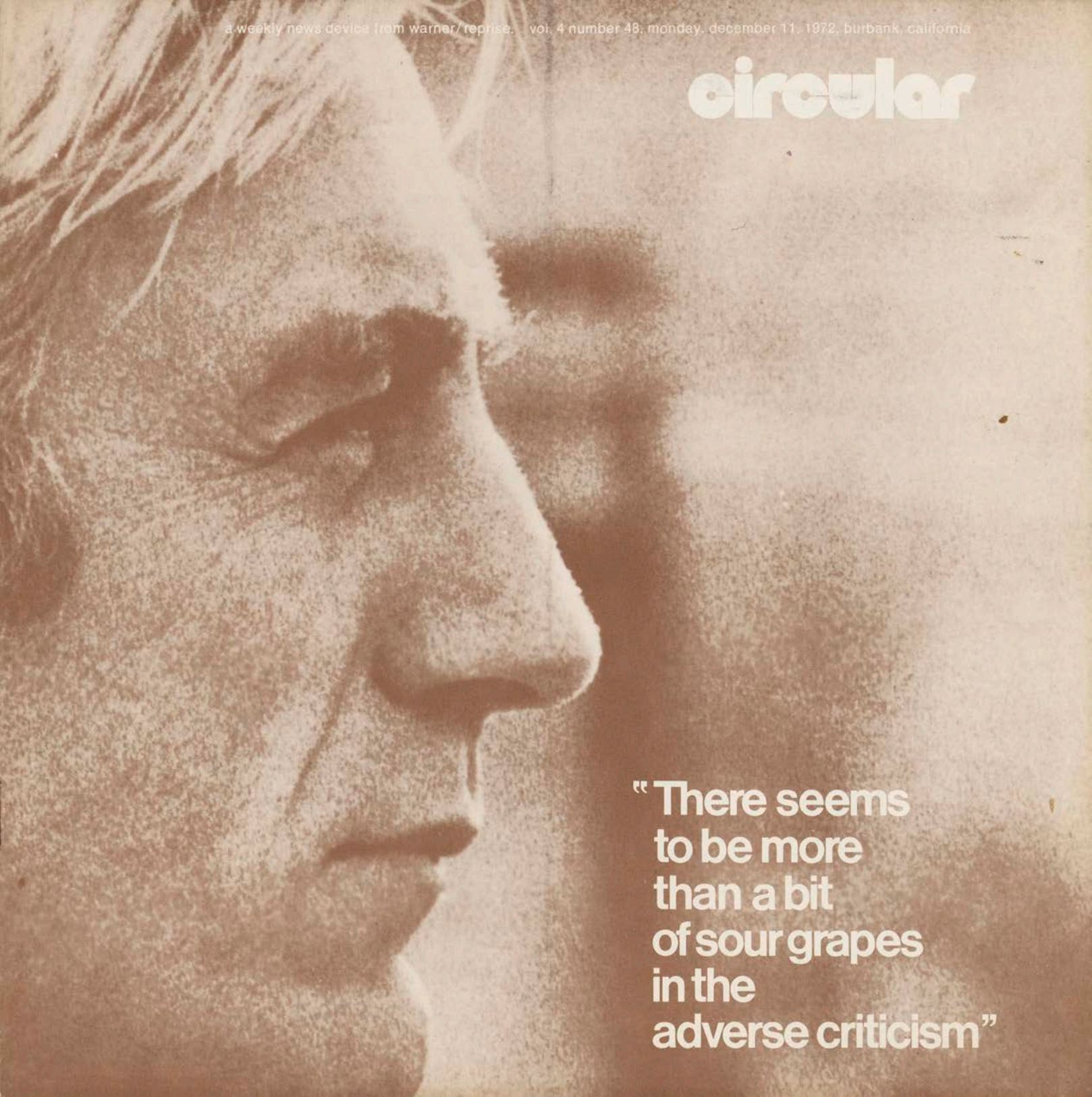


**circular**



**“There seems  
to be more  
than a bit  
of sour grapes  
in the  
adverse criticism”**

# The Circular Interview: Rod McKuen

**DENVER**—Different observers notice different things. Sure everybody's heard that Denver has a nice climate, trees and lots of good-looking girls. Two things *Circular* liked about Denver, though. First, Johnny Carson starts half an hour earlier than Dick Cavett. You can see Carson's monolog and the display of lightning-quick ripostes with Ed McMahon (well, after all these years, they *should* be lightning-quick ), and then tune in Cavett for the rest of the evening. Second, some theaters give parking rebates. Aah . . . *Circ's* kind of city.

The mission wasn't to check out Denver television, though, and certainly not to go to movies. Rather, the trip was in search of the elusive Rod McKuen.

Rod doesn't try especially hard to be elusive. But, doing more than 250 concerts this year, plus recording, plus writing books and magazine pieces, plus producing other people's recordings, plus keeping track of investments including his own publishing house and record company, plus the requisite travel, there isn't much time left to be available.

## Hurried Hits for Holland

Denver was an exception of sorts. Rod was to be there for five days. During that period, he was scheduled to perform three concerts in Denver, one in Colorado Springs, a college lecture in Denver, a television appearance and recording the vocal tracks for *Rod McKuen's Greatest Hits, Volume Four* ("They need it in Holland as soon as possible").

The Denver concerts were to be with a full orchestra of 20 local

string players, plus Rod's own traveling rhythm section. One afternoon was reserved for rehearsal. Plus, perhaps, some writing. Portable typewriter, books and papers covered a largish table in McKuen's suite. You get the idea.

The pace was typical; the five days in one town a rare exception. On short notice, *Circ* laid in a supply of blue jeans, bought a couple of pairs of white tennis shoes and a round trip ticket and caught the champagne flight to the Mile-High City.

On the way, some in-flight reading. Books of poetry, starting with *Stanyan Street and Other Sorrows*, originally sold by mail to people responding to a note on a Glen Yarborough album cover—the first record, by the way, that another artist devoted to McKuen compositions.

