

a weekly news device from warner/reprise vol. 4 number 23, monday, june 12, 1972 burbank, california

circular



Seals and Crofts
Brew New Music

Seals and Crofts Brew New Music

A session begins with somebody turning the lights on.

If there is ever a beginning of human creation . . .

So much light, in so many variegated shapes and colors. Shards from everywhere coming together into tight focus. Smoothly. Purposefully. Dusty light from a Texas fiddlers' contest. Holy light from an Indian prison. Pagan light strobed by tiny wings. Amber light from the belly of a guitar. And the inner light which is the hidden sun to the birth and flowering of poems and songs before they are spoken and sung—and heard . . .

Precious Nuggets

Circular set aside an afternoon recently to drop in on Seals and Crofts, who are recording songs for their next album. The assignment was to hang out and watch folks play and sing, study the rolling of the tape and the wig-wagging of needles on dials, and try to be mouse-in-the-corner while production decisions were being discussed. Then hasten away to write so that *Circular's* readers would have hip nuggets of insider info for luncheon chat with disadvantaged nonreaders (if such there be).

. . . Circular says that Jimmy Seals and Dash Crofts are laying down a bunch of dynamite tracks over at Dave Hassinger's . . .

. . . A potential gold single, according to Circular. You don't get Circular? I'd lend you my copy, but I save 'em. Maybe the library . . .

But somehow the wonder of music in the making is always fresh and stunning, and, as frequently happens, there seems to be no simple, straight news formula for reporting the magic of merging of complicated elements which become a song on one-inch black oxide tape moving at 15 inches per second.

For instance, there is the poker-player face of Dave Hassinger, and his hands resting lightly on buttons and switches and slides. Here in his studio, he is the sum of immense technical knowledge and experience, coming from another light source—the student's lamp upon hundreds and thousands of text book pages. He is listening to *parts* of sounds, putting them where they belong on the unreadable black tape. At his side, an assistant, who responds to almost inaudible instructions with unobtrusive efficiency: a microphone is moved or replaced; the snare drum's vibrations are damped; details are handled. If an earthquake happened now, Dave Hassinger would give it a separate track and keep its level within acceptable parameters. Probably without so much as a grunt or a frown.

Jimmy Seals has been sick. A virus knocked him flat a couple of days ago. One of those 24-hour hay-makers. But here he is, happy as a clam because he's got a new song; he's already heard it, and the task now is to make it so others can hear it, too. He is a brisk, smallish dude whose trademark is his funky little cap. The cap is jaunty today, which says that good things are happening.

Contrasting Tempo

Dash Crofts is fooling around between takes with a wah-wah pedal and his electric mandolin, getting some outrageous effects to be used later when there is a place to work them in. Dash is a slow talker, and astonishingly able to radiate excitement and enthusiasm without moving one whit faster or talking one tat louder than his always easy and graceful style of being. Dash is a gradual kind of guy. He drawls when Jimmy almost stammers with what he knows comes next.

Both are perfectionists.

The song seems to epitomize the growth the two have shown in

the three stages of their three previous albums.

Jimmy has a rehearsal of it on a cassette. He and Dash recorded it with their studio people a week or so before, shortly after Jimmy wrote it. Studio time is expensive, not to be wasted in preliminary rehearsing.

He says, "There's been a lot of hummingbird songs." But he seems unworried. His "Hummingbird" is different.

Harvey Brooks has flown in from New York to play bass on "Hummingbird." Himself a star, a musician's musician, the almost legendary studio bassist is another of these calm professionals. He likes the tune, boogies in the control room while Hassinger plays back a take.

Bobby Lichtig, who plays bass with Seals and Crofts when they tour and on most of their album cuts, will overdub a flute part for "Hummingbird."

Circular counts 11 takes or partial takes.

With Larry Knechtel playing grand piano and Jim Keltner on drums, Seals and Crofts run through their arrangement of "Hummingbird" over and over. Producer Louie Shelton, who is also a guitarist and studio musician, listens intently.

Fattening Fingers

There is a moment of professional insight. Shelton enters the studio and shows Harvey Brooks the fingering for a passage which needs more musical richness. ("I like a fat sound on this one," Jimmy Seals says later . . .) Brooks watches, practices the variation for a moment, then sits and waits for his cue. He comprehends exactly and quickly, and gives Shelton what is needed—and more; always more.

Skeletal at first, the instrumental tracks begin to grow. This is accompaniment to a song which *Circular* will not hear today. Tomorrow for the voice. Today for the instruments.

But, surprisingly, there is little of the feeling of an incomplete work. Voices will fit into it, or soar over it, to be sure, but the music being recorded has substance and melody and form and interest of its own.

