

circular

Discover America's Parks



The Singular Multiplicity of Van Dyke Parks

There's only one Van Dyke Parks, more's the pity, because in the course of his 29 intense years he has turned up work enough for a busy dozen of himself.

Circular took its single self into the singular presence of the multi-leveled Parks on a recent afternoon which was appropriately both rainy and bright in the California way of trying to do all things at once, which is also the Parks procedure. The occasion was the release of his second album, *Discover America* (WB 2589), four years after his Warner Bros. recording debut with *Song Cycle* (WB 1727).

Parks and his lady, Durrie, live on one of Laurel Canyon's timeless cul-de-sacs, a tiny lane which appears to have grown its own dwellings as a hospitable accommodation between the disparate priorities of Man and his alienated parent, Nature.

The Parks house embraces with serenity the energy within . . .

As does Van Dyke Parks.

To comprehend the initial imprint on *Circular* of its encounter with Parks, it is suggested that you recall the dialog between Alice and the Caterpillar, who undertook defense of its territory with a direct question of identity. Need it be stipulated that Van Dyke Parks was more subtle in his challenges? Indeed, Parks is that rare man who remains wide open in his relationships with people.

Psyche Sightsee

In conversation, he moves restlessly through the parts of himself, from concern to speculation to preoccupation, in freely associated readouts from each district of his alert mind and active conscience.



During *Circular's* first hour with him, he spoke of the beleaguered of the world. Of the endangered species.

Of buses, of Greyhound and Continental Trailways.

Of troubadours and tuba players, both themselves endangered species.

Of cultural symbioses: steelbands and oil companies; VDP and WB.

Yet each issue or event or entity, however vast or remote, was always and inevitably tied by process of reason to his own energies and commitments and realities.

"I've been interested in wildlife in danger," he told *Circular*. Durrie Parks brought from their study a file of clippings. "Seagull bites boy. Polar bear bites zoo visitor. Falcon downs jet plane." Short articles from the daily papers about, as he put it, "the feeble attempts of other life forms to command some of their shrinking territory."

Like the Trinidad steelband?

Van Dyke Parks first became interested in Trinidad's steelbands in 1961. He relayed to *Circular* some of the lore which has accumulated around these formidable orchestras. About their rise to respectability on their home island, from the raffish "Bad John" days when no right-minded mother would permit her daughter to associate with a man who "beat the pan," to the pre-ordained day of their exploitation by American promoters.

Cast-off oil drums are part of the legacy of Anglo-American oil operations in Trinidad, virtually all that was left to the islanders in the siphoning off of their non-replenishable resources. From these drums, the artisans of the steelbands tempered their instruments. The recycling of barrels into tympani was briefly interrupted by World War II, when British authorities decreed the theft of oil drums to be a hanging offense.

Popularity of the pans increased spectacularly after the war, and steelband music gained recognition as a cultural accomplishment. Trinidad recently commemorated its indigenous music with a postage stamp picturing an oil drum. Major oil companies sponsor bands, the right of sponsorship entailing merely the donation of a sequined jacket to each member of a company's band.

Annual competitions are held amongst steelbands, and classical works have been arranged for oil drum and mallet.

Such items of information as these were part of the fallout of Parks' further involvement with steelbands through Andrew de la Bastide, who became his mentor in matters Calypso. Last year, *Circular* readers will recall, was the year of the Esso Trinidad Steelband album (WS 1917), produced by—none other than Van Dyke Parks.

During the four years between *Song Cycle* and *Discover America*, Parks participated in the production of several other WB LPs, among these albums by Arlo Guthrie, Ry Cooder and Randy Newman.

He told *Circular* that *Song Cycle* had been an "embarrassment" to him. The critical acclaim it earned he described as "an over-estimation of the byproducts of my work." But he said that *Song Cycle* had finally, after the passage of a full Leap Year, yielded its first return, which amounted to less than a dollar on his latest royalty statement.

One must marvel at the concentrated sanity which guides that gentle man through the mazes of his data banks. ("I wanted a bus. Two buses, one for the band, one for myself. And I resented being patronized by Greyhound. I wanted to patronize *them*. There are two buses on the album cover [*Discover America*], one a Greyhound and the other a Continental Trailways . . .")

Presently one begins to perceive the correlations, and from these the scope and significance of Parks' quest, which is for nothing less than a master switch—a single handle to equalize all of the intricate circuits traced by his creative conscience. He is a chart-maker, and *Circular* hastens to expunge the taint of hype from that assertion by reminding that the word "chart" also means map. Not that *Discover America* lacks what it takes to be a map or make the charts.