## Gift Books Galore

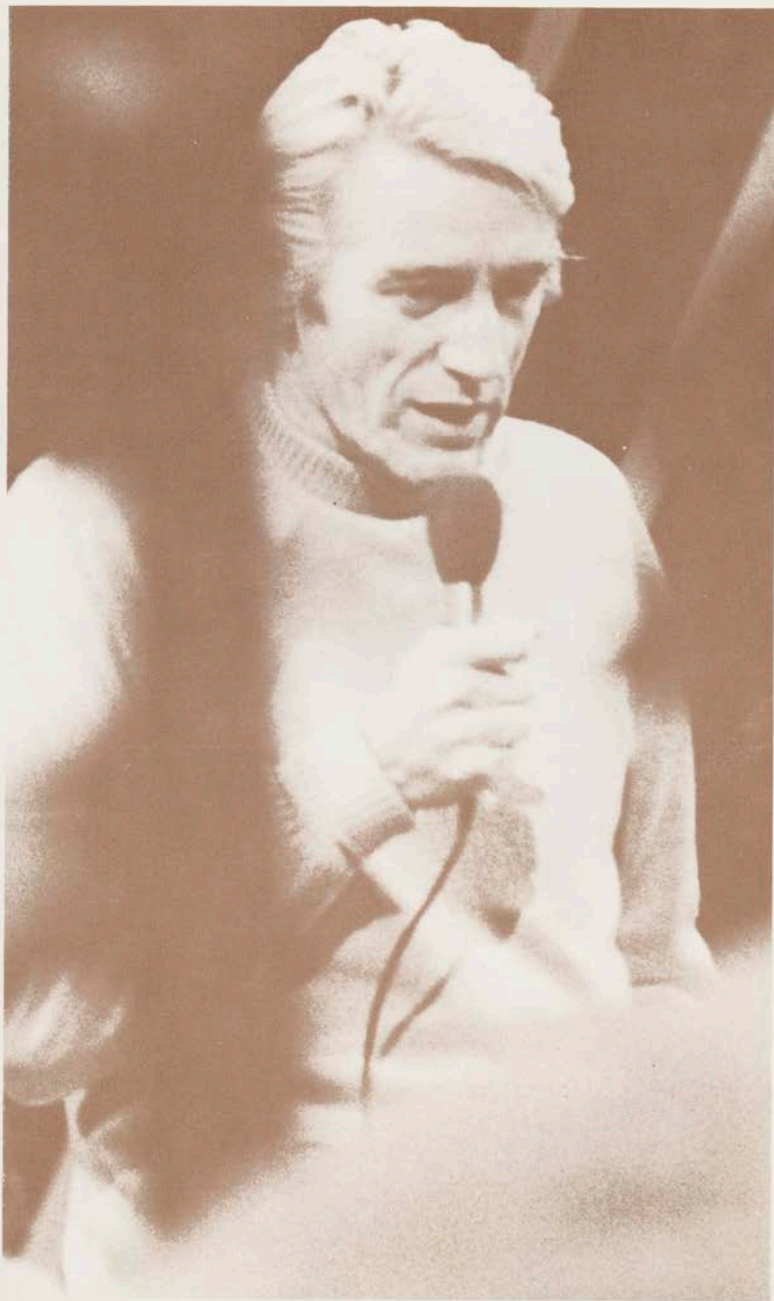
Gift books, like *Mother Grabbers; Actors About Acting, Loving, Life; Love on \$5 a Day and Fun With Fondue*. There are more than 40 books in the series. Some were written by McKuen under pseudonyms. Which, he isn't letting on.

The engagement calendars. One for 1972, one for 1973.

Some record albums. 60 or so, in fact.

Landing. Drive to the hotel, unpack. Phone Rod's road manager, Wayne Massie. The college lecture's been cancelled; some form of trouble on the campus and student activities are off. TV interview that afternoon. Meet at 1:00.

Meet at 1:00. Driven to TV studio, where Rod is to be interviewed during breaks in the afternoon



movie, a Western of obscure origin starring James Cagney. Host shakes hands with McKuen; was a disc jockey when "The Mummy" (Brunswick 55140; 1959) and "Oliver Twist" (Spiral 1407; 1962) came out.

### Biography in Brief

A break in the movie. Host moves in quick for the questions. Holds up book; plugs concert. Question: when did you start writing? "When I was 12," says Rod. "I used to watch the Hit Parade on TV. When I couldn't remember all the words the next day, I'd make up words of my own." Came out of Army in 1955, went to Hollywood. Signed to contract at Universal. Refused to do picture in 1959—"Who wants to do *Rock, Pretty Baby* all the time?" Was put on suspension by studio, went to New York. Wrote, published book of poetry. "It must have sold six copies, total. I bought three of them." Embarked on recording career. Voice went out on extensive tour of one-nighters to plug "Oliver Twist." "I'd originally taken the song to Chubby Checker. But he said 'Chubby don't do but *Chubby's Twist*.' So I recorded it myself." Voice has never really recovered, hence gravelly quality. "But it's improved a lot. I've got a 2½ octave range." Host thanks McKuen, back into movie. Off-screen McKuen tells interviewer he's sorry time was so brief. Rod really loves Denver; spends a lot of time there. Wants to do benefit performance of classical music with and for symphony in a year or so.

Back at the hotel, Rod changes jeans. "They're Australian. Amco. The best in the world. They send

them to me free, now." Settles down over a cold Coors ("Someone there heard that I like it. Now they make sure that I've got plenty").

Noteпад and freshly-sharpened pencil in hand, *Circular* began.

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**CIRCULAR:** Hi, Rod.

**McKUEEN:** Hi, *Circular*.

**CIRCULAR:** What have you been up to recently?

**McKUEEN:** Well, I've just signed a new five-year contract with Warner Bros. So far, I'd been with the company on a handshake deal with Joe Smith, which had been working out fine. But we finally had to sign a contract, to prove to the government that Warner Bros. and I are doing business together. My *Odyssey* album has been out for a couple of months and is doing well. For Christmas, there's a new San Sebastian Strings album and coming soon is an all-new four-record set, *The Rod McKuen Collection*.

**CIRCULAR:** Would you tell us a bit about the new albums?

**McKUEEN:** *The Rod McKuen Collection* is designed to show many aspects of my performing. Several songs are taken from live performances. There are some questions and answers from the rap sessions I hold after my concerts. There's some classical music, and a full side of songs that I didn't write but enjoy very much.