The afternoon goes very quickly. The tension which is so essential to performance begins to assert its discipline, so that outlines become sharp, freeing the musicians to create more comfortably within the tightened structure.

But Jimmy Seals is bustling back and forth, frowning and shaking his head. The tempo is not quite right, not quite what he heard when this song first made itself known to his inner ear.

A union representative, on his studio rounds, is in and out so quickly, so modestly, that there is no interruption. Yet he gets the information he needs, makes his notes and leaves without a rustle.

Still dissatisfied, Jimmy refers to the cassette, the rehearsal tape. He plays it back on his Ampex portable. Louie Shelton and Dash Crofts listen, and Dave Hassinger runs his tape back so that they can compare the two. The same song, yes, but far from the skinny original version. However, Jimmy Seals is right. It moved faster when they were just getting into it.

Back into the studio.

This time the feeling is *right*. This take will be the version Seals and Crofts are striving for.

But how to explain the final miracle? All that hard work, all that polishing, has succeeded in perfecting the definition—and still these five musicians perform with a bright and blithe spontaneity, as if this were a jam session!

This is one of those songs without a formal ending. So all of the instruments just get it on joyously. In the mix-down, this exuberance will be faded gradually into the vinyl



silence which separates songs upon an album. A board fade, it's called.

During these last bars of the last take, Larry Knechtel, whose playing has become increasingly complex as the session progresses, begins rolling arpeggios and runs. Real bravura stuff.

Harvey Brooks is so evidently pleased with the way this is happening that his feet are dancing while his hands shape the rhythm and texture of the bass line.

Jim Keltner is adding delighted licks to embellish the stylized idiom of rock drumming as his endorsement of Jimmy Seals' New Improved Tempo.

But the bottom line, of course, is that Dave Hassinger smiles during the playback. Not a broad grin, but enough of a wrinkle to testify that he got more than just a board gig out of this session.

On that first afternoon, Dash Crofts says, "I think we're going to call this album *Yellow Dirt*." *Circular* suggests that they're thinking wishfully of gold albums. Their manager, Marcia Day, a very nice lady, agrees to this emphatically. But the title they settle on will be *Summer Breeze*, which is also the name of the single they picked. ("Summer Breeze," the single, is just now being released; *Summer Breeze*, the album, will be out July 1.)

Solidly Connected

After the session, Louie Shelton discusses his role as producer for Seals and Crofts. Having been a studio musician for years, he knows how detrimental heavy-handedness can be to the sensitive process of creating music. He's had a long relationship with Seals and Crofts, played in a band with them several years before they got their present act together and produced their just-previous album (*Year of Sunday*, WB 2568). Moreover, he is also a member of the Bahá'í faith, as are Seals and Crofts, and all three are guided by the humanistic

precepts of that religion, which they follow and practice. And, just to nail it down, Louie Shelton and Dash Crofts are brothers-in-law.

"We thought of producing our own records," says Jimmy. "And we were pleased with John Simon's work on our second album" (*Down Home*, on T.A. Records, as was their first LP, *Seals and Crofts*). Alternatives. But Jimmy and Dash chose to concentrate on their music-making and let Shelton supervise things in the studio. The comfortable proof of the present family collaboration was abundantly evident.

Marcia Day said: "We picked Warner Bros. when we were looking for a new label affiliation because WB has a progressive attitude and open-minded respect for what Seals and Crofts are doing." She added that *Circular*'s presence during this session was "the first time anyone from Warner Bros. has ever been in the studio while the boys were recording."

Circular felt smug.

— Leonard Brown

Items

Hendrix Gold

★ Newest certified-gold member of the Reprise album family is *Hendrix in the West*, which was so pronounced by the inscrutable RIAA, who so pronounced it based on a million bucks' worth of sales.

Birthday Ballyhoo

★ This week's celebrations include the following musical notables: Vic Damone (June 12), Burl Ives (June 14), Billy Vaughn (June 16), James Brown (June 17) and Paul McCartney (June 18).

Warped Time

★ Nine years ago this month WB made its bid for the popular market with the following LPs: *Young and in Love* by Dick and DeeDee, *My Son, the Nut* by Allen Sherman, *Hollywood's Bad but Beautiful Girls* by Stan Applebaum and *Something New* by the Glenn Miller Alumni.



