

Mike McGear, Bible Salesman and Ladies' Barber, Turns Soloist

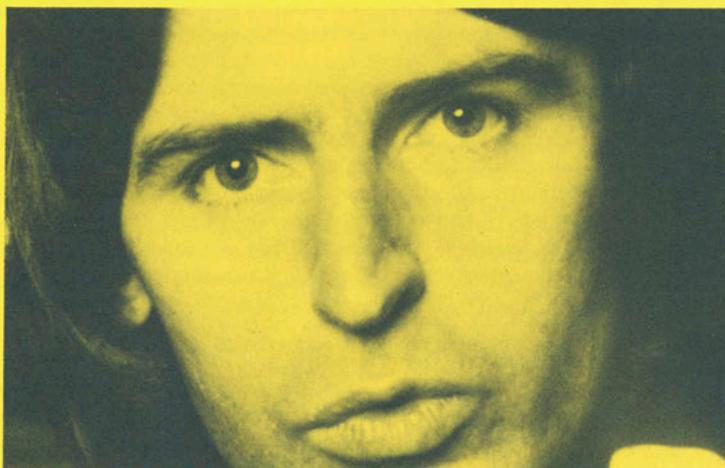
by SHELLEY BENOIT

Mike McGear brings blessed relief to the long-since disenchanted *Circular* correspondent who normally prefers tooth extraction to interviewing artists about their albums. McGear is extraordinary. Here we find no yawns. No irritable contempt. No druggy jests. No empty catch-phrases larded with "funky." No pusillanimous hypersensitivity. In short, none of the vices that commonly drive writers to vindictive vitriol. Just candid blue eyes, an openly affable nature and quantities of contagious enthusiasm for the record he's made, *McGear*.

Perhaps the reason Mike is so miraculously free of musicianly flaws is that he's never considered himself a musician.

One's Enough. There are two main reasons why he plays no instruments. At the age when most people take up playing (if they are going to take up playing), Mike was interested only in getting into art school. Also, he figured one musician in the family was enough. Since the one was his 18-month-older brother, Paul McCartney, Mike is to be applauded for his discretion.

If any reader at this point thinks that here is the catch, that it's all down to Paul McCartney's Brother making a record, then he obviously hasn't been living in England for the last decade or he'd know better. McGear (who changed his name 10 years ago—despite professional advice to the contrary—in order to avoid trading on his brother's success) is firmly, inde-



pendently established with the British public as one-third of the Scaffold, a perennially popular three-man revue famed for delivering the unexpected in poetry, satire and song. The act, a comparatively sophisticated offshoot of the Mersey Boom, is still going strong.

If we return to the Golden Age of Liverpool, we can retrace the path that led Mike apart while all about him were playing beat music.

Both McCartney boys were graduates of the Liverpool Institute, which Mike feels was determinedly programmed to produce accountants and bankers. ("I've always thought they should have a class just called 'Life'. . .") Mike's intention was to go on to art school, and he was entirely confident that he would qualify because he had done his GCE exam in art. After all, Paul's friend John Lennon got into the art school with no GCEs at all. But fate

was perverse. In a sudden tactic to eliminate the scores of illiterate louts who found art school preferable to work—and there were plenty—entry was abruptly limited to students with at least five GCE exams. In his dismay, Mike took up work as a Catholic Bible salesman, an experience he now refers to as "terrifying."

In the Fanguard. The Bible job upset him something fierce. Driven crackers by the guilty burden of hypocrisy, he drew a self-portrait that was literally diabolic (he still has it) and quit. He moved on to ladies' hairdressing, which was at least marginally creative, and his clients were privy to the hot tips of the Beatles' first (unofficial) PR man. Mike was the original fan.

"You're a bit arty," said a fellow hairdresser one day ("a bit arty" being the popular working-class expression for anyone whose

horizons extend beyond football and beer), and he suggested that Mike might enjoy the Merseyside Arts Festival currently in progress. The casual suggestion was to have lasting implications. The Festival yielded Mike's first exposure to cult poet Roger McGough, whose speed and accuracy of perception inclined Mike to think of his as "a bullet-brain."

