

## Soft Sell on the Hard Goods

by GENE SCULATTI

DEEP EAR



You can't buy them in stores. They're wrapped in plain brown cardboard and travel in discreet Fourth Class all across the country. They turn up in otherwise respectable households from Nome to Nacogdoches and carry names like *Big Ball*, *Hard Goods* and *Deep Ear*.

Stan Cornyn, the man most responsible for their presence, finds them "a valuable program for the consumer." Dr. Demento, whose annotation and programming perpetuates the line, thinks they're "fun."

The Warner/Reprise Loss Leaders sampler program is a merchandising device which in six years has showered the record-buying public with nearly two dozen dollar-a-disc albums. TV has fall previews, Tupperware has Tupperware parties and Warner Bros. has samplers, the better to expose new and not-so-well known "product."

**Out for the Eye.** They roll out sporting eye-catching titles and spiffy graphics; like the imposing *Whole Burbank Catalog*, the provocative stick and cue of *Big Ball*, or the epic *Schlagers*.

The intent behind them all, from *Songbook* to *Appetizers* to *Hot Platters* and beyond, is to bring to the public's attention as many worthy Warner/Reprise small-to-moderate sized acts as possible; this is accomplished by pairing them up with a healthy quotient of established Big Names. In the space between *Songbook* and the just released *Deep Ear*, just about everyone, from America to Frank Zappa, has made a sampler appearance.

The program was the inspiration of the Diet Pepsi-drenched brain of Creative Services Director Stan Cornyn. "The music industry was changing in 1968. A new kind of music was beginning to emerge. It was called 'underground' at the time and you've got to remember: we really had to struggle to get heard; even people like Jethro Tull, Van Dyke Parks, the Mothers. We even felt proud when we could get Jimi Hendrix booked on a Monkees tour. The only place you could advertise the first two Neil Young albums was in the underground press."

**Lotsa Takers.** "At the time we'd been involved with a number of ads, in *Rolling Stone* and elsewhere, that involved people mailing in coupons and receiving new albums. We'd given away 5,000 Randy Newman albums. We sold Joni Mitchell posters for a quarter.

"For some reason, people seemed to like the coupon-mailing idea, so I came up with the sampler, to take advantage of that fact and to find a new avenue of exposure for this new group of artists. We took out ads for our first samplers—*Songbook* and *Record Show*—at \$2 for two records. We were practically giving them away (and these two had cuts by Van Morrison, Jethro Tull, Jimi Hendrix, the Grateful Dead), but that was our intention."

Cornyn credits his modest proposition to "a series of fortuitous instincts." The first samplers generated an avalanche of listener response.

**Hoary Discs.** The sampler album motion actually predates



# Cheap Taste Hooks "Music Freaks"



the current Loss Leaders series by some years, even if the ancestors of *Burbank* and *Hot Platters* directed themselves more toward radio programmers and retail merchants. As far back as 1959 and 1967 Warners was pre-peddling its hardware under such guaranteed-to-grab monickers as *You Ain't Heard Nothin' Yet* (XS 1307) and *Some of Our Best Friends* . . . (PRO 290).

But it wasn't until the arrival of the *Warner/Reprise Songbook* ("25 Different Acts-40 Selections-Old & New") that the sampler market was realized, sought and captured. Other labels have followed Burbank's flashy lead but there's still only one Loss Leaders show, which makes its presence felt three to four times yearly. "We try to adhere to that schedule," Cornyn explains, "but we have to remain flexible. You don't have much luck getting the production department interested in getting a sampler ready when they're in the process of finishing up a Gordon Lightfoot or Maria Muldaur package they know will ship Gold."

The formula has remained unchanged since 1968; high value, low cost, with great covers (Art Director Ed Thrasher came up with the *Hot Platters* idea after perusing a particularly shopworn menu in a drugstore grill, *Deep Ear's* title was Cornyn's idea from the start). The highly confidential Sampler Mailing List notes some 80,000 active and satisfied previous users who receive advance notice of new releases by mail weeks before ads for the albums appear. (It's safe to count on six weeks' elapsed time between the clipping of the coupon and

## Sampling the Samplers

If you're one of the millions of Americans still using expensive—and ugly—anti-macassars or bulky and scratch-prone Plexiglas shields to keep dust off your turntable, consider this array of cheap and useful alternatives from Warner Bros. Records: the sampler albums.