**CIRCULAR:** For instance?

**McKUEEN:** Oh, things like "Both Sides Now," "I Think It's Going to Rain Today," "Here, There and Everywhere" and "Mr. Bojangles." I was the first person to record "Bojangles" after Jerry Jeff Walker, you know. We just didn't

"*Winter* was originally going to be *Autumn*, but the release date was pushed back and I had to write new poems."

release it. On "Here, There and Everywhere," I changed the reference from "her" to "you." That makes it more personal. I'd really like to do more outside material, but my fans want to hear the new songs.

**CIRCULAR:** How about the new San Sebastian Strings album? Would you describe what goes on there?

**McKUEEN:** The first San Sebastian Strings album was *The Sea*. It was a collection of poems, with musical and sound-effect backgrounds. The album was so successful that we followed it with two more, *The Earth* and *The Sky*. *Winter* will be the first of a series based on the four seasons. It was originally going to be *Autumn*, but the release date was pushed back and I had to write new poems. No point in releasing *Autumn* in December!

When I write the San Sebastian Strings albums, I make up 'dummy' poems—very rough. Then I'll sketch out musical ideas and send them to Anita Kerr, in Switzerland. She writes the music and records it in Europe. The tapes are sent back to me. I'll put them on my car tape deck, and let them stew for a while. Then I'll finish the poems and record the voice and sound effects. This time, for instance, we're using rain, my dogs barking and the sound of a biplane. Among others. I've gotten very interested in biplanes recently, ever since some people I met took me up in one.

**CIRCULAR:** You own your own record company, don't you?

**McKUEEN:** Yes. Most of our albums and tapes are sold through the mail; we're the second largest



“I created myself; I should know best how to market myself.”

mail-order record company in the world, right behind the Columbia Record Club. We're doing some distribution through record stores, now, too.

**CIRCULAR:** Why your own company, when you're happy with Warner Bros.?

**McKUEN:** I've made a lot of money from the business, and I want to put it back into records. Nobody's recording Chris Connor. Nobody's recording Sylvia Sims, Greta Keller or Ellis Larkins, and I felt that it should be done. Next year, we'll be doing something with Lotte Lenya. I've recorded Claudette Colbert doing *The Little Prince* in French and English. I've recorded Phyllis Diller doing the *Switched-on Mother Goose*. You know, there are a lot of artists like that that I'm interested in. At one time, I talked to Frank [Sinatra], because he did such a good job of recording the 'talk' elements of *A Man Alone*. We talked about doing a spoken album . . . I don't know.

We financed the only complete recording of *Showboat* ever made—complete in that it contains every song ever written for the show. Hammerstein and Kern kept adding to the score, long after the original Broadway run. Nobody's ever put all those songs together before. We produced it on stage in London, and have the album in this country. Here, it's a two-record set on Stanyan. In England, there's only one record—ours has more songs. English collectors are importing our version of the album. We also have the English cast of *The Music Man*, with Van Johnson. We're doing an entire retrospective of Noel Coward—



“It’s a fact that I’ve been the only successful translator of Brel into English. Successful commercially, aesthetically and with the critics.”

everything he’s ever recorded. We’re getting the material from *everywhere*.

All of the foreign-language San Sebastian Strings albums are on Stanyan; *La Mer* did better here than it did in France. We’re doing *The Sea Around the World*, with tracks from all the different versions.

And then, there are some of my own albums on Stanyan. One of the best albums I ever made is the Amsterdam Concert. We couldn’t release it here on Warners, because *Grand Tour* had just come out. We don’t want to flood the market, but the material should be available for whoever wants it. And we reach a different audience through Stanyan than we might through regular channels.

It’s hard for me to market new performers, because I don’t have the sales force for it. Even though I’d like to be able to. It’s gotten to a point where we really have to enlarge our distribution. But I’m not really sure how. If I were to sell Stanyan, it would have to be to somebody who understands what the company is about. It’s about people. We’re trying to make some money for artists that other companies—wrongly, I believe—ignore.

**CIRCULAR:** You have no manager nor agent, do you?

**McKUE:** I created myself; I should know best how to market myself. The trouble with agents is that they tend to be very narrow about things. They say “What do you want to do? Do you want to write poetry, sing, write songs, write classical music, act, lecture, produce . . .” I say “Yes, all of those,” and they say I’ve got to limit my-

self. Well, I *want* to do all of those, am *able* to do all of those, and am in fact *doing* all of those. Without an agent or manager. So why do I need one? I don’t have a publicist, either.

I’ve become proficient in a number of things. So if I run dry in one area, I go to another for a while. I might stop writing poetry, and work on some classical music. I spend plenty of time recording, and a lot of time on the road, doing concerts and lectures. I’ve done a good deal of film music, and am doing some more.

People have got to realize that I mean what I’m talking about, and that I’m not just shitting them when I say that. Why were there no San Sebastian Strings albums for the last three years? Certainly the demand was there. It’s simply that I felt that I had nothing to say.

**CIRCULAR:** Tell us about your involvement in films.

**McKUE:** I wrote the screenplay for *Stanyan Street and Other Sorrows*, which is going to be filmed next year. I wrote the story and did the score for *Angela*, the first Dutch film ever made for export. It’s photographed by the same man who photographed *Elvira Madigan*. It was directed by Nickoli Van der Heyde, and stars Barbara Hershey and an incredible new actor named Sandy Van der Linden. It’s a very unusual film, and a very good film. I did *Travels With Charlie*, the John Steinbeck special for TV, and worked with Henry Mancini on *Me, Natalie*. I received my first Academy Award nomination for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, and one for *A Boy Named Charlie Brown*. *Joanna* was the first film I’d ever done. I did *Come*

*to Your Senses*, a film on Esalen. And *Scandalous John*, for Disney. I really liked that one. And I’m working on a film about biplanes that I can’t talk about.