McGough made a hit with Mike. "The power, eloquence and *humor* (Mike's emphasis) of his speech were very impressive to me at that age." Mike regularly went back to see McGough and John Gorman, the comedian who organized the Festival. Given sufficient coaxing, Mike overcame his self-consciousness and read some of Roger's poetry aloud. He discovered that he liked doing it, and that other people liked him doing it. As his elocution grew sharper, his shears grew rustier and he was gradually absorbed into (oh, evocative of all that was Happening) The Liverpool One Fat Lady All Electric Show, a peripatetic performing troupe.

Bye Bye Barber. They made the rounds of clubs and universities, still clinging tenuously to their real-life jobs as teacher, Post Office engineer and ladies' barber, until television twigged that something attractively exploitable was going on. At the very mention of TV, the three jacked in their jobs "just for the promise." They emerged from their series of weekly comedy sketches as the Scaffold, and Mike McCartney,

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The October Release Freeze-Dried and Microencapsulated for Ready Reference.

Badfinger. The all-singing band which made it into prominence with Paul McCartney's "Come and Get It" continues its winning ways with an album entirely made up of self-composed, mostly-self-played and self-sung songs, *Wish You Were Here*. All this novelty leaves the describer with little to describe, other than alluding to an outstanding history of superlative music and suggesting that this Warner's LP sounds rife with singles. Producer is Chris Thomas, just off assignments for Procol Harum and Roxy Music. Lending backing assists are The Average White Band.



Jethro Tull. The eighth addition to the Chrysalis Jethro Tull catalog is *War Child*, an album abounding with 10 delightfully accessible individual chunks of music, of which the recently-released single "Bungle in the Jungle" has been a foretaste. All you concept album fans shouldn't worry, though, since *War Child* features the unimusal style which Ian Anderson & Co. have developed through the course of their travels from *This Was to Stand Up to Benefit to Aqualung to Thick as a Brick to A Passion Play* (not to mention *Living in the Past*, the group's banner collection of miscellaneous singles and other enchanting oddments).

Candi Staton. This lady, whose introduction to Warner Bros. Records bears the name *Candi*, is a rather consistent hit singler. So far her chartbusters include "I'd Rather Be an Old Man's Sweetheart," "I'm Just a Prisoner," "In the Ghetto" and the R&B reworking of Tammy Wynette's "Stand By Your Man," a 1970 million-seller. Married to singer Clarence Carter, Candi Staton journeyed from her Atlanta home to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, where her Warners debut LP was produced by Rick Hall, known for his success with artists such as Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and Paul Anka, for whom Hall produced "(You're) Having My Baby."



The Modern Jazz Quartet. *In Memoriam* marks the end of a Very Well Known and Revered Combo, The Modern Jazz Quartet, whose 23-year lifespan included more zestful pioneering than you could shake a lyrically swinging stick at. Produced by pianist/arranger/composer John Lewis, this album release from Warner-distributed Little David Records was taped just before the group's break-up early this year. Highlighted by the 18-minute title track, *In Memoriam* features the MJQ augmented by an orchestra conducted by Maurice Peress. In addition to Lewis, the Quartet includes Milt Jackson on vibraharp, Percy Heath on bass and Connie Kay on drums.

Foghat. They know how to rock and there isn't much more to say about Bearsville's premier foot-stompers other than that *Rock and Roll Outlaws*, ably produced by Nick Jameson and recorded in Europe's own Wales, is just as strong as its three Foghat predecessors: *Energized*, *Foghat (Rock & Roll)* and jes' plain *Foghat*. Material includes a handful of originals by Rod Price and Lonesome Dave Peverett and three songs by others, notably the title track, written by Felix Cavaliere and Carman Moore.



Todd Rundgren's Utopia. Anton Chekhov. Winston Churchill. Bertrand Russell. Giuseppe Verdi. Benjamin Franklin. Maury Wills. These are all great men. Todd Rundgren is a great man too. Great because he writes perfect pop hits like "Hello It's Me" and "I Saw the Light." Great because he plays, sings and produces these same hits with an approach that manages to combine far-reaching ambitious technique with restrained economy. Great because his albums articulate self-knowledge and social awareness without losing their humor or sharpness. His new band, Utopia, is as great as he is. Their first album, *Todd Rundgren's Utopia*, is, well, great. Available on Bearsville.

The 9 x 9s may be gone but you still don't get off easy. With this issue, *Circular* offers 17 partially-digested lumps of copy to ballyhoo the new release.