You don't need the whole set just for dust-catching, but you might find that these vinyl medallions are appreciating even faster than your sugar, gasoline, real estate and meat collections.

Turley Richards fan Alex Hirka, a Chicago resident, has written *Circular* to com-

plain that he cannot find a copy of the three-record *Looney Tunes* sampler, lamentedly now out of print because of its expense. Actually, he says, he can find a copy, but only at \$25, a growth of 833% over its original \$3 price.

So whether you're a speckophobe or a plasticized gold bug, or even if you're just in it for the music, you'll appreciate the attached list of currently available sampler albums to be had by sending the buck-a-disc price to Loss Leaders, P.O. Box 6868, Burbank, Calif. 91510. All are two-record sets unless otherwise noted.

- Songbook** (\$2)
- Record Show** (\$2)
- The Big Ball** (\$2)
- Schlagers!** (\$2)
- Zapped** (\$1 for this single album)
- Non-Dairy Creamer** (also one LP, also \$1)
- Hot Platters** (\$2)
- Together** (\$1 for one record)
- The Whole Burbank Catalog** (\$2)
- Burbank** (\$2)
- Days of Wine and Vinyl** (\$2)
- Appetizers** (\$2)
- All Singing, All Talking, All Rocking** (\$2)
- Hard Goods** (\$2)
- Peaches** (\$2 for this special Capricorn Records sampler)
- Deep Ear** (\$2)



# Gene's Guitar Gadget



*Intrigued by a recent classified advertisement in Rolling Stone, Circular asked parajournalist Todd Everett to track down Gene Parsons, former Byrds' drummer, Warners recording artist (Kindling, BS 2687) and currently, according to the ad, inventor of musical devices.*

It wasn't easy, but was worthwhile. Gene lives in Caspar, California, a town so remote that the telephone company couldn't give me an area code, let alone a number.

Caspar, as it turns out, is about halfway between Mendocino and Fort Bragg, in Northern California. Gene has been working around (often with a band including guitarist Joel Scott Hill, drummer John Barbete and bassist Chris Ethridge) and developing his invention, the subject of the aforementioned ad.

**Strainless Steel.** The Parsons/White Pull String, as it's formally known, is a device invented for guitar players. "Clarence White," explains Parsons, "used to do this thing where he'd pull a string around the nut of his guitar, giving an effect something like that of a steel guitar. It was impossible to do and play the guitar at the same time, though. On a couple of sessions, I would pull the string for Clarence while he'd play."

"What he wanted was a way to produce that effect mechanically."

Parsons, something of a craftsman, worked on the idea himself and eventually came up with the Pull String. It's a linkage, built into the instrument, connecting the leather guitar strap with a gizmo that pulls the string; all the guitarist has to do is apply some extra pressure on the neck of the guitar to "pull" the string up as much as one full tone without having to change the position of his hands. "It does the same sort of thing as a palm-pedal device, only more efficiently. And, because you don't need your hands to work it, you can combine the Pull String with other effects that do use the hands. It's useful for blues and country effects that you can't get on any other guitar."

Parsons has been working on the device for some time, carrying it through several phases of development. At two different stages, Parsons says, the Fender company was interested in marketing it, but both times the project was shot down. Such players as Bernie Leadon of the Eagles, Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, Bob Warford, Freddie Weller and one of Glen Campbell's sidemen are currently using the device.

**Made to Order.** It's not inexpensive: Parsons charges \$350 plus tax (in California) and shipping from the Pull String. He constructs it to custom-fit any solid-body guitar: you send your instrument to him, he installs the Pull String and returns it to you. His guarantee is as good as exists anywhere. "If it breaks, I'll fix it."