**CIRCULAR:** You translate Jacques Brel’s songs into English. What qualifies you for such a difficult assignment?

**McKUE:** Jacques Brel qualifies me. He asked me to do his translations, and now tells me that I’m the best translator that he has. He’s given up writing songs, but he and I have a new song called “For You” on the next Warners album. It will be the first new song by Brel in many years. It’s a fact that I’ve been the only successful translator of Brel into English. Successful commercially, aesthetically and with the critics. “If You Go Away” has been called one of the greatest songs of the 20th century—it’s in all the anthologies. So is “Amsterdam.” So is “The Lovers,” which I wrote in English and he translated into French. He wrote a song called “Filles De,” which I originally translated as “I’m Not Afraid.” Later, I rewrote it as “Still We Go On.” Now, Brel is writing *French* versions of “I’m Not Afraid” and “Still We Go On.”

**CIRCULAR:** Are you worried about eventually losing your popularity?

**McKUE:** No, not at all. In fact in some respects, it would be a blessing in disguise. Maybe I could go some places where I can’t go now. I could be on my own more often than I am now.

**CIRCULAR:** We were thinking more in terms of popularity as an artist—sales and so on—than of celebrity. What if people would not buy your records at the rate they now do? What if your books didn’t

go into so many editions? What if the 1973 engagement calendar doesn’t sell as well as the 1972?

**McKUE:** The calendars would bother me, because the profits go to scholarships for kids studying animal husbandry. But no, those things don’t worry me. If you worry about those things, then I think that you end up being some formula-type person.

I’m lucky. Because I don’t try to con the public and, as a result, I have a very loyal following. I have people who come in from all over the world for the concerts. This year, instead of two birthday concerts at Carnegie Hall, there are three. And there are people who have chartered 747s to come to the birthday concert and then on to the concert at the Royal Albert Hall.

**CIRCULAR:** What makes the birthday concerts so special?

**McKUE:** A birthday concert is a time of summing up. We usually record them, so that means that I do a lot of new material. For instance, I’ve recorded the last four birthday concerts, none of which have come out on record. We’re thinking of some way to put them all together—maybe through Longines or somebody. And, birthdays are happy, special occasions.

**CIRCULAR:** Let’s talk about your poetry for a while. You seem to elicit a particularly hostile reaction from some critics. Those who don’t like your work don’t seem to be content to ignore you. They seem to go out of their way to be nasty. Do you have any idea why that might be true?

**McKUE:** A lot of the people who do seem to be “secret poets.”

Journalists or whatever, everybody who writes has a poet lurking in the back of his head.

**CIRCULAR:** You mean, they're saying "How dare he be a best-selling poet, when I can write better than that?"

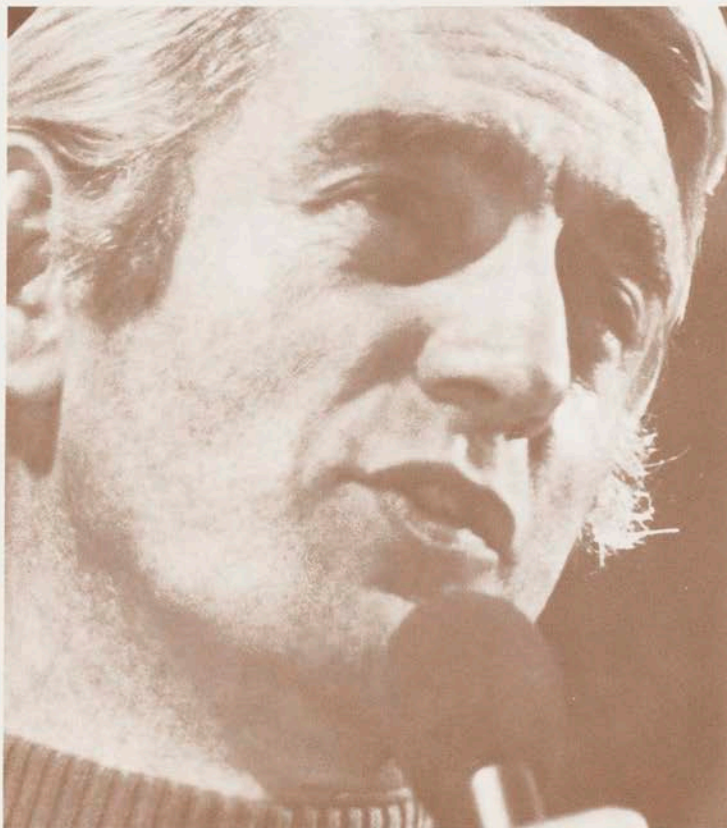
**McKUE:** Why don't they, then? There are plenty of people imitating me—just walk into any bookstore. They're imitating my meter and everything else; it's incredible. I have my own meter, my own style and my own way of doing things.

I was bored as hell with poetry when I was a kid. Some of it was so obscure that you had to have a 5-foot bookshelf, a copy of "Alice in Wonderland" and a thesaurus in front of you to understand it. Why, when a poet should help us preserve the language? One of the best things T. S. Eliot did for us was to help our language. He almost rescued it. As did Carl Sandburg. He wrote very simply, and very directly.

The present medium is available to Richard Brautigan, to Ann Sexton, to James Dickey, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allan Ginsberg. Most of those poets, by the way, I like very much. May Swenson, I like very much, William Carlos Williams. Eliot. Auden. I mean, the list is endless. But I find it as odious to be compared to Auden—whom I love—or e. e. cummings—whom I love—as I do to be compared with Robert Service, whom I dislike. I don't think that poetry should be compared, nor that poets should be compared.

**CIRCULAR:** What is your duty as a poet?

**McKUE:** I'm writing for my time.



The poet's function is to chronicle his life as he sees it, and everything about him. He owes that. He owes it to the world and to himself. And to be as truthful as possible.

A poet is a form of historian, I think, or should be. He should comment on the times. He should be involved in the times. Any lasting poet has—even Robert Service. I haven't read that much of his, but what I did had nothing to offer me. But that doesn't mean that it isn't relevant; no more than it means that Don Blandings isn't relevant.

But I don't want to be a guru or fad or anything. People ask me questions after concerts; I try to answer them as truthfully as possible.

Hey, I don't know why critics dislike me. If they want to dislike me, it's up to them. I think that a lot of people who don't understand should shun what I do. I like to have friends, but I'm on no campaign to win people over.

