphony Hall, Boston
4/8, Worcester Memorial Hall, Worcester

of Dr. Demento's two-weeks-ago question (Q: Who made the first 33 1/2 rpm records for home consumption? A: RCA) is George Tweedy of Van Nuys, Calif., who requested *Bare Trees* by Fleetwood Mac which he will receive in two or three weeks.

Honorable mention, but no album, to Dan Hoffman, Program Director for KJOY (1280) in Stockton, Calif.

Each week the good doctor poses a music lore question whose answer is the focus of his subsequent column. The earliest reply to his question (mailed to Dr. Demento, c/o *Circular*, Warner Bros. Records, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91505) wins any single Warner/Reprise catalog album (please specify choice). Answers will be geographically pro-rated on the basis of two days per time zone, ties will be judged on the basis of penmanship, wit and lucidity.

Missouri

John Baldry
4/4, Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis

Fleetwood Mac
4/4, Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis

Rod McKuen
4/9, Music Hall, Kansas City

Alexis Korner
4/10, Arena Annex, St. Louis

Nebraska

Rod McKuen
4/7, Civic Auditorium, Omaha

New York

Earth, Wind & Fire
4/5-11, Apollo Theatre, New York City

Jackie Lomax
4/6-8, My Father's Place, Roslyn, Long Island

John Baldry
4/7-8, Academy of Music, New York City

Fanny
4/7, Palace Theatre, Albany

Fleetwood Mac
4/7-8, Academy of Music, New York City

Black Sabbath/Wild Turkey
4/8, Hofstra Univ., Hempstead

North Carolina

Kindred
4/9, The Cellar Club, Charlotte

Ohio

Deep Purple
4/8, Hara Arena, Dayton
4/9, Struthers Field House, Youngstown State Univ., Youngstown

Oklahoma

Rod McKuen
4/6, Civic Center Music Hall, Oklahoma City
4/8, Municipal Theatre, Tulsa

Pennsylvania

Deep Purple/Nazareth
4/4, Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh

Virginia

Kindred
4/8, Hampton Rhodes Coliseum, Hampton Rhodes

Washington

Cold Blood
4/4, Seattle Center Arena, Seattle

Canada

Deep Purple
4/6, Coliseum, Quebec

Gordon Lightfoot
4/6-7, Univ. of Western Ontario, London, Ontario

Brave Belt
4/8, Edmonton Civic Auditorium, Edmonton, Alberta