The patent for the Parsons/White Pull String is owned jointly

by Parsons, Clarence White's widow and White's former manager, Eddie Tickner.

Parsons has also been talking with Sneaky Pete, Chris Ethridge, fiddler Gib Guilbeau and guitarist/singer Vern Gosdin about forming a new edition of the Flying Burrito Brothers (of which group Sneaky and Ethridge were charter members), and has been working on an album with Hill, Ethridge and Barbete. Both projects give Parsons an opportunity to exercise his multi-instrument (guitar, banjo and all) capabilities; both mean that many more musicians will be exposed to the Parsons/White Pull String.

You can find out more by writing to Gene Parsons, General Delivery, Caspar, California 95420. ●

## Top Ten

Based on Warner Bros. sales figures for the week of November 25-29.

1. Jethro Tull/**WarChild**
2. Maria Muldaur/**Waitress in the Donut Shop**
3. America/**Holiday**
4. Deep Purple/**Stormbringer**
5. Foghat/**Rock and Roll Outlaws**
6. George Carlin/**Toledo Window Box**
7. Todd Rundgren's **Utopia**
8. Alice Cooper's **Greatest Hits**
9. Montrose/**Paper Money**
10. Randy Newman/**Good Old Boys**

the arrival of a sampler.)

**Elusive Threefer.** Most Loss Leaders are two-record sets selling for \$2. There have been a few \$1/single record sets (like *Together, Oct. 10* and *Non-Dairy Creamer*). There was even one specially-priced three-record set, *Looney Tunes-Merrie Melodies*, since discontinued because of its cumbersome packaging (and thereby the rarest of Loss Leader collector items).

Collectibility is, in fact, another quality that goes into each and every Warner Bros. sampler before the name goes on, a point Cornyn and official selection-and-sequence director Doc D strongly agree on. Tasty items like Jimi Hendrix' "Red House" blues, the Beach Boys' "Susie Cincinnati" and the Everlys' "Lord of the Manor" reinforce Cornyn's original intention: to use the records to "expose a lot of good stuff that isn't being heard."

(Van Dyke Parks' "Come to the Sunshine," recorded long before Harper's Bizarre's 1967 hit version, rounds out the newly-released *Deep Ear* and more surprises are planned for *Deep's* successor, *The Force*.)

To hear Cornyn tell it, everybody wins on samplers. "In a capitalist, profit-making company, we have found a program that is valuable: to the consumer, to our company, to the artists. No matter how anonymous he might previously have been, if an artist is represented on one of the samplers, someone somewhere will hear his music."

Oh yeah, *Schlagers* is German for "hits." ●



# EuroBlitz Forges Ever Onward



## Now It's Color-Coordinated.

Just like department stores' fall accessory lines, the singing, dancing January "Warner Bros. Music Show" (better known as "Dream On" among some of the more intimately-involved personnel) is matching up red, orange, yellow, blue, green and violet to make Continental touring slightly less confusing. There are two shows of three acts apiece. One is to be called (by insiders only, of course) the Red Tour; the other is nicknamed the Blue Tour. If you were to be part of the Red Tour and/or Crew, you'd be tagged with red, orange or yellow stickers. It stands to reason then, if you belonged to the Blues, you'd be earmarked blue, green or violet. Each group—plus equipment and road crew—gets a personal hue. Should the Blues collide with Reds, through some unforeseen act of utter confusion, the situation would be saved by virtue of the universal color spectrum. It all sounds so simple. Just wait until the whole entourage gets drunk in Dussel-

dorf; the pudding's proof will lie therein.

## Some Tasteful Clapping and a Classy Curtsy to Welcome Curtom.

Saluting the New Year with a blast of horns and plenty of rhythm, WB is pleasurably preening its corporate feathers while announcing the collaboration between Chicago-based Curtom Records and the Burbank-bogged Bros. Curtom Co-Presidents Curtis Mayfield and Marv Stuart exchanged handshakes and many smiles with our MoJoe team as contracts were signed and press releases winged out to *Billboard*, *Record World* and *Cash Box*. Effective January 1, 1975, Warners will distribute all Curtom discs, including existing catalog product. The talent roster involved is staggering: Curtis Mayfield, The Impressions, The Natural Four and LeRoy Hutson for openers, with more to come. Keep your ears open, your toes tapping and your turntables warm. This venture's gonna be a hot one.