Kathy Dalton. This album was first released under the title *Amazing* about a year and nine days ago with a sci fi cover (blonde in bondage, maniacal-looking lobster). Kathy herself is neither a blonde nor a lobster, and she now properly fronts herself in a charming portrait. The album's been rechristened *Boogie Bands & One Night Stands*, named for the newly-included track which came quite close to hitdom. Also included is another delightful near-smash (honest!), "At the Tropicana." Produced by Greg Dempsey, who wrote all of the material, the DiscReet album sports a remarkable cast of musicians, including all of Little Feat, Van Dyke Parks, Sneaky Pete, Carl Wilson, Jimmy Reed, Jr., and numerous other luminaries.



The Beach Boys. For The Beach Boys, great music has always been more or less a habit—they seem to write, perform and record pop masterworks the way you and I shred matchbooks and pop our gum. Under these circumstances, marvelous records (impeccably crafted and fascinatingly textured: you know how it goes) begin to accumulate. Some are properly exposed upon their release, while a lesser portion of the output is inevitably obscured by conflicting hubbub and unfortunate timing. Brother/Reprise has initiated a modest program of re-releasing insufficiently beloved BB music. *Friends & Smiley Smile*, in one package, contain "Good Vibrations," "Heroes and Villains" and much more.

Trapeze. By now, this group of English hardcore rockers should be picking up Texarkana accents. Night after night, they've done the grinding Holiday Inn tour of mid-America, one town blending into another. That's their pattern and it works. By now, the high energy men have built devotees throughout America. *Hot Wire* is their album debut on Warners (following three LPs on Threshold). Produced by Britain's Neil Slaven. All original rockers.



Gregg Allman. He is, of course, an Allman Brother. This would be enough to keep your average person busy, happy and rich. Not to say exhausted. But Gregg Allman (who is not, of course, an average person) found the leisure time and nervous energy to make an album with the unlikely title *Laid Back* some months previous. About 650,000-plus copies later, Gregg went on tour, taking with him the Allmans' Chuck Leavell, members of Cowboy and a rather hefty orchestra. *The Gregg Allman Tour*, a two-record Capricorn travelog, includes "Turn On Your Lovelight," "Oncoming Traffic" and "Queen of Hearts."

Maria Muldaur. Maria Muldaur, whose single "Midnight at the Oasis" has become a feature of radio programming on roughly the same level of regularity as time and temperature over the past few months, is not an overnight star, nor yet an overmonth sensation. Many years of Jim Kweskin Jug Banding and husband-and-wife dueting with Geoff Muldaur sifted her, "Midnight" and the album *Maria Muldaur* to the top. Superstar that she is, she retains her *leitmotif* of unaffected s-t-y-l-e, an imperiled art, on *Waitress in the Donut Shop*. Big band arrangements, full and sweet to an untimely degree, back her voice (ditto) on songs by Skip James, Fats Waller and many others, "I'm a Woman," Maria's perennial Leiber-Stoller anthem, is rockingly Reprised.



Van Morrison. His enigmatically titled new WB album, *Veedon Fleece*, is Van's first studio-recorded LP in well over a year. Long enough. Less like *Moondance* and more like his sensuous '68 masterpiece, *Astral Weeks*. The radio group believe his new song "Bulbs" is the hit-most cut, and are doing their duty in its behalf. Other aficionados embrace the nine-minute "You Don't Pull No Punches but You Don't Push the River."

The October Release Breaks Water

Continued from page 3

Montrose. Warner producer Ted Templeman joined with power guitarist Ronnie Montrose about this time last year for the debut album of the group, issued with the catchy title *Montrose*. Montrose then spent the better part of their youth overwhelming audiences by touring many crannies of America (and a bit of Europe), spreading the power. Out of the San Francisco Bay area, and one of that place's ultra-high-energy outfits, Montrose now breaks out with album number two: *Paper Money*, including a delectable slow-down of the Rolling Stones' "Connection."



Chip Taylor. Fairly inaccurately, Chip Taylor's first WBLP was titled *Chip Taylor's Last Chance*. Fat chance, since it is now followed by his all-the-songs-written-by-himself *Some of Us*. Mr. Taylor has been writing songs for a while: from "Wild Thing" and "Any Way You Want Me" to lots more. But lots of people write songs. Chip Taylor has an album also because he sings well, looks good and (according to those wisemen in Burbank who once spotted Troy Donahue before anyone else) has the makings of a star.