Van Dyke Parks has the ethical aggressiveness of a bedrock Yankee coupled to the sophisticated adaptability of an exceptional citizen of today's real world.

Heartened by humor.

Laughter and Music

Discover America is laced together with broad laughter. Even an inadvertent girlish giggle during a take, when Parks broke up his back-up singers, was retained on the final mix, as if to say that laughter and music are equally sacred to him.

It was a costly album, he told *Circular*, partly because of his exacting production standards, and partly because of steelbands and tuba players.

Parks relishes poetic justice, and he harbors a fond fantasy of gas stations someday peddling steelband albums.

Discover America offers a bouquet of ballads (with real-life characters like J. Edgar Hoover and Bing Crosby and Jack Palance); songs (particularly "Sailin' Shoes," which Lowell George of *Little Feat* composed while on the way to the studio); and snatches (a tape-recorded insert of vintage recollections by Parks' uncle Sam).

A campaign might be in order to designate Van Dyke, buses and all, as one of our national Parks. And that would cover a lot of territory.

— Leonard Brown

Items

Neil Young Singles

★ Faster than the rush of gold is the speed with which Reprise is releasing a new Neil Young single, "War Song," whose lyrics are said to be



quite timely. It is, hopefully, the prelude to a fall album from Neil. The single features Mr. Young backed by Graham Nash and the Stray Gators.

Gold Brick

★ Informed sources at the mysterious RIAA tell *Circ* that Jethro Tull's *Thick as a Brick* album is worth its weight in bullion (gold, not beef, which is spelled bouillon anyway), thanks to \$1 million worth of sales. Smiles in the accounting department.

Movie Contribution

★ Warner Bros., the movie studio, has announced it will donate 10% of its share of the net profits from the *Malcolm X* film to Malcolm X College, an accredited undergraduate institution in Chicago with 8,000 full-time students. The studio has already given the college a \$5,000 check as its first contribution. The soundtrack album, a documentary featuring the voices of such as Malcolm X, James Earl Jones, The Last Poets and Ossie Davis, not to mention some very pertinent music by Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and others, was just released by Warner Bros., the record company.

The Dark Ages

★ Ten years ago this month WB made its bid for the popular market with the following LPs: *Button-Down Mind on TV* by Bob Newhart, *Oh You Kid!* by Dorothy Provine and Joe "Fingers" Carr, *Let's Duet* by Gordon Jenkins and *Sousa's Greatest Marches* by Henry Mancini.

Fleetwood Forever

★ Fleetwood Mac has signed on for another tour of duty with Reprise, much to the pleasure of both parties. Don't forget to buy a copy of *Bare Trees*.

The Australian Invasion

★ Newest scion to the tradition which has brought the United States Lonnie Donegan, Rolf Harris, Frank Ifield, the BeeGees, Lainie Kazan,

Daddy Cool and so much more is G. Wayne Thomas, an Aussie singer whose "Open Up Your Heart" is a Top Tenner in his native land. It'll be released here as a single quicker than you can say "Don't wanna hurt no kangaroo."

Rampant Reunions

★ Peter Yarrow called *Circular* to report that June 14 will see the coming together of three sets of people whose partnerships no longer theoretically exist—Peter, Paul and Mary; Simon and Garfunkel and Mike Nichols and Elaine May. The occasion is a Madison Square Garden concert for Presidential candidate George McGovern.

Monkee Business

★ Former Monkee Micky Dolenz has a new single version of the Randy Newman-penned "A Lover's Prayer."

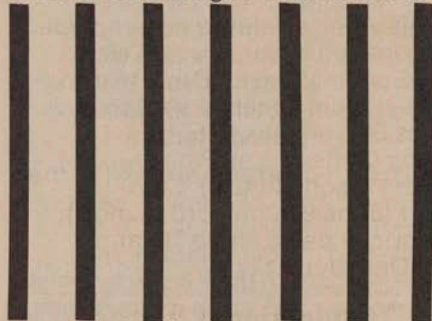
Eight Miles High

★ Get high with Warner/Reprise was the message given to *Circ* by way of a bright yellow kite which contended that WB/Reprise takes you higher with America, Deep Purple and Tony Joe White. The high-flier was laid on *Circ* by a well-wisher helping this issue get off the ground.



The In Crowd

★ Labelle did two prison shows in recent weeks, one at Graterford Prison and one at Penn State Prison, both of which are in Philadelphia. Rounding out the benefits were local acts. Manager Vicki Wickham



reports also that Nona Hendryx and Sarah Dash are writing songs like mad these days and the results are most impressive, as can be seen with the release of the group's second WB album next month, *Moon Shadow*.