**Airing Mary.** After the turn of 1975 at least 20 major radio markets (among them Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Indianapolis, Milwaukee and Denver) will present a Mary Travers-hostessed weekly hour-long program titled *Mary Travers and Friend*. The planned format combines both music and spoken interviews. *Cash Box* recently reported already-taped shows with Richie Havens, Jefferson Starship, Melissa Manchester, Dory Previn and Harry Chapin. The *coup de grâce*, however, is an exclusive taping already-in-the-can with Bob Dylan who, to the best of *Circular* staffers' addled recol-



**Promotions Are Always on Top of It.** Seen here (center) is the Tin Man, holding America's first LP, *America*, unfortunately not the album from whence the single "Tin Man" came. The true parent LP, *Holiday*, must've disappeared from corporate record cabinets as fast as it did from record store shelves. Surrounding Tinny you'll see WB New York workers George Solovitch, Bob Merlis (with can opener), Lis Rosenberg, Dave Morrell, Cathy Galligan and Marion Perkins.

lections, has not spoken out on radio (or TV for that matter) in a decent decade. If you're unfortunate enough to nest in a city not carrying this show it might be worth a move.

**The Envelope Please.** This week Monday's-Maxi-Media-Awards go out to *Cash Box* and radio station WEDO, serving Pittsburgh. The *Box* earned this well-deserved press citation for several reasons, not the least of which was that it arrived Monday a.m. on schedule. Another *raison d'être* was its display of customary élan for spotlighting Graham Central Station's newest 45 "Feel the Need" (from latest 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ , *Release Yourself*) and Fleetwood Mac's "Heroes Are Hard To Find" (from

album of same name) in the Single Picks of the Week Category. A third factor was the discovery of Capricornian Johnny Darrell's "Orange Blossom Special" and Gordon Number-One-Around-Here Lightfoot's "Carefree Highway," both distinguished under *CB's* Country-Looking-Ahead-Department. Aerowaver WEDO won Ruby's heart and soul for two ahead-of-the-pack playlist additions, the aforementioned "Heroes Are Hard To Find" single and the timely "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)" by Darlene Love, out of the fledgling Warner-Spector label.

**Contest Comeback.** Thanks to Maiden of Merchandising Ellen Greenberg, Ruby's drawer of won-



derful surprise prizes is once again brimming with goodies to give away. This week's contest is a lulu. All you have to do is analyze line by line and word for word (no skimping now) the lyrics to America's last Top Five single hit "Tin Man." For encouragement you'll note pics floating around this column of an honest-to-God Tin Man, employed, natch, to promote and perpetuate the small disc's gargantuan success in New York City. P.S. If you get stumped on "the tropic of Sir Galahad," never mind entering. You have to get it all figured out to win.

## Ruby's Run-Ons

◆ Watch for a rocking and rolling **New Year's Eve TV Special**, recently taped (according to *Cash Box*) with **Chicago** headlining and guest star attractions like the **Beach Boys**, **Olivia Newton-John**, the **Doobie Brothers** and **Herbie Hancock**. It'll sure beat **Lawrence Welk** with bubbles for those of us under 40. ◆ Babbling as I just was about the **Beach Boys**, they've got a full-blown Western-type tour in the wings with none other than **Jim Guercio** playing bass. You'll recall the fame of Guercio from creating none other than the red-hottest recording spot around, the fabulous **Caribou Ranch**. States swung through on this gala include Colorado (of course), Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, California and Canada's Toronto. The trip kicked off December 5 and winds down December 29. ◆ Just in case you were wondering how "the cutest monopoly in the



Oz never did do nothin' for the Tin Man, but evidently this New York sidewalk pretzel vendor did.