Mike McGear. The Britisher shows uncommon grace and tolerance at being introduced everywhere as Paul McCartney's brother. His grace reduces *Circular's* guilt in adding that Paul McCartney's wife and Paul McCartney's self produced Mike's album. You can read all about his new WB album, *McGear*, elsewhere in this issue. McGear, who changed his last name in the mid-60s, possibly looks forward to P. McC. being introduced as Mike McGear's brother.



Manfred Mann's Earth Band. To give you an idea, Manfred Mann's been on six labels now in the U.S. That history might make it difficult for him to meet record executives with more than a passing wave. Nevertheless, Warner Brothers' exex have a strong grip on his ankles because of a goodly belief that the Mann who did up "Do Wah Diddy Diddy" and "Mighty Quinn" is doing it again. Mann's Earth Band departs from his previous group—the jazz-oriented Chapter III—to what is called in the trade a more commercial, popular style. The new album is *The Good Earth*.

Kenny Rankin. How anyone can spend the bulk of his career in cynical, hard-nosed New York and remain as insistently sensitive and clear-throated a stylist as Kenny Rankin is a point of some contention here in idealistic, easy-going Los Angeles. The man traverses the octaves like a free agent, scats at the speed of trickling water and interprets like a UN guide. His technique on acoustic guitar is subtle and samba-laced, shading his translucent vocal style with complementary warmth. On *Silver Morning*, his first album for Warner-distributed Little David (after outings on Mercury and Columbia, as well as many Tonight Show minutes logged in the past few years), Kenny mixes originals like "Silver Morning" and "Catfish" with original approaches to "Penny Lane," "Blackbird," "Birimbau" and select companion pieces.



The Family's "Other" Musician Chooses His Own Way

Continued from page 1

adopting and Celticizing one of the by-words of the mid-60s, became McGear. (Preferable to McFab, don't you think?) Mike dismissed offers from no less than Brian Epstein to make him a pop star. He had found a satisfactory identity, thank you.

As the years rolled away, the Scaffold demonstrated resilience, stamina and versatility. Theirs was the kind of enviable image that press releases can't buy. In a field where real wit equals class, they had the goods. And although singing was just part of their act, they had hit records. "Thank U Very Much," produced by George Martin, put this unorthodox trio into the Top 5, and "Lily the Pink"

(1968) millionized them into household word-dom.

To the Dogs. A year or so ago the Scaffold merged for performing purposes with a couple of England's other best loved looniaries—Viv Stanshall (who also now records for WB) and Neil Innes, both of the deathless-despite-dismemberment Bonzo Dog Band (whose memory many will carry to their graves and keep on laughing). Plus a handy guitarist the Scaffold once led astray from his Liverpool law school, Andy Roberts. The outfit was called GRIMMS (Gorman, Roberts, Innes, McGough, McGear, Stanshall). It was funny to watch but unwieldy to be a part of and Mike ultimately opted out.

He was sitting in his comfy, countrified house that is the appealing shape of a giant Christmas present of uncertain identity when all of a sudden the phone rang and it was his older brother, whom he does not in the least resemble. And to whom he refers almost exclusively with the characteristic Northern expression "Our Kid."

The conversation went something like:

"What you doin'?"
 "Nothin', what you doin'?"
 "Nothin'. Me group's bust up."
 "Funny, so's mine."

(This was just after Paul's return from Nigeria, where *Band on the Run* was recorded despite the precipitous departure of two Wings.)

Their talk eventually furnished the idea of Paul producing a record for Mike. The concept was a long time coming, but the time was finally right.

Behan Ditty. What Paul had in mind was a collection of older songs, in particular the winsome "Liverpool Lou" (the copyright to which he sought, unsuccessfully, to secure back in 1971; and as it is not his custom to record songs to which he does not hold the copyright, if he can help it, you may infer that he was very *attached* to this ditty).

"Liverpool Lou," written by Dominic Behan (brother of the Irish poet Brendan), was destined to dwell in the upper regions of England's singles charts in all its wheezing, melancholic glory—but not as part of the fraternal escapade conceived over the phone. Instead, the brothers found themselves composing original material at a rate of knots.

Meanwhile, the Scaffold were booked to do a TV sketch and decided that "Liverpool Lou" would fit the bill. The audience appeared to know the song even better than they did, so the group speculated with a single, produced by McCartney. And it hit.

So here we find McGear, a man for whom it obviously never rains but it pours, with both a thoroughly recharged group on his hands, plus a first solo album masterminded by his hero.