Malpractice Dept.

★ A slight slip of the scalpel occurred during Dr. Demento's May 8 Rising Sons operation: Jesse Lee



Kincaid's "Baby You Come Rollin' Cross My Mind" was covered by the Peppermint Trolley Company, not the Peppermint Rainbow. To Linda Alter of Memphis, who obviously knows her candy, a copy of an elderly but still-in-print Warner Bros. album, *Spike Jones in Stereo*.

Philosopher Felled

★ The following filler was found in the April 22 issue of the *Southampton Summer Day*, a New York area newspaper under the headline Thought for the Day: "The Thought for the Day has been postponed this week because the man who was supposed to write it is sick."

Birthday Bachanalia

★ This week's celebrations include the following musical notables: Gary Bonds (June 6), Dean Martin (June 7), Tom Jones (June 7), James Darren (June 8), Fred Waring (June 9), Les Paul (June 9), Jackie Wilson (June 9), Cole Porter (June 9), Jon Lord (June 9), Frederick Loewe (June 10) and Joey Dee (June 11).

Inspirational Verse

And when I was sure
His teachings were pure
He drowned himself in the pool

— Leonard Cohen
"Thin Green Candle"

Fast Spins

Soul Train

Charles Wright
WB 7600

"Soul Train" is from the upcoming solo LP, *Rhythm and Poetry*, by the Watts Rhythm man, Charles Wright. Bass and guitar in unison are the big driving wheels, piano and drum are the pistons and not a stroke is



wasted, mind you. The oilers have done their work well, and the track rides like a groove. Riding it, first class, is Charles himself; his vocal jabs and hooks should soon be accompanied by fancy footwork on the part of the nation's soul shakers. For even smoother connections, WB's timetable man has trimmed the album cut's 5:03 run to a 3:35 single.

Summer Sun

Jamestown Massacre
WB 7603

Top Forty rides again with this fast and flashy single, a recent coup for WB's Talent Scouting and Master Purchasing Department, Midwest Division. Recorded somewhere in Michigan, it's a typical sample of Midwestern movin' music, fine for dancing, driving and all-purpose energizing. In addition to a nice violent name, the group has a driving drummer, a stout-hearted singer and some happy harmonies. As you may have guessed, further erudition is unavailable at the moment, but also unnecessary.

Blue Sky

The Allman Brothers Band
CPR 0007

In response to abundant airplay on the 5:10 album cut, Capricorn presents the compact version of one of the mellower melodies from the RIAA-golden *Eat a Peach* album. This is Dicky Betts' tune; he wrote it, sings it and plays one of his ecstatic guitar duets with Duane. Allman fans will be delighted at the increased likelihood of hearing "Blue Sky" on AM radios and jukeboxes; for the rest of you, its aforementioned melodic mellowness makes it a superb Rock-Music-for-People-Who-Hate-Rock Music item. On the reverse: "Little Martha," that lovely acoustic guitar duet by Duane and Dicky that follows "Blue Sky" on the album.

Wonderful Feeling

Fanny
Reprise 1097

With three Reprise albums under their belts, Fanny have pretty well outlived their erstwhile curiosity status, and today the copy boils down to simplicity: Fanny are one fine band. "Wonderful Feeling" is from the most recent of the three LPs, *Fanny Hill*. It's a little hard to think of this Jean Millington original as a *song*, a thing to be copyrighted and published and licensed. It's more like listening in on a very personal conversation, with all the shades, ambiguities, conflicts and solutions of everyday love. But it has a nice, moody melody and some unusual guitar effects from sister June, so it doesn't *quite* feel like snooping.



Cafe

Malo
WB 7605

Malo's first album, already the proud father of the highly successful "Suavecito" single, proudly announces the birth of its second seven-inch son. A four-barrel Latin rocker, "Cafe" sparkles like the bright lights of San Francisco's Mission district, from which it came, and teems with its toughness as well. Vocalist Arcelio Garcia Jr. and bassist Pablo Tellez wrote it, along with Malo's 18-year-old guitarist and leader, Jorge Santana (whose older brother also has an orchestra of which you may have heard). For 45 rpm, "Cafe" is edited down from the original 7:21 to a *pulcro* 3:26.

Win a Raggedy, Scratchy Album!

As a side-effect of one of Reprise's advertising campaigns for the Beach Boys' *Surf's Up* album, *Circular* finds itself awash in well-used copies of the Beach Boys' first album, *Surfin' Safari*.

Their condition ranges from cherry to cruddy, from mangy to mint. One of them has Charlene's name on it, and 11 say "Ed."