world" (a fairly apt description of WB once tossed off by **Randy Newman**) is doing in the Inter-



Everybody—blue, red, green, orange, yellow and violet—is leavin' town, except for Curtis Mayfield, who's just arriving, and Darlene's love, who'll be home for Christmas if he can still get plane tickets.

from the sound track is destined for Top 40. Wouldn't want to ruin the plot for you, but it concerns a glass skyscraper that catches fire. What a line up of stars too—**Steve McQueen**, **Paul Newman**, **Faye Dunaway**, **William Holden** and **Jennifer Jones**. The strange part is that WB's releasing the soundtrack album and 20th Century Fox is releasing the picture. Ah well, that's showbiz. ◆ We're so glad A&M artist **Peter Allen's** not offended. "Some people have called me a 'Seventies Cole Porter,'" said Pete recently in an A&M sales booklet, "I don't mind that comparison—I don't mind at all." ◆ Finally, I'm sure everyone is wiping their collective brows with relief over the fact that although **David Cassidy** did announce his retirement from rock a while back, reports are in (via *Billboard*) that he's cutting a new one in London with—are you ready?—**David Bowie** producing. That's it for this week, thank goodness. ◆

national marketplace, let me fill you in. In Japan we're holding the #2 best seller spot with a ditty entitled "Fuyu No Eki" by artist **Rumiko Koyanagi** and the #20 mark with "Ai No Tanjobi" by **Shinya Aizaki**. Do write in if you've heard either one—we're dying to hear the melodies even though the lyrics might escape. Meanwhile Canada is holding forth with **Gordon Lightfoot's** "Carefree Highway" at #3. The United Kingdom may not be brimming with white sugar or hot water, but it's ringing our bells with "Da Doo Ron Ron" by the **Crystals** on Warner/Spector at #14. ◆ Something to watch and listen for around the demise of December is a flick and soundtrack LP called *The Towering Inferno*. **Maureen McGovern's** "We May Never Love Like This Again"

## Inspirational Verse

Just a little bobsled we call  
it old Saint Nick,  
But she'll walk a toboggan  
with a four-speed stick.  
She's candy apple red  
with a ski for a wheel  
And when Santa hits the  
gas, man just watch  
her peel.

—The Beach Boys  
"Little Saint Nick"



# Make Me an Angel... ..That Flies From Montgomery

## Gregg Allman

12/10 Veteran's Memorial, Columbus  
12/11 Convention Center, Indianapolis  
12/13 Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis  
12/14 Municipal Auditorium, Nashville  
12/15 Ellis Auditorium, Memphis  
12/17 Municipal Auditorium, Birmingham  
12/18 Auditorium, Boone, North Carolina

## Richard Betts

12/10 Golden Hall, San Diego  
12/11 Santa Monica Civic Auditorium  
12/13-14 Winterland, San Francisco

## Cowboy

12/10 Veteran's Memorial, Columbus  
12/11 Convention Center, Indianapolis  
12/13 Kiel Auditorium, St. Louis  
12/14 Municipal Auditorium, Nashville  
12/15 Ellis Auditorium, Memphis  
12/17 Municipal Auditorium, Birmingham  
12/18 Auditorium, Boone, North Carolina

## Deep Purple

12/9 St. Paul Civic Center  
12/11 Arena, Milwaukee  
12/13 Coliseum, Greensboro  
12/14 Veterans Memorial Coliseum,  
Jacksonville, North Carolina  
12/15 Carolina Coliseum, Columbia  
12/17 Norfolk Scope  
12/18 Civic Center, Baltimore

## Doobie Brothers

12/10 Omni, Atlanta  
12/11 Toledo Sports Arena  
12/12 Hara Arena, Dayton  
12/13 Illinois State University,  
Bloomington  
12/14 Chrysler Arena, Ann Arbor  
12/15 Indiana State University,  
Terre Haute