There seems to be more than a bit of sour grapes in the adverse criticism, though. It doesn't seem to hurt things any. I've sold more

"I don't know why critics dislike me. I think that people who don't understand should shun what I do."

than 8 million copies of six books—none of them in paperback. "Listen to the Warm" sold 2 million copies by itself. One hundred million records of the songs I've written have been sold. I don't know how many of those have been my own versions, but I know it's an awful lot. I've got about three gold records coming up from Warner Bros., and they only distribute my records in the U.S., Japan, Canada and Scandinavia. There are more than 35,000 schools, colleges and universities using my books as texts. I'm selling more now than ever. I'm selling more records and books, there's a wider audience for my work and I'm reaching into many different countries.

I don't say that you can judge quality by how many people you can reach, but you can certainly understand the appreciation that you get, and the understanding of the work.

**CIRCULAR:** What have you planned for the future?

**McKUE:** As I mentioned earlier, I've become involved, through friends, in flying biplanes. I'm currently taking lessons to qualify for a license. Next spring, I plan to fly across the country. Landing in fields, when possible, and sleeping under the stars. I'll do a book on Americana from that viewpoint. I'm really looking forward to it.

— Todd Everett

(Rod McKuen occasionally publishes a newspaper, covering his activities and items of interest to his fans. There is also a lengthy catalog of Stanyan Records. For further information, write directly to Stanyan at Box 2783, Hollywood, California 90028.)

# Unminced Words From the Group Without a Voice

"This is the Section," murmurs James Taylor as he glides onstage to thunderous applause. "They're friends of mine," he continues, "all Los Angeles session men who've been my back-up band for a couple of years. They play instrumental music and I want you to give them a listen and a nice welcome."

About halfway into the third number, the audience, who wasn't really listening to James—only staring—realizes nobody is stepping forth to sing.

Some are amused, some dismayed—most bewildered. Strange that a purely instrumental group should be the source of such mixed emotions.

Craig Doerge, Danny Kortchmar, Russ Kunkel and Leland Sklar, collectively the Section, are part of an expanding movement toward jazz-oriented instrumentalism in rock. They are both a new path and a resurrection of old, melodic values.

## An Unplanned Birth

The band was forming even before the principals realized what had happened. Drummer Russ and bassist Lee were original members of the Taylor troupe, with Craig replacing pianist Carole King and Danny joining on guitar after his band, Jo Mama, dissolved.

The Section itself began a year and a half ago when they heard and liked a cassette recording of one of their frequent jams. After retiring to a rehearsal hall for 10 months and then doing a record for Warner Brothers, the band was ready to go on the road as Taylor's opening act.



"I often imagine somebody in the audience waiting the whole show for one of us to start singing. Actually, the microphone is just there so James can introduce us."

—Danny Kortchmar

They anticipated trouble with audience acceptance, hence Taylor's introductions, but the group remained realistic in an appraisal of their place in the music business. They knew their capabilities and were not about to flaunt their egos, take off their clothes or simulate sex acts with one another onstage.

It becomes apparent from watching them play that the Section is working from rock roots outward. They are not a jazz band, nor are they jazz musicians laying back and playing funky to gain acceptance. Instead, they are, as Russ says, "moving out of one set of structures into another."

The Section orients its style to suit the gig they're playing. "I definitely think people need something new," said Craig, "but I have a tendency to mistrust their taste a lot of the time. The record stores are just filled with examples of street band rock & roll, for example. Fortunately most of it is on the way out." Craig, 26 and a former liquor truck driver (among other things), has a solid jazz background but feels there is a limited market for jazz musicians.

### No Rolling on the Floor

None of the guys, however, intends to compromise himself to make a buck. "We're gonna try new things, sure," says Danny, "but we're not gonna roll around on the floor in an effort to look heavy. We can't afford to be afraid and end up representing ourselves as something we're not. It's a good idea to make it based on what you really are, otherwise it's hard to keep the pretense up over long periods of time."

Lee agrees: "We hope that even

if the band isn't successful momentarily, that it will hopefully open a few minds to the alternatives available to 'get up and boogie' music. Rock isn't all English, trendy and fag-oriented."

Danny, particularly outspoken, explains the band's main purpose. "Playing in the Section is what helps us keep our sanity. It allows us to play the things we want to."

### Likes to Sweat

"Our other projects require thought but little physical energy," says Lee, "and I dig getting up on stage and sweating a bit. Our music demands that we do everything we're capable of and it's a real workout." Though Danny and Craig write most of the group's material, by dint of their melodic instruments, all four are participating more and more these days.

Lee claims never to have done any session work prior to meeting Taylor. "We work more on projects than hang around at studios." The Section has been advertised as Los Angeles session men, but according to Russ it's only because "nobody knows anything about us so there's nothing else to write."

To date, they've appeared on many notable albums, backing the likes of Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, James Taylor and others, both individually and collectively. Their session work allows them to remain free of the pressures most bands labor under since their livelihood is not dependent on the band's success. "We don't have to take any gig or grab at any chance to play like I did when I was with Jo Mama," explains Danny.

According to Lee, the Section



is a long-term investment that will hopefully lend credence to the jazz idiom as a possible direction for evolving rock bands. "There have been ideas that weren't looked on with favor in the beginning," he says, citing the original Mothers of Invention as an example. "But soon everybody jumped on the bandwagon. There aren't that many inventive people in this business, so as soon as one thing hits, then all the people who were trying to think of it at the time cash in, and ride the vehicle to success. But there have been trailblazers."

Onstage, the Section is still try-

ing to adjust. "We set up exactly like we do in rehearsal to retain our spontaneity," says Lee. "We don't want to get scattered up there."

Russ feels their placement keeps them from freezing in front of a big crowd. "It's hard to make the transition from months of peaceful rehearsal to large, jam-packed auditoriums."

While the future doesn't seem threatening, it is the subject of much discussion and speculation from all four.

**Danny:** "It'll take a while for us to reach whatever high we're gonna, but I hope we become big



# Fast Spins

because I really believe in this music. I just don't want to have to worry about coping with audience typecasting or rejection because we don't have a singer. I can't look upon our lack of a vocalist as a handicap because then it'll become a problem. I try and think of it as a plus instead. I figure words often limit the listener's experience to the singer's own esoteric trip. Non-verbal expression allows you to interpret things your own way."