Since it's again Beach Boys season, what with the release of the something old/something new two-album set of *Pet Sounds* and *Carl and the Passions/So Tough*, what better could *Circ* do with these elderly platters but to offer them up in an easier-than-spitting contest?

All you have to do is to be one of the first several hundred to tell *Circular*, in writing, "What the Beach Boys Mean to Me," an essay whose length must be restricted to 25 words or less.

Send those neatly-written answers to *Circular*, a Division of Warner Bros. Records Inc., 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, California 91505. There is no time limit.

The Not-So-Secret Life of Foghat

When Tony Stevens (bass), Roger Earl (drums) and "Lonesome" Dave Peverett (guitar and vocals) decided to leave Savoy Brown, they were exiting from a popular and successful band that had made five hit albums. And yet they were confident about their future.

For several months after their departure from Savoy Brown, Foghat (as they now called themselves) worked on new material, building up the new band. After a while the threesome agreed that their collective rock and roll sound would be greatly enhanced by the addition of another guitarist. Several possibilities were considered, all to be rejected on the same grounds—each guy was *already* playing in a group. They all had gigs.

Call for Pickers

As Roger Earl tells it, "We advertised in one of the major London papers. Over 200 people responded, even though we hadn't put the name of the band in the ad. By the end of the first day we narrowed the number of contenders to about 30 or 40 over the phone. Rod Price was the last guitarist we interviewed, and by that time we were all pretty shot, having listened to about 20 guitarists play for 10 consecutive hours. But Rod got up and started playing and we jammed for about half an hour, until we got kicked out of the place. As it turned out, Rod was our man."

Rod had been a member of Black Cat Bones, a Mayall-like blues band that had played the club circuit at the end of the British blues boom. It was Wednesday when Rod tried out, but he didn't learn until Friday that he had been accepted. The enormous competition made him glad that he had known "Lonesome" Dave from a group that they had both participated in about six



years previously.

Rod joined the band in rehearsals and by the time they were ready to record, their manager, Tony Outeda, had signed them up with Bearsville Records. Tony had received offers from several companies interested in the former Savoyos, but Bearsville was the most excited. After a fast contractual meeting in New York, the foursome headed back home to England to record their first album.



They secluded themselves in the beautiful Wales countryside, recording in a picturesque studio called Rockfield. "It's only come to prominence fairly recently," says Roger, "but it's been going quite a long time. It's run by two brothers who are sons of the farmer whose farm it's on. They're running the farm and the studio as well, which is a bit strange."

While at Rockfield, they met Dave

Edmunds, who had recorded John Lennon's favorite single of last year, "I Hear You Knocking." Dave is also known in Great Britain for his masterfully progressive rock guitar playing with a group called Love Sculpture. Foghat talked to Dave, who was mixing an album of his own, and Dave agreed to produce Foghat's first LP.

Dental Atmosphere

The recording was done over a period of about six months, a much longer span of time than Savoy Brown had been allowed to take. Roger describes his recording experience with SB: "It was like going to the dentist's. You go in a bit nervous, and you come out not really knowing what happened. The recording often didn't really make it that well, but somehow the band had something going for it onstage.

A lot of little things used to come into play to mess up the music. With Foghat, we're much happier in the studio. There just comes a time when you have to step away and try to get better."

Todd Rundgren, who has become quite a world traveler lately, dropped in on the sessions and produced a couple of the tracks on *Foghat*, which has been recently released on Bearsville, distributed by Warner Bros. Records.

The nine songs on the LP range from blues to raunchy rock, with even Chuck Berry represented by "Maybelline." Foghat does an especially good arrangement of "I Just Want to Make Love to You," which may well be their first single in the U.S. "Lonesome" Dave is responsible for most of the original material on this album, although he shares authorship on several songs with the others.

Altogether, the sound is a lot more rock and rolly than it ever got with Savoy Brown, and the excitement that the album has already created in America has caused the

original nationwide album order to be doubled. The vinyl is practically warm from the presses, but radio stations both Stateside and abroad have started to play a lot of Foghat.

A month ago, Foghat completed a tour of England with Captain Beefheart. They played London and from there they traveled northwest to Liverpool for a couple of dates. Then north to Scotland and south again to Brighton.

"The tour was a bit shaky to start off, but after that, things really got going" says Roger. "The whole tour was sold out. We played nine or 10 dates in all, and we were scheduled to go to Europe, but we were held up by recording commitments."