## Foghat

12/9 Jubilee Auditorium,  
Edmonton, Canada

12/10 Jubilee Auditorium,  
Calgary, Canada  
12/13 Public Auditorium, Cleveland  
12/16 Cobo Hall, Detroit  
12/18 Auditorium Theatre, Chicago  
12/20-21 Academy of Music,  
New York City

## Good Rats

12/11-14 Aquarius Ballroom, Seattle  
12/18-22 Whisky A Go Go, Los Angeles

## Doug Kershaw

12/14 Window Rock Civic Center,  
Arizona  
12/18-21 Barbara Kelly's, Monterey  
12/23-1/4/75 Harrah's, Lake Tahoe

## Little Feat

12/10 Golden Hall, San Diego  
12/16 Santa Monica Civic Auditorium  
12/18 Fresno  
12/19 Bakersfield

12/20-21 Winterland, San Francisco  
12/27-28 Winterland, San Francisco

## Manfred Mann's Earth Band

12/10 Civic Center, Ottawa  
12/11 Segep Maisonneuve High School,  
Montreal  
12/12 Convocation Hall, Toronto  
12/13-14 Michigan Palace, Detroit  
12/15 Erie County Field House,  
Pennsylvania  
12/17 The Stone Ballroom, Newark  
12/18 Boston  
12/20 War Memorial, Trenton  
12/21 Spectrum, Philadelphia

## Marshall Tucker Band

12/16 Santa Monica Civic Auditorium  
12/17 Golden Hall, San Diego  
12/20-21 Winterland, San Francisco

## Maria Muldaur

12/9 Western Washington State College,  
Bellingham

## Vinyl Statistics

When it came to collecting "privileged" information about new record releases, however, the *Circular* staff's most valuable contact was a man within the record company itself—a man who insisted that his real name never be cited as a source. The *Circular* staff referred to him by the code name "Fine Print."

When "Fine Print" wanted a meeting with Penthaus, Penthaus' copy of *Record World* would be missing its singles chart. Penthaus was unable ever to deduce how "Fine Print" intercepted the magazine. Once he received the signal, however, Penthaus would drive to the parking lot of the Copper Penny coffee shop on Olive

Avenue and wait for "Fine Print" to arrive. Then he would ask "Fine Print" yes-or-no questions about records scheduled for release by Warner/Reprise and affiliated labels.

On December 9, "Fine Print" made the most startling revelation the *Circular* publisher had yet heard. The informant dismissed with a curt nod the suggestion that the company would be releasing any albums in the first two weeks of December.

Penthaus was stunned. "You mean it's *all singles*?" he asked.

"Fine Print" nodded grimly and turned to leave—but not before handing his journalistic confessor a neatly typed list of titles and numbers:

### SINGLES

#### NOVEMBER 27

"**Lonely People**"/"Mad Dog"—America—Warner Bros. WBS 8048

"**Love Chain**"/"Tutti Frutti"—Silver, Platinum & Gold—Warner Bros. WBS 8057

"**As Long as He Takes Care of Home**" (With Rap)/"As Long as He Takes Care of Home" (Without Rap)—Warner Bros. WBS 8038 (Reservice)

"**Padre**"/"Burden of Freedom"—Judy Lynn—Warner Bros. WBS 8059 (Reservice)

"**Black Water**"/"Song To See You Through"—The Doobie Brothers—Warner Bros. WBS 8062

"**I'm a Woman**"/"Cool River"—Maria Muldaur—Reprise RPS 1319

#### DECEMBER 4

"**Hard Core Man**"/"To Keep From Crying"—Bobby Hart—Warner Bros. WBS 8058

"**Only So Much Oil in the Ground**"/"Give Me the Proof"—Tower of Power—Warner Bros. WBS 8055 (Reservice)

"**Child of Winter (Christmas Song)**"/"Susie Cincinnati"—The Beach Boys—Reprise RPS 1321

"**Wolfman Jack**"/"Breathless"—Todd Rundgren—Bearsville BSS 0301

"**Santa Fly**"/"Santa Doesn't Cop Out on Dope"—Martin Mull with the Sondra Baskin Glee Club—Capricorn CPR 0037