You might think here is a man who comes barrelling out of the doldrums with a vengeance, but really things just "happened" to him. There's not much you can tell someone of Irish descent about kismet that he doesn't innately know. Or about magic, an element to which Mike frequently refers when discussing the history of his album.

How We Have Grown. The thing began modestly enough as a single, but it multiplied faster than you can say.

The problem of Mike's inability to play any instruments was expeditiously solved by Our Kid, who hired Wings. Who wouldn't grab a Gold-record band for back-up, given the chance? And who wouldn't grab Gerry Conway (veteran of countless Cat Stevens LPs and tours, among heaps of other credits) to play drums?

"You know when Scaffold did Top of the Pops, I could hardly believe the scene in the TV studio. Bloody big cameras going at 50 miles an hour, men sitting on top in crash helmets as they piled through kids who went flying like matchsticks!" He shoots a glance at one of his blond children (who has chosen to dress herself in paper bags), wordlessly conveying what his own priorities are.

Somewhere in this room, which boasts a bird's nest, a Harpo Marx-type curled-up horn, a photo of Buster Keaton, a green teddy bear, a butterfly collection, a net full of pinecones, and lots of records, there is also a carefully preserved cache of vintage Beatle photos containing such private delights as Paul and John composing together at an old piano way before anyone knew where it would all lead. Mike describes the photos (which he printed himself) as "pure joy." And you would have to be quite blind with prejudice if you failed to perceive just how genuine Mike's admiration for his brother is, and how appropriately he has chosen his own way. Lend an ear to *McGear* and hear what he has to sing for himself. ●

Top Ten

Based on Warner Bros. sales figures for the week of October 7-13.

1. America/*Holiday*
2. Alice Cooper's *Greatest Hits*
3. Richard Betts/*Highway Call*
4. Neil Young/*On the Beach*
5. Fleetwood Mac/*Heroes Are Hard To Find*
6. Zappa/*Mothers, Roxy & Elsewhere*
7. Graham Central Station/*Release Yourself*
8. Little Feat/*Feats Don't Fail Me Now*
9. Gordon Lightfoot/*Sundown*
10. Bonnie Raitt/*Streetsights*

Enough of Those Furry Egg-Layers



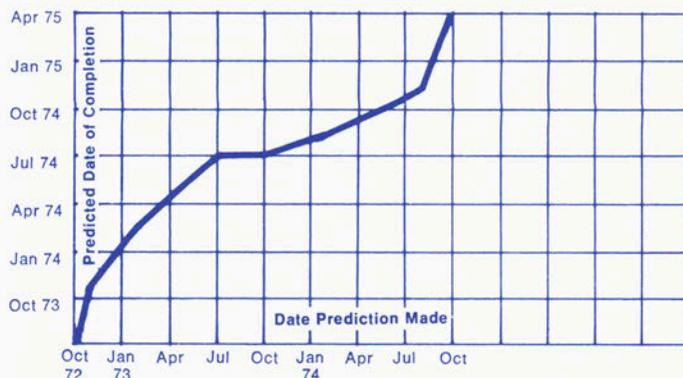
A Winner a Day. OK, cut it out, enough is enough, stop. No more winners for the platypus/echidna contest. Every day last week brought a new winner. You should see the prize drawer now. It's lower than ever. Likely to remain so too, at least until they make a new crop of buttons, bumper stickers and posters. Meanwhile, congratulations to those who cleaned out the prizes: Larry Deckel from La Jolla, Calif.; Jan gealer of Los Angeles (who, like Lowell George, writes only in lower case letters); Cindy Intoreo and John Foster of Orlando, Florida (who apparently collaborated on the answer); Joe Torre of Atlanta (who wrote a particularly rude response, "Any idiot knows the other egg-laying mammals are the Duck-Billed Platypus[sic] and Gerald Ford," and therefore gets the worst prize); Alexander B. Pappas from Milton, Massachusetts (who wins far too many of these contests); Richard Fowler of Dallas and Susan Ridder of Springfield, Missouri (who was the only one to mention that our duck-billed friend is native to Australia and Tasmania). By the way, will Maundy Thursday of 12115 Valleyheart Drive in Studio City, Calif., please identify her or himself so he or she can receive a prize in rightful order? You can't fool me. Nobody's named Maundy Thursday.