**Lee:** "I always have trouble judging what an audience is going for, so this group will have to take time to grow on my part. It won't be an overnight sensation."

**Russ:** "There's been a lot of instrumental music in the past few months from people like the Mahavishnu that has been gradually educating rock audiences. They may be appreciating him on only one level now, his speed and volume, but it will eventually shift to a great understanding of what he's really all about musically."

**Craig:** "Our dynamic structuring really allows us to loosen up to music itself. That's important to me if we intend to continue."

The Section consider themselves a versatile and volatile combination, kept together by a pragmatic, sensible outlook and a definite love for one another. "We'd all be playing together somehow even if we weren't the Section," Danny emphasized. "Right now we're not demanding anybody's attention—we're content to be Muzak for a while. People's ears will open up to new concepts once the word gets out. It will be automatic."

— David Rensin

## Gypsy

Van Morrison  
Warner Bros. single WB 7665

*No matter where you wander  
No matter where you roam  
Anyplace you hang your hat  
You know that that is home—  
check it out first!*

From Van's current album, *St. Dominic's Preview*, comes this hymn to mobility, dedicated to Gypsies, gypsies and would-be-gypsies wherever they may roam. The tempo changes like the view from a caravan (or a Volks van) but the underlying pulse of restless motion continues unabated throughout. Set in a minor key, the wordless refrain invokes the



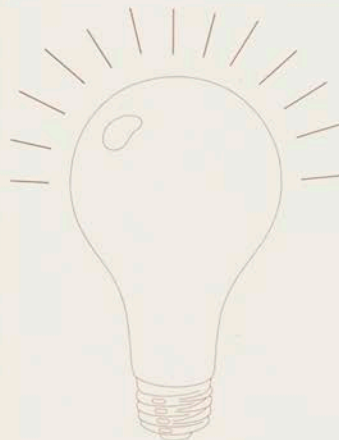
feeling of wanderlust with an eerie blend of ecstasy and melancholy. Van produced "Gypsy" himself, along with Burbank's own Ted Templeman.

## The Electric Company Theme

Warner Bros. single WB 7666

Only those readers without elementary-school-age children will have to be reminded that The Electric Company is not the latest 50,000-watt rock behemoth, but an enterprise of far higher energy. This Children's Television Workshop series, devoted to the development of basic reading skills, is a treat for the ear as well as the eye. Joe Raposo, the same fellow who

did most of the music for CTW's ubiquitous Sesame Street, has come up with a whole new tubeful of tunes for Sesame's high-voltage sibling. The instruments are appropriately electric, and the voices



even more so on the incandescent "Electric Company Theme" which begins the show, as it does WB's feature-packed album of 25 songs from same. As a special added attraction, the flip side of WB 7666 presents the *Sesame Street* kids themselves, singing "Sing."

## Cooper's Lament/ Ukulele Lady

Arlo Guthrie  
Reprise single REP 1137

The antique and the modern come to a splendid conjunction in this double-A beauty from Arlo Guthrie. Representing the modern is A-side No. 1, a newly-written and even more newly-recorded Guthrie composition, "Cooper's Lament." A "lament" only in a very broad sense of the word, it's not so much a song of sadness as one of peace on earth and good will to men. An impressive, loyal force of singers and musicians has been

marshaled by producers Lenny Waronker and John Pilla to help Arlo spread his message, a more than worthy followup to "The City of New Orleans." A-side No. 2 is Arlo's skillfully antiqued performance of a dandy ditty from the Golden Age of Ukuleles, written circa 1923 by Richard Whiting and Gus Kahn and already well-known to the 1970s via Arlo's *Hobo's Lullaby* album.

## Gaudete

Steeleye Span  
Chrysalis single CH 2008

Not exactly your run-of-the-mill single. Not exactly. For one thing, it's sung in Latin. "Gaudete" (pronounced GAU-DAY-TAY) is from a collection of religious songs issued in 1582 as *Piae Cantiones*. For another thing, it's a *cappella* (and in the *original* meaning of that term which is "in the chapel style," from the Italian). The most remarkable aspect of all, though, is the pure success of Steeleye Span in transporting the listener to another time and another place for two minutes and 21 seconds. To quote from the liner notes to Steeleye Span's Chrysalis album, *Below the Salt*: "Mist takes the morning path to wreath the willows—Rejoice, rejoice—small birds sing as the easy rising monk takes to his sandals—Christ is born of the Virgin Mary—cloistered, the Benedictine dawn threads timelessly the needle's eye—rejoice."



# Dots and Dashes

Hottest news toasting the dapper toes at last Monday's 45 Gathering was, natch, James Taylor's newest fast waxing, "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight." Two weeks ago it was the Chartmaker of the Week in *Record World* and none other than Bill Gavin slotted it as a "Hot Shot." Already it's scooted up (with appropriate bullets, stars and squares) to 41 in *Billboard*, 45 in *Cash Box* and 54 in *Record World* . . .

## Gathering for Gavin

Two weeks ago an executive entourage departed for San Francisco, where Bill Gavin was holding his annual Gavin Conven-



tion. Mo Ostin, Joe Smith and Ron Saul came home from the Annual Awards Banquet on Dec. 1 with honors in the form of Distinguished Service Awards. Mo's quiet but skillful guidance, product diversification and organization of efficient marketing systems were praised along with Joe Smith's boundless energy and unselfish service on behalf of minority training programs. Ron Saul was lauded for preserving human relationships on all levels of promotion. The symbol on the plaques this year, by the way, is the clasped hands of friendship . . .

## Doobies Doing It Again

One giant single notwithstanding, the Doobie Brothers have released yet another 45 from *Tou-*

*louse Street*, "Jesus Is Just Alright." Getting immediate field reaction, it's being played at WRKO (Boston) and KLIF (Dallas), not to mention secondary and FM stations all across the country. This album has had its share of hits . . .

## Luminous Lightfoot

Gordon Lightfoot's latest single, "That Same Old Obsession," is Hitbound right this very minute at CKLW in Detroit. It's getting lots of air exposure in Washington, D.C., not to mention Atlanta, Memphis, Boston, Hartford, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Denver and Seattle, in non-alphabetical order. Potent LP fathering this child of wax, *Old Dan's Records*, Number One in Canada . . .