"**God Bless**"/"Love Is Bigger Than Baseball"—Dexter Redding—Capricorn CPR 0033



# Titi Sings of Yule

12/11 University of California, Davis  
12/12-15 Boarding House, San Francisco  
12/18-22 Troubadour, Los Angeles

## Kenny Rankin

12/26-1/1/75 Boarding House,  
San Francisco

## Bob Seger

12/9 Washington, D.C.  
12/10 Civic Center,  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
12/11 Memorial Auditorium, Utica  
12/12 Civic Center, Providence  
12/19-21 Richard's, Atlanta  
12/22-23 Beggar's Banquet, Louisville

## Tower of Power

12/31 Winterland, San Francisco  
1/12/75 European Tour  
2/7-9 Circle Star Theatre,  
San Carlos, California  
2/14 Shrine Auditorium, Los Angeles  
2/15 Swing Auditorium, San Bernardino  
2/16 San Diego State College  
2/20 Coliseum, Spokane  
2/21 Paramount Theatre, Seattle  
2/22 Portland State University, Oregon  
2/23 University of Oregon, Eugene

## Trapeze

12/12 Ellis Auditorium,  
Memphis, Tennessee  
12/14 Ambassador Theatre,  
St. Louis, Missouri

## Wet Willie

12/10 Civic Auditorium, Bakersfield  
12/11 Convention Center, Fresno



**Hot Canary.** Were you aware of the Parisian passion for Burbank's own Tweety Pie, whom the French call Titi? The character, which I could never tolerate, was popularized via a TV cartoon series and WEA Paris last year speculated with a Christmas single, featuring the actors who provide voices for the cartoon. Even though it was released a bit late in the game, the little devil sold roughly a million copies. A subsequent album and single sold comfortably in the hundreds of thousands, and there was evidence of Titimania in Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. WEA were well prepared for Christmas this year. They've got the Berlitzing bird to chant "tout ce que je veut pour Noel" (which *Music Week* spelled with wild abandon). They reckon it could be the biggest Gallic seller this season, so long as Titi fever doesn't lead to psitticosis.

**Glad Tidings.** The London Warners have their own musical stocking stuffers. The Scaffold single "Mummy Won't Be Home for Christmas" has spurred the sales of Kleenex and provoked a lot of unanticipated controversy. A sad song with a happy ending (mummy does come home), it has rattled a few listeners doomed to a less sanguine season. Capitol Radio likes it, though, and has dubbed it their "Christmas Cracker." Another staunch entry is the time-honored "Christmas (Please Come Home)" by Darlene Love, a track from the evergreen *Spector Christmas Album*. Right now nothing can dismay the merry gentlemen and ladies at Greek Street upon seeing that song-for-all-seasons,



"Streets of London," tear into the singles charts on the very birthday of its creator, Ralph McTell. Ralph wrote the song years and years ago, and it is *de rigeur* at any McTell performance. Although the song has appeared on a past LP of his and been recorded by at least 40 different artists, Ralph has never done it himself as a single. He recently recorded it fresh with the sweet, ghostly backing of Prelude (whose unaccompanied version of "After the Goldrush" is wowing Americans nearly a year after its British release). The effect is deliberately that of an audience shyly singing along on the choruses, as they invariably do when Ralph plays live.

## It Wasn't the Airplanes Killed Him . . .

Anne-Marie Micklo, sweetheart of the Antipodes, has come from Burbank to Greek Street so as to wrestle with the monstrous January Supertour from this vantage point. (I refer to the six WB acts scheduled to storm Europe, about which you will not stop hearing for a long time.) I am put in mind of Fay Wray battling King Kong but am confident Anne-Marie will prevail. She's got

the whole thing plotted on sheets of paper thumbtacked to the wall, à la Jo Bergman, and I'll bet we're the first to know that Little Feat will be doing a sound check in Amsterdam at 1 PM on January 30.