Our New Building. It's another construction bulletin, just handed over from the "Hardhats Only" area of that baneful building. You remember our luxurious new quarters? Between ground cave-ins and burst water pipes we

were beginning to wonder if we'd ever get to relocate at all. Now they tell us April 1. That's the day we're supposed to move. April Fools' Day. Oh my God.

Win a Proofreader's Dream Date With Me. Two mistakes and big ones at that. Last week, while lovingly poking at Art Director Norman Seeff (for making someone's life miserable by including Kiss' liner notes in Japanese and English), I misspelled his name. It has two f's. Seeff, see? Don't stop there. I blithely announced that the Mary Weils single was out of Capricorn via WB. That's patently untrue. It's a Reprise single all the way. But the saga of the changing B side is still true.

No Comment Department. From the Promotion Department's weekly singles and albums digest comes the story of Promo Man Bob Stolarski, Los Angeles, Calif. "BORN: Detroit, Michigan. SIGN: Aries. HEIGHT & WEIGHT: 6 ft. — 160 pounds. FAVORITE COLOR: Blue/Green. HOBBIES: Sex, sunshine, sex, swimming, golf & sex. Bob's qualifications for a WB promotions man are two-fold . . . his background as manager of Wherehouse Records gave him training in the record business and his previous five year position as an auernatutical [sic] buyer trained him as a Space Cadet. Now what more can you ask for!?? Bob is known as the 'Animal Promotion Man'—but not because of any personality problems (or, at least, none that we know of). Anyway . . . some of his promotions using animals include—Gentle



Dreams Don't Always Come True. For no good reason, *Circular's* Research Department developed this graph to show the Predicted Date of Completion (vertical axis) versus the Date Prediction Made (horizontal) for the Warner Bros. New Building. As you can see, the graph has exhibited a tendency to rise. How interesting. PDCs and DPMs were drawn from past *Circ.* issues, which shows how much credence you should give what you read in these pages.

Ben for the Youngblood's 'Running Bear' promotion, giving turkeys away on Thanksgiving for Wild Turkey, a roller skating penguin for the Fleetwood Mac *Penguin* LP promotion and the animal Emmy award nominee, Rosie, a sweet and lovely camel for the Sopwith Camel promotion. We are all looking forward with wary anticipation to Bob's ideas for the Good Rats promotion! Over or out. Let's make that *out*.

A tie for Number One Radio Station of the Week. It's hats off to KHJ (Los Angeles) and WCOL (Columbus, Ohio) this week. KHJ wins because Alice Cooper guest-hosted in the a.m. last week and was allowed to give the world premier airing to *Miss Rona Sings Hollywood's Greatest Hits*. Yes, it's a record album by Rona Barrett. WCOL wins because their playlist expanded last week to include "Country Side of Life," Wet Willie's latest Capricorn 45, and Zappa's soon-to-be-smash-hit-

single "Don't Eat the Yellow Snow" from DiscReet.

Billboard Gets Our Vote.

For Trade Mag of the Week, anyway. The reason *Billboard* wins for the second straight week in a row is that its proofreaders are as apt as ours. In its 25-page section congratulating Mickie Most's RAK Records one ad read "Mickie (Your the) Most" while another read "Well Done Mickie. You're Scandinavian Publisher." All we can think of is that the two "yours/you're's" fell off the ad artwork and someone re-pasted them backwards. Another reason to give *Billboard* honors this week is its rave review of Randy Newman's Troubadour appearance: "Randy Newman has been a consistent delight since being coaxed onstage to display his eccentric uniqueness. But now, in the first round of appearances celebrating his new *Good Old Boys* album, he emerges as a master performer." P.S. *Good Old Boys* is listed as



Good Old Days on the *Billboard* Album Chart at 119 with a star. *Billboard* makes me feel better.

The Flip Side. Of course, every review written on Randy wasn't a knock-down, drag-out rave. Three out of five songs offend someone. Here's part of what *Daily Variety* had to say: "Though his lines lack the clever twists and the tunes are far less catchy, the effect is somewhat like the amusement Jimmy Durante's obstructed voice and ungrammatical verses brought so long to American audiences." Jimmy Durante?