IN THE STUDIO — Al Kooper (left) and Bobby Hatfield relax for a moment between takes of Hatfield's current recording sessions in New York City. Kooper is producing the vocalist, aiming toward Hatfield's Warner Bros. debut album. (Photo by David Garr)

Tall Purple

★ The Number One Album on the British charts these days belongs to Deep Purple. It's *Machine Head*, the same *Machine Head* which is doing so spiffy (though not quite *that* spiffy) on these shores.



Deep Purple

Twofers Abound

★ A recent issue of *Record World* detailed the current flood of prosperous two-album sets. Writer Mitchell Fink came up with a list which included the following now-successful and soon-to-be successful titles from assorted labels: *Manassas* by Stephen Stills, *Something/Anything* by Todd Rundgren, *Eat a Peach* by the Allman Brothers Band, *Joplin in Concert* by Janis Joplin, *Mark, Don & Mel 1969-1971* by Grand Funk Railroad, *The Kink Kronikles* by the Kinks, *History of Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits, Vol. II, Hot Rocks* by the Rolling Stones, *The Four Sides of Melanie*, *Golden Butter* by the Butterfield Blues Band, *Exile on Main Street* by the Rolling Stones, *America Eats Its Young* by Funkadelic, *Pet Sounds/Carl and the Passions—So Tough* by the Beach Boys, *From Within* by Dionne Warwick, *Live Bloodrock*, *Amazing Grace* by Aretha Franklin and two larger-multiple record sets, *The Concert for Bangla Desh* (three discs) and *Chicago at Carnegie* (four albums).

Purple Precaution

★ Victims of hepatitis for two tours running, Deep Purple have taken measures to safeguard their next try at the United States. The group will be accompanied on all stops by a doctor and his family (including a nanny for the doc's kid).

Fannyvision

★ Fanny, currently doing good sales things with their *Fanny Hill* elpee and "Wonderful Feeling" single, recently taped a half-hour segment of *The Session*, a college-aimed TV series produced by Bruce Scafe for WSIU-TV of Southern Illinois University. Television outlets in Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Nebraska, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota will also air the program.

Power Plays

★ Currently sundering Warner Bros. into a two-camp controversy is the question of what to release as a Tower of Power single from their bumpy bumpy bump *Bump City* album. Half the electoral votes thus far have gone to "Down to the Nightclub," while another half have swung to "Young Man." Adding heat to the internal strife is radio tip sheetster Bill Gavin's endorsement of "Young Man," countered briskly by radio tip sheetster Kal Rudman's endorsement of "Down to the Nightclub." Stay tuned.

Country Comforts

★ Breaking out in a big way from the Texas area is "Queen of My Heart" by Benny Whitehead, a Nashville-produced gem which may gain Warner Bros. a long-due foothold in the country marketplace. Even the diehard city slickers (Burbank-style) of *Circular* love the single, which probably has nothing to do with its future destiny.

Meters Click

★ "It looks like a record," said one of the promotional potentates recently while discussing the career of the new Meters' single, "Smiling" (the original B-side of "Do the Dirt," which has now become the B-side of "Smiling"). What that phrase means is that it's slowly developing into a hit via the secondary market route. What *that* phrase means is anybody's guess.



Meters

Inspirational Verse

She's so small
She can mambo in a pay phone
booth

— Joe Turner
"Flip, Flop and Fly"

Fruity Launched at the World

President Nixon penetrates Russia. China exports ping pong paraphernalia. Vietnam continues. Frogs invade Malaysia. Beach Boys move to Amsterdam.

With headlines like these occurring all around the world, small wonder that Warner/Reprise's own international department is currently pressed into feverish activity to make its own dent in the global situation.

As was exclusively reported in *Circular* back in April, the international people are preparing an unboundaried sampler album to introduce foreign hordes to the delights of Warner/Reprise recordings, said sampler to be titled *Fruity*, which

apparently translates into better things abroad than it does here.

Pictured in the vicinity of these words is the completed album and sundry devices designed to help vend it to aliens. Manufactured in Germany, it's packaged in a round jacket which resembles a cut-open fruit salad can, printed in bright attractive colors.

Among the artists represented on the album are Van Morrison, Alice Cooper, Fanny, the Allman Brothers Band, America, Grateful Dead, Fleetwood Mac, John Baldry, Ry Cooder, Faces, Curved Air and Malo.

One small step for the international department, 33 rpms for the world.