The group isn't sure yet, but their first single in England may be "What a Shame," a recently recorded rocker written by Rod Price that features the talents of Bobby Keys on sax and Jim Price (no relation) on horns. Both musicians are featured prominently on the Rolling Stones' new *Exile on Main Street* release. Rod feels that "What a Shame" is the best recording that the group has made to date.

An American tour is scheduled beginning in July, giving Foghat the opportunity to prove their competence to audiences on both coasts—and in between. This trip, Roger Earl won't bring along his drum kit with the two bass drums, a conspicuous trademark during his association with Savoy Brown. "You should be able to get everything out of one bass drum that you can from two," he says. Besides, the extra bass drum would take up too much room in his cozy country home in Barkshire.

Basically, Foghat are a rock and roll band who love to play wherever they can. Especially America.

"If people dig your music in America, where most of today's music is drawn from, then it doesn't really matter what people anywhere else think."

— Mike Harris

Dr. Demento



Per last week's query, Jesse Colin Young's first solo album was called *The Soul of a City Boy*, and it was Capitol T 2070, mono. It features six Young originals, an exquisite rendition of George Remaily's "Four in the Morning," a cover photo whose dormant pose predates The Band's similar attitude on the *Cahoots* cover by the better part of a decade, and the liner-note info that Jesse was born with the name Perry Miller in 1941. *The Soul of a City Boy* was followed by a Mercury solo album aptly named *Young Blood*, which may ring a bell somewhere. Both solo albums were produced by Bobby Scott.

Question for Next Week

One of the more interesting avenues of phonographic trivia is the label slogan. Collectors of shellac fondly recall Columbia's "Viva-Tonal Recording" from the 1920s; 50s freaks revel in Keen's "Ultra Tonal Disc Recording," Argo's "Audio Odessey" (sic) and Love's "High Tri-Fidelity." (Love is the label Cozy Cole made "Topsy" for). "Promotion Copy—Not for Sale" is a current favorite. Now, for the WB/Reprise catalog album of your choice, identify the perpetrators of these power phrases:

- Visual Sound Stereo
- New Orthophonic High Fidelity
- Vitaphonic Stereo
- Don't Drop Out

The winner of Dr. Demento's two-weeks-ago question (Q: First commercial stereo discs? A: Cook Laboratories) is Brian Murphy of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, who requested *Spike Jones in Stereo*.

Honorable mention, but no album, to Sasch Rubinstein of North Hollywood, 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.

Top Ten

1. Deep Purple/*Machine Head* (BS/M5/M8 2607)
2. Bob Weir/*Ace* (BS/M5/M8 2627)
3. Alice Cooper/*Killer* (BS/M5/M8 2567)
4. Todd Rundgren/*Something/Anything* (2BX/L5/L8 2066)
5. Neil Young/*Harvest* (MS/M5/M8 2032)
6. *Malò* (BS/M5/M8 2584)
7. The Allman Brothers Band/*Eat a Peach* (2CP/J5/J8 0102)
8. Arlo Guthrie/*Hobo's Lullaby* (MS/M5/M8 2060)
9. Fleetwood Mac/*Bare Trees* (MS/M5/M8 2080)
10. Cold Blood/*First Taste of Sin* (MS/M5/M8 2074)

Artist Itineraries

Arkansas

Black Sabbath
6/17, Barton College, Little Rock

California

Grateful Dead
6/17, Hollywood Bowl, Hollywood

Iowa

Todd Rundgren
6/13, Roof Garden Ballroom, Arnolds Park

Minnesota

Todd Rundgren
6/14, Hollyhock Ballroom, Hatfield

Missouri

Jethro Tull
6/15, Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City

Nebraska

Todd Rundgren
6/15, Creighton Prep School, Omaha

Nevada

Jethro Tull
6/17, Convention Hall, Las Vegas

New York

Alex Taylor
6/17, Central Park, New York City
Labelle
6/18, Canaan Baptist Church, Harlem

Ohio

Black Sabbath
6/16, Cincinnati Gardens, Cincinnati

Oklahoma

Jethro Tull
6/14, Fairgrounds Arena, Oklahoma City
Fanny
6/18, Auditorium, Oklahoma City

Oregon

Jethro Tull
6/12, Coliseum, Portland

Pennsylvania

Kindred
6/18, Spectrum, Philadelphia

Texas

Cold Blood
6/15, Mother Earth, Austin
6/16-18, Liberty Hall, Houston
Sparks
6/16-18, Liberty Hall, Houston
Jethro Tull
6/18, Coliseum, Houston

Virginia

Black Sabbath
6/18, Scope, Norfolk

Washington, D.C.

Stovall Sisters
6/12-18, Shady Grove Theatre