Ruby's Run-Ons

◆ Results in, *Melody Maker* recently ran its **1974 Pop Poll Winners**. The Poll divvied itself into "British" and "International." In the Anglo-section, **Maddy Prior**, **Lynsey De Paul** and **Linda Lewis** took place under "Female Singer," at #3, #5 and #10 respectively. **Deep Purple** burned out the #7 slot under "Band" and caught #6 for "Live Act." We had two British "Brightest Hopes": **Leo Sayer** and **Robin Trower**. Internationally, **Van Morrison** slid into #10 "Male Singer" and **Montrose** stomped out #6 for "Brightest Hope," while Chrysalised **Steeleye Span's Maddy Prior** grabbed #9 "Female Singer." **Alice Cooper**, **Slade** and **Deep Purple** all scored under "Live Act." Purp guitarist **Ritchie Blackmore** kayoed position #6 under "Guitar." Two more Purple-members won a niche with their instruments: **Ian Paice**, #4 "Drums," and **Jon Lord**, #3 "Keyboards." Chrysalis' **Cozy Powell** tied with Paul Thompson at #7 "Drums," of course. Under

"Miscellaneous Instruments," naturally, resided **Ian Anderson**, Chrysalis' master flautist, at #4. Bearsvillian **Todd Rundgren** walked off with #9 "Producer" and DiscReet's legend, **Frank Zappa**, chuckled away at #5 "Arranger." Oh yes, Deep Purple and **The Allman Brothers Band** rolled over #'s 8 and 9 under "Band." ◆ **The Beach Boys** in

Concert, a live, two-record set of vinyl history, has been declared Gold by the munificent RIAA. It's their first gilded disc through Brother/Reprise, and a bargain to boot: two Gold records for the expense of one. ◆ **The Dare We Say It Department: Barry White's Love Unlimited** call their next LP *In Heat*. Will it include "Walking the Dog?" How about

"The Bitch Is Back"? Stay tuned. ◆ Speaking of dogs, lissome **Rin Tin Tin**, longtime kiddie video fave, will enter disc field later this month through exclusive wax deal. Debut click-to-be is a ballad tagged "You're Having My Rabies." ◆ Best Birthday Brouhaha to **Keith Reid** (Procol Harum) on October 19; **Manfred Mann**, **Tetsu Yamauchi** and **Elvin Bishop** on October 21 ◆

Vinyl Statistics

Let's face it: in this fancy, frilly, gotta-have-a-gimmick world, one department of *Circular* is head and shoulders ahead of the fleet. Here at Vinyl Statistics we don't believe in putting a lot of linguistic fads and syntactic gadgets between you and your reading pleasure. What is it that sets Vinyl Statistics apart from the rest? Is it a dime's worth of difference? A name you can count on? The assurance that comes from knowing you're the best you can be? The juice of one whole lemon? Well, yes. It's all of those. But mostly it's good, honest flavor. That, and the 15 new LPs and four new singles issued by Warner/Reprise and affiliated labels this week. Top that, Ruby.

SINGLES

OCTOBER 9
"Let Your Love Come

Down"/"I Wanna Be Close to You"—Paul Kelly—Warner Bros. WBS 8040
"Don't Let the Door (Hit You in the Butt)"/"Wishful Thinking"—Tony Joe White—Warner Bros. WBS 8042
"Long Tall Glasses"/"In My Life"—Leo Sayer—Warner Bros WBS 8043
"A High Price To Pay"/"Mountain Man"—Felix Cavaliere—Bearsville BSS 0300

ALBUMS

OCTOBER 8
War Child—Jethro Tull—Chrysalis CHR 1067
OCTOBER 11
Veedon Fleece—Van Morrison—Warner Bros. BS 2805
Paper Money—Montrose—Warner Bros. BS 2823
Some of Us—Chip Taylor—Warner Bros. BS 2824
McGear—Mike McGear—

Warner Bros. BS 2825
The Good Earth—Manfred Mann's Earth Band—Warner Bros. BS 2826
Wish You Were Here—Badfinger—Warner Bros. BS 2827
Hot Wire—Trapeze—Warner Bros. BS 2828
Candi—Candi Staton—Warner Bros. BS 2830
Friends & Smiley Smile—The Beach Boys—Reprise 2MS 2167
Silver Morning—Kenny Rankin—Little David Records LD 3000
In Memoriam—The Modern Jazz Quartet—Little David Records LD 3001
Todd Rundgren's Utopia—Bearsville BR 6954
Rock and Roll Outlaws—Foghat—Bearsville BR 6956
Boogie Bands & One Night Stands—Kathy Dalton—DiscReet DS 2208

Trains Keep a-Rolling in Song

Jet travel is taken for granted these days. And there are a few good songs about the big birds:

"Leaving on a Jet Plane," "Eight Miles High" (?) and "Next Plane to London" come to mind.