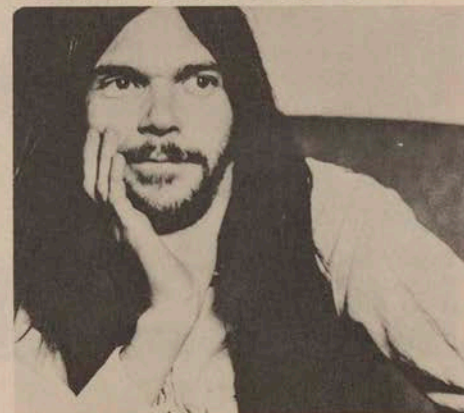


Fast Spins

War Song

Neil Young and Graham Nash
with the Stray Gators REP 1099

The topical single, rushed into print overnight to add musical dimension to some captivating issue or event, was once a common, if irregular, feature of the record business. This



was a final vestige of the balladeers who once rode from town to town spreading the news in song, before the age of journalism. Today the topical disc is almost a lost art, surviving erratically in some of the remoter corners of C&W, and most forcefully in the work of Neil Young. The present political conflict in general, and the shooting of George Wallace in particular, are the subjects of this bold new broadside from the composer of "Ohio." Graham Nash and the Stray Gators provide an appropriately angry electric accompaniment. On the other side is Neil's equally pungent comment on a chronic American disease: "The Needle and the Damage Done," from the RIAA-golden *Harvest* album.

Marcella

Beach Boys
REP 1101

It was a mere rough dub of this recording that inspired Martin Cerf to a full page of raves in the April, 1972, *Phonograph Record Magazine*. Along the way, he quoted his

friend Greg Shaw saying "This is the sound and the record we've been starved to hear for over six summers." With the release of the finished product on the *Carl and the Passions—So Tough* LP, America's radio taste-makers found their hunger pangs similarly relieved, and responded with abundant needle-time. Clearly, "Marcella" is one sweet hunk of vinyl, which Brother/Reprise is only too happy to make available in doughnut form. For added flavor, the Brother bakery also includes a splendid and much-radioed composition by the newest Beach Boys, Ricky Fataar and Blondie Chaplin: "Hold on Dear Brother."

Summer Breeze

Seals & Crofts
WB 7606

"Summer Breeze" is in many ways the modern expression of what Gershwin's "Summertime" said for summers when the fish were jumpin' and the cotton was high. Here again the lyrics use acute imagery to express contentment with nature and civilization alike, while the tune finds special comfort in a minor key. As with so much of Seals & Crofts' work, a tinge of Eastern fragrance lends charm and refreshment to the music. The unique orchestration, blending a skilfully modulated electric lead guitar with winds, strings, xylophone and other mystic sounds, also helps make "Summer Breeze" a real standout in this year's bumper crop of summer songs. It's a selection from the duo's imminent WB album (their second), which is also titled *Summer Breeze*, a gesture of confidence well placed.

I've Got a Thing About You Baby

Tony Joe White
WB 7607

The rock 'n' roll troll strikes again with some tender soul. "Thing" is a simple but eloquent love song which speaks the truth with cleverness and verve. Tony Joe wrote it himself, and it's not hard to predict

a rash of cover versions. But just as in the old days of rock, the original is the one; producers Jerry Wexler and Tom Dowd have seen to that. With great economy of means, this recording provides a naturally perfect setting for Tony Joe's unmistakable voice. Acoustic guitar, bass, tambourine and a dash of piano provide a more erotic beat than any amount of wattage could equal, and with Tony Joe adding some well-thought wisdom to the more basic concerns of the song, this is 2:39 of universal pop music. Delivered, uncut, from TJW's album, *The Train I'm On*.

Rita

Arthur Conley
CPR 0006

Lipstick on her lips, hot pants on her hips . . . some may say good ol' Rita's nothin' but a sex symbol. But she's liberated enough to have half the neighborhood's males firmly tucked under her thumb, the old ones and the young ones too. She does sound like quite a personality as the "Sweet Soul Music" man sizes up her recent development in this hearty hip-shaker of a single, a record that efficiently and irresistibly achieves its goal of making one feel good. Jerry Williams Jr. produced it for the music makin' men from Macon, better known to the trade as Capricorn Records.

You're Still a Young Man

Tower of Power
WB 7612

Like Cold Blood, this Northern California power band came to Burbank from Bill Graham's dear departed San Francisco label. Tower of Power came, in fact, by way of Nashville, where their bumptious *Bump City* album was recorded for your dining and dancing pleasure. "Young Man" spotlights lead singer Rick Stevens in a little love drama, on a subject that has inspired as many hits as any: the indefinability of the age of reason for matrimonial purposes. While Stevens pleads his case with the greatest of fervor,

the background voices take the side of moderation, in those jazzy "sweet soul" harmonies that have become the trademark of a whole new generation of soul music.