## Breadwinners

America's *Homecoming* LP is doing just fine, thank you. The single is #8 withastar in *Billboard*, #9, withasquare in *Record World* and #10 withabullet in *Cash Box* . . .

## And Speaking of Record World

Top FM Airplay LP of last week was the new Hendrix Reprise LP,



*War Heroes*. Top Retail Sales LPs included *Duane Allman, an Anthology*, America's *Homecoming* and the new Dead LP, *Europe '72* . . .

## Now That the Dead Has Been Mentioned

Their newest is the hottest LP in all of Atlanta—it's completely sold out. Boston calls it, "The biggest Dead album ever." Chicago



reports, "Great stuff. Great sales. Great album." WIBG (pop major in City of BrothLove) featured the entire album, which must have taken quite a while—it's a three-record set . . .

## Bearsville Sparklers

"Wonder Girl," setting new fires under station seats, is currently Hitbound in Charlotte, Hartford and Dallas. It's also climbing up charts in Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Omaha, Wichita, Memphis, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Houston, Denver and Seattle . . .

## Another Gentle Bearsville Giant

Looks like Jesse Winchester is finally getting the attention he has so long deserved, or at least someone's looking under the rock. Here's an excerpted sample of what our-men-in-the-field are saying about *Third Down, 110 to Go*: "Good album," "Heavy play," "Good airplay," "Record of the Year," "Fantastic LP, getting good reviews." . . .

## Appalachian White Elephant

From the new WB film *Deliverance*—a flick of special import (note: WB films doesn't pay any salaries over here)—comes a single



called "Duelling Banjos" which is causing quite a fuss in Minneapolis. Quoted from the ACTION report: "Every retail outlet and one stop reports tremendous calls from play. Started at WWCO (Waterbury), now on WWTC, KRSL, KQRS and WTCR (Minneapolis). Record also confirmed winner from Atlanta, where WSB received immediate calls after play. Also added at WMC-FM (Memphis)." Furthermore, there was a substantial reorder from the Chicago branch, which made everyone smile . . .

## Globular Gab

Mr. International reports these hot flashes from the various continents: Flo and Eddie (yes, Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman) are in the throes of winding down a fabulously successful European tour. We'll have more on that as soon as Jerry Heller gets his report to us . . . The Doobie Brothers' LP is currently charting in the land of wooden shoes, windmills, tulips and chocolate; as well as in South Africa, land of diamond mines and apartheid . . . and Peter Yarrow has a huge hit (#1 in fact) in Sweden and Brazil with "Weave Me the Sunshine," from his solo album, *Peter* . . .

# Items

## Pot of Gold

★ The current film *Rainbow Bridge*, featuring as it does the work of Jimi Hendrix, is only a foretaste of the documentary on Jimi's life and music now being prepared by Warner Bros. (the film company and the record company) in conjunction with the Hendrix estate. The film, as yet untitled, will include previously unreleased footage from Woodstock, Monterey, the Isle of Wight, the Fillmore East and London's Marquee Club along with conversations with Jimi and many of his friends. Release, coincidental with a sound track album, is scheduled for the spring.

## Die Top Ten

★ They still have an ear for the sound of music in Austria. Arlo



Guthrie's single "City of New Orleans" made it to number one in the land of Strauss and Weinerschnitzel. A hearty Gluckwunsche to Mr. G.

## Play on

★ The Allman Brothers Band will not succumb to the death of Berry Oakley. Their dates for this month are still scheduled, and they will continue work on their new album, which is already 50% completed.

## Miscellaneous Instrument?

★ Ian Anderson, known far and wide as flautist extraordinaire of Jethro Tull, has a new feather in his cap. Britain's pop journal *Melody Maker* announced recently that Anderson won its 1972 poll, being the peoples choice in the "miscellaneous instrument" category.

## North of the Border

★ Odds are, if you were in Canada you'd be reading the *Mike & Tom Show* instead of *Circular*. The *Mike & Tom Show* is the communications device published by

Warner Brothers' Canadian counterpart. For Christmas, they're putting together a record to send out to their subscribers which will include a cheery word from the gang in Burbank.

## Hold Your Breath

★ Neil Young plans to present an expectant world with a new album sometime in the month of February. The title is still a gleam in the printers' ink.

## Hail Columbia

★ Ry Cooder attracted the attention of CBS news while he was in

New York for one of his infrequent concert appearances. He was spotted by Joel Seigel, of CBS, who interviewed Ry and supervised filming of Cooder and his band doing "Coming in on a Wing and a Prayer." It all went down at the Vinegar Works studio on Manhattan's Lower East Side.

## Solo Flight

★ Two former Byrds named Parsons will be releasing solo albums in January. Gram Parsons, who was also part of the Flying Burrito Brothers, is no kin to Gene Parsons, Byrds drummer till of late.

# The Sweet Cents of October

Pumpkins roasting on an open flame aren't the only distinguished characteristics of October, as the counters of Warner/Reprise have just reminded *Circular*.

Newly in are the IBM sales tallies for that hallowed month, statistics which enable *Circ* to gross rank Burbank's Top 40 best-selling albums in the order of their best sellerdom.

As usual, all albums and artists not listed joined in a mammoth tie for the 41st position of this October list.

## The Uppermost Ten

1. Black Sabbath/*Vol. 4* (new this month)
2. Seals and Crofts/*Summer Breeze* (4)
3. Arlo Guthrie/*Hobo's Lullaby* (6)
4. The Doobie Brothers/*Toulouse Street* (2)
5. Deep Purple/*Purple Passages* (new)
6. Jethro Tull/*Aqualung* (10)

7. Deep Purple/*Machine Head* (11)
8. Alice Cooper/*School's Out* (1)
9. The Allman Brothers Band/*Eat a Peach* (12)
10. Jethro Tull/*Thick as a Brick* (3)

## Pre and Post Teens

11. T. Rex/*The Slider* (9)
12. Neil Young/*Harvest* (8)
13. Mickey Hart/*Rolling Thunder* (new)
14. Black Sabbath/*Paranoid* (15)
15. Alice Cooper/*Killer* (7)
16. Neil Young/*After the Gold Rush* (14)
17. Jethro Tull/*Benefit* (18)
18. Van Morrison/*Saint Dominic's Preview* (5)
19. Alice Cooper/*Love It to Death* (13)
20. Neil Young/*Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* (16)