Hardly anyone rides the train anymore, except commuters and a few romantics like me. Yet train songs continue to outnumber airplane songs; they've almost kept up with car songs, even. If trains are obsolete, why didn't Gladys Knight and the Pips sing about the "Midnight Plane to Georgia"? Or, a few years earlier, the "Friendship Plane?" Why was it a "Long Train Runnin'" for the Doobie Brothers, not a "Big Plane Flyin'"? And why not "Last Bus to Clarksville" for the Monkees?

I submit that the above songs, none of which is primarily *about* trains, simply carry on a comfortable, natural tradition nurtured through the half-century-plus when trains were the normal way to get from here to there. We all grew up with train songs, from "Mystery Train" to "Chattanooga Choo Choo," so why not a few more? Al Green's first hit, "Back Up Train," the Rolling Stones' "Silver Train" and the Grateful Dead's "Casey Jones" all continue the tradition.

A couple of recent songs seem to me to relate especially well to the experience of riding trains in the 1970s. One is Joni Mitchell's "Just Like This Train," in which the squeaks and rattles of not-quite-new rolling stock leap out of the lyrics and the accompaniment as well. Here the main focus, as usual in a train song, is on what waits at the end of the line. Not so with "City of New Orleans," the Steve Goodman song Reprised so nicely by Arlo Guthrie. This one says all that can be said for long-distance passenger trains as a barely surviving institution in the 1970s.

What did trains have in their heyday that planes don't have today? Rhythm. The rhythm of the chugging steam locomotive, the mightiest bass line anyone ever heard before the days of megawatt amplifiers. (Wonder why that group named itself Grand Funk Railroad?) Also, the rhythm of the wheels clickety-clacking over the rail joints.

Trains have since lost their choo-choo, and (thanks to welded rails) are fast losing their clickety-clack. But whatever happens to trains in the future, train songs will roll on.

Question for Next Week.

As I write this, on autumn's first rainy day in Burbank, the #1 album in the country is *Endless Summer*. This is of course the Capitol anthology of early hits by the Beach Boys, many of them (including the hit single from the album) more than 10 years old.

Though revivals of old discs are no longer a rarity on the charts (Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit,"

recorded in 1939, was on the *Billboard* Hot 100 for a few weeks in 1972), it is unusual to find 10-year-old music up there at Number One. The only precedent I can think of is an instrumental originally recorded in 1933, then remade in 1938 for another label. It finally hit the top spot—in 1947! (*Billboard* lumped the 1933 and 1938 versions together in its statistics). The piece is a rumba, and features a whistling solo. Name the record and the band (and, to help me break any possible ties, the whistler).

This is the *Demento Tag*. This little bit of copy down here. That's what it's called: the *Demento Tag*. Someone pulled me aside the other day and said that last week's *Demento Tag* was a little tacky. A little unbecoming to a sizable entertainment corporation with multinational operations and whopping sales. All those references to hangovers and whatnot.

So this week we're going to class it up a little. *I wandered lonely as a cloud/ That floats on high o'er vales and hills/ When all at once I saw a crowd/ A host, of golden letters to Dr. Demento. Wait a minute, that's not so good. Let me try another one. Between the dark and the daylight/ When the night is beginning to lower/ Comes a pause in the day's occupations/ That is known as Dr. Demento's column. Not quite it. Well, look, next week we'll pull out Ulysses and see what we can get going. The winning answer to Dr. Demento's September 30 question (about Bob Seger's "East Side Story") came from Brian Lee of Milwaukee, who asked for—and will get—the newest Beach Boys release. *How's the surf in Milwaukee, Brian?* Heh heh heh. Sorry. Cheap shot.*

Anyone wishing to answer the question asked by Dr. Demento this week should get the answer in the mail pronto, so that it arrives here within the next two weeks (a non-negotiable deadline). The first right answer wins its author any *single* LP in the Retailer's Rosetta Stone, sometimes called the Warner/Reprise catalog. Neatness, distance, originality—all of these can make the Doctor raise an eyebrow or chuck a chuckle. The address? Why, Dr. Demento, Warner Bros. Records, 3701 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Ca. 91505, of course—Burbank's most mutually exclusive address since the Pleistocene Era.

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