Wonder Girl

Sparks
BSV 0006

A sly song of innocence and experience from these gifted gents. Visions of good and evil, purity and degradation, prurience and purity dance about so swiftly that they become thoroughly intertwined, a fitting frustration for those who would view life and love in black and white. Color is more fun anyway, and besides Sparks is a band which, despite having abandoned its former soubriquet of Halfnelson for its more electric current name,



still likes to stay one up on everybody. It's a trait the group shares with its producer, that saucy seer of lights, Todd Rundgren, whose expertise has helped make "Wonder Girl" a wonder of a song. It just might corrupt some young innocents, or innocent some old corrupts, and/or expose them to the Bearsville *Sparks* album, which could be dangerous.

Dr. Demento



The answers to last week's Record-Label Slogan contest are (a) Visual Sound Stereo was what you got your Canned Heat or Gary Lewis/Leon Russell LPs from Liberty in, unless you bought mono; (b) New Orthophonic High Fidelity was how RCA Victor brought you Elvis (and Perry Como and The Boston Symphony; Victor Talking Machine Co. had started "Orthophonic Recording" back in the 20s); (c) Warner Bros. Records were Vitaphonic in both stereo (gold label) and mono (gray label) for the first five years or so; and (d) "Don't Drop Out" was Swan Records' contribution to education in America, as it adorned every copy of the million-seller "She Loves You" by the Beatles.

Question for Next Week

One for you Beatle buffs. Swan Records was one of five American labels that issued early Fab Four product in addition to Capitol, which eventually won exclusive rights to the most prominent product of its parent company, EMI. For the WB/Reprise album of your choice, name the labels on which the following goodies first appeared in the land of Stars and Stripes:

- "Love Me Do"
- "Please Please Me"
- "My Bonnie"
- "Ain't She Sweet"

The winner of Dr. Demento's two-weeks-ago question (Q: Identify Jesse Colin Young's first solo album. A: *The Soul of a City Boy*, on Capitol) is Paul Feldman of Quincy, Mass., who requested *Swallow*.

Honorable mention, but no album, to Mike Staveley, of Berkshire, England.

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. Neil Young/*Harvest* (MS/M5/M8 2032)
2. Jethro Tull/*Thick as a Brick* (MS/M5/M8 2072)
3. Frank Sinatra/*Greatest Hits* (FS/M5/M8 1034)
4. *America* (BS/M5/M8 2576)
5. Alice Cooper/*Killer* (BS/M5/M8 2567)
6. Allman Brothers Band/*Eat a Peach* (2CP/J5/J8 0102)
7. Tower of Power/*Bump City* (BS/M5/M8 2616)
8. *Malo* (BS/M5/M8 2584)
9. Bob Weir/*Ace* (BS/M5/M8 2627)
10. Beach Boys/*Pet Sounds—Carl and the Passions/So Tough* (2MS/J5/J8 2083)

Artist Itineraries

California

Swallow

6/18-20, Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles

Jethro Tull

6/23-24, The Forum, Inglewood
6/25, San Diego

Dionne Warwick

6/23, Convention Center, Fresno
6/24, San Diego

Malo

6/24, Santa Rosa County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa

Florida

Fanny

6/21, Winterhaven
6/23, Tampa

Allman Brothers Band

6/22, Sports Stadium, Orlando
6/23-24, Jai Alai Fonton, Miami

Illinois

Black Sabbath

6/21, The Armory, Rockford

Maryland

Stovall Sisters

6/19-25, Painter's Mill, Baltimore

Missouri

Cold Blood

6/19, Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis

New Mexico

Jethro Tull

6/22, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque

New York

Herbie Hancock

6/19, St. Thomas Church, New York City
6/20, Grasslands Compound, Yonkers
6/22, Creedmore State Hospital, Queens

Kindred

6/19, Central Park Festival, New York City
6/24, Ritz Theatre, Staten Island

Labelle

6/23, Madison Square Garden, New York City

Randy Newman

6/23-25, My Father's Place, Roslyn, Long Island

Ohio

Kindred

6/23, Yankee Lake Park, Youngstown

Black Sabbath

6/24, Akron Rubber Bowl, Akron

Pennsylvania

Alice Cooper

6/23, Three River Stadium, Pittsburgh
6/25, Muscular Dystrophy Benefit, Nazareth
Speedway, Allentown

Texas

Jethro Tull

6/19, Tarrant County Center, Ft. Worth
6/20, Arena, San Antonio
6/21, Coliseum, El Paso

Wisconsin

Black Sabbath

6/23, Auditorium, Milwaukee

Canada

John Baldry

6/24, New York Continental Arena, Toronto, Ontario

Kindred

6/25, O'Keefe Centre, Toronto, Ontario