## Those Twinkling Twenties

21. Grateful Dead/*American Beauty* (34)
22. Black Sabbath (28)

23. Foghat (25)
24. Bonnie Raitt/*Give It Up*
25. Wet Willie
26. Gordon Lightfoot/*Don Quixote*
27. Grateful Dead/*Workingman's Dead* (31)
28. James Taylor/*Sweet Baby Janes* (22)
29. Jethro Tull/*Stand Up*
30. *The Best of Peter, Paul and Mary* (27)

## Life Begins at Thirty

31. Joni Mitchell/*Blue* (36)
32. Jimi Hendrix/*Smash Hits* (24)
33. *America* (19)
34. Fleetwood Mac/*Bare Trees* (29)
35. Joni Mitchell/*Ladies of the Canyon* (38)
36. Jimi Hendrix/*Are You Experienced?*
37. Tower of Power/*Bump City* (17)
38. Sound Track from *A Clockwork Orange* (26)
39. Jethro Tull/*This Was* (31)
40. Gordon Lightfoot/*Sit Down Young Stranger*

# Dr. Demento

As Warner Bros. Records last week tearfully laid to rest its former address, 4000 Warner Blvd., (in favor of upstart 3701 Warner Blvd.), Dr. Demento commemorated the passing of 4000 by invoking the memory of another former record company address which became the title of a performance by a very famous rock group.

That address was not in Burbank, or even in Hollywood, but in dear old Chicago—2120 South Michigan Avenue. Until a recent change of management, that was the address of Chess Records, a shrine of electric blues to which the Rolling Stones made a celebrated pilgrimage on one of their earlier American tours. They even taped a tune or two in Chess' studios, and commemorated this synergy of old blues and new with a track from their 12 x 5 album, titled "2120 South Michigan Avenue," of course.

## Question for Next Week

You've probably encountered, in *Circular* or elsewhere, discussions of the strange and magical things that recorded music goes through



on its way from your favorite group to your favored ears.

With 16-track recording as standard procedure, the "mix," "remix" or "mixdown" (all three words mean about the same thing) of 16 individual tracks into the one, two or four channels you hear at home or on the air often requires as much time, effort and inspiration as the original recording session.

The procedure by which the mixed-down tape becomes a vinyl record is less well known but much more standardized: though the materials and equipment involved have been greatly refined and improved, the basic procedure has remained the same since disk records were first introduced over 70 years ago.

## Top Ten

Warner Bros. Album Sales Figures for Week of December 4-10.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Seals & Crofts/ <i>Summer Breeze</i><br>(BS/M8/M5 2629)    | 6. America/ <i>Homecoming</i><br>(BS/M8/M5 2655)           |
| 2. Grateful Dead/ <i>Europe '72</i><br>(3WX/M8/M5 2668)       | 7. Arlo Guthrie/ <i>Hobo's Lullaby</i><br>(MS/M8/M5 2060)  |
| 3. Jethro Tull/ <i>Living in the Past</i><br>(2CH/M8/M5 1035) | 8. Doobie Bros./ <i>Toulouse Street</i><br>(BS/M8/M5 2634) |
| 4. Duane Allman/ <i>An Anthology</i><br>(2CP/M8/M5 0108)      | 9. Jimi Hendrix/ <i>War Heroes</i><br>(MS/M8/M5 2103)      |
| 5. Black Sabbath/ <i>Vol. 4</i><br>(BS/M8/M5 2602)            | 10. James Taylor/ <i>One Man Dog</i><br>(BS/M8/M5 2660)    |

One of the steps in this procedure involves the making of a metal disk containing a positive (as opposed to negative) impression of the grooves that ultimately bring home the music. By purest coincidence, the technical term for this disk is very similar to the name of a very popular and definitely non-standardized group whose disks are spread the world over from 3701 Warner Blvd.

For the single catalog WB/Reprise album of your choice, be the first to send us in a letter or a postcard that magic word which identifies a powerful group, a positive disc and a lot of other things we'd best not get into in a family publication.

The winner of Dr. Demento's four-weeks-ago contest (Q: Who was the other part-time recording artist who preceded WB's Norman Greenbaum into the vocation of goat farming? A: Carl Sandburg) is Karl Jeter of Carrollton, Georgia, who requested the Mothers' latest, *The Grand Wazoo*.

Honorable mention, but no album, to Ken Bader of Coralville, Iowa.

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, 3701 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.

## Inspirational Verse

My wife, she can't cook  
Lord, if I thought she could read  
I would buy her a book.  
But all she knows how to do  
Is fuss 'n' holler.  
She don't even know  
How to boil water.

— Lonnie Russ  
"My Wife Can't Cook"

# Artist Itineraries

## California

**Roxy Music**  
12/19, Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles



**Malo**  
12/20-24, Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles  
**Cold Blood**  
12/21, Civic Mem. Auditorium, Stockton  
**Stoneground**  
12/21, Civic Mem. Auditorium, Stockton

## Florida

**Roxy Music**  
12/22-23, Shula's Nite Club, Dania

## Illinois

**Martin Mull**  
12/20-24, Quiet Knight, Chicago  
**Fleetwood Mac**  
12/22, Aragon Ballroom, Chicago  
**Dick Heckstall-Smith**  
12/22, Aragon Ballroom, Chicago

## Maryland

**Foghat**  
12/23, Lyric Theatre, Baltimore

## Massachusetts

**Swallow**  
12/20-23, Sandy's, Beverly

## New York

**John Simon**  
12/18-19, Max's Kansas City,  
New York City  
**Fleetwood Mac**  
12/23, Academy of Music, New York City  
**Dick Heckstall-Smith**  
12/23, Academy of Music, New York City

## Ohio

**Fleetwood Mac**  
12/19, Civic Theatre, Akron  
**Dick Heckstall-Smith**  
12/19, Civic Theatre, Akron

## Washington, D.C.

**John Hartford**  
12/18-23, The Stardust

## Wisconsin

**Roxy Music**  
12/20-21, Humpin' Hannah's, Milwaukee