## Let Them Eat Soyilent Green.

Shortage of the week in this sceptor isle is bread. Members of the Bakers Union are cooling their pans and we're not getting any more of the squishy white kind till they get more of the folding green kind. Private bakers aren't in on this, so the more realistic sort of bread is still being baked, just not enough of it. Your Observer has tackled the problem more directly—kneading away with hands strengthened by years of assiduous Telexing.

## Letter, We Get Letters.

We even get resumes from unlikely actresses. Ruby thought that Martha del Rio thing was a hoax—"obviously an old college friend of yours," she said, mailing it on. I promise I've never heard of M. Del Rio in my life before. Well, Martha, this mention in *Circular* should make you a household word by Wednesday.

—SHELLEY BENOIT



# Struggling To Be Moondog



Louis Hardin, composer and musician, was born in Marysville, Kansas, on May 26, 1916, son of an Episcopal minister. He showed an early aptitude for musical composition, particularly the creation of complex rhythms.

While attending high school in Hurley, Missouri, Hardin lost his sight when a dynamite cap exploded. His musical studies continued, and in 1943 Hardin moved to New York City. About 1947 he began using the pen name "Moondog," after "a dog I had in Hurley, who used to howl at the moon more than any dog I know of."

By this time he was composing prolifically. Though he considered his works "classical," he had some difficulty getting them accepted by the symphonic estab-

lishment despite striking up a friendship with the late Artur Rodzinski. For many years Moondog was a familiar sight on the sidewalks in the neighborhood of Carnegie Hall, playing some of his smaller-scale compositions on instruments of his own invention and selling scores to passersby.

His first professional recognition came from the modern jazz community. This led to his making a number of recordings in the 1950s, including a 10-inch LP for Epic and three 12-inchers for Prestige.

About the time the Epic LP was released, in 1954, a new disc jockey came to New York, playing music which he called "rock & roll" and calling himself "Moondog." It is not recorded what Louis Hardin thought of rock & roll music at the time, but he certainly didn't take kindly to the appropriation of his name. He sued, and before long the disc jockey was forced to call himself plain old Alan Freed. History has also failed to record whether Freed was aware of the blind composer when he adopted his sobriquet, but it was clearly established that Hardin had used the name first, and that was that.

Despite this setback, Freed's career continued to skyrocket until 1958, when he was charged with inciting a riot as a result of the disorderly conclusion of a show he presented in Boston. The payola syndrome compounded his problems, and he died broke and alcoholic in 1965.

Meanwhile, Hardin's Prestige LPs made him a cult favorite with the "beat generation." It was not until the 1970s, however, that he was able to reach the kind of

audience he desired with music recorded the way he wanted it. This was finally achieved with two Columbia LPs produced by James William Guercio, the first of which contains Moondog's brief but fascinating autobiography as well as some remarkably captivating music.

## Question for Next Week.

Chuck Berry, an artist heard with great frequency on Alan Freed's radio shows, has never recorded for Warner Bros. This despite the appearances of his colorful contemporaries Little Richard and Fats Domino on Reprise. However, Chuck may be clearly seen, guitar in action, on the cover of a WB-distributed album which is selling

like Johnny B. Goode right at this very moment. Hey, kids, be the first to name that album and win yourself a platter!

Top seeded Brian Blevins, press officer of London's own Island Records, swept the pro division of entries to Dr. Demento's November 18 question regarding the coincidence of *Stormbringer* titles between Deep Purple and John & Beverly Martyn. He should know, since the Martyns recorded that album for worldwide ('cepting U.S.) distribution via Island. Amateur (actually semi-pro, since he's minister of communications for cable—as opposed to real—station WQAX in Bloomington, Indiana) Neil Sharrow turned in a surprisingly quick and astute entry to the same question to outpoint the remainder of the not-quite-pro field.

Each Doctor the week whose question poses a focus is the answer of his week column next. If you are clever, swift and exotic and know the right answer and it comes in before all the other responses from clever, swift and exotic people, then you're entitled to win any *single* Warner/Reprise in-print album of your choice. You'll find *Circular's* address in the adjoining box.

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