



observation post

Vol. 65 No. 1

THE CITY COLLEGE

Friday, February 23, 1979

What's Happening

FEBRUARY 23

Seminar: On physics in J417 at 2:00 p.m.

MARCH 1

Handwriting Analysis: In the Trophy Lounge at 12:30 p.m.

OP Staff meeting: All students interested in writing for OP are invited to attend. Starts at 12 noon

MARCH 2 and 3

Theatre: In Finley Ballroom, Friday at 7:30 p.m., and Saturday at 7:00 p.m.

Disco: In Finley Ballroom, Friday at 9:30 p.m., and Saturday at 9:00 p.m. Admission is \$2.00.

MARCH 6

Recital: Janet Steele and Fred Hauptman in Shepard 200 at 3:00 p.m.

MARCH 8

Recital: Mendelssohn songs in Shepard 200 at 12:30 p.m.

Dance Contest: In Finley 132 from 12:00 noon — 3:00 p.m.

MARCH 9

Festival: Given by Dominican Students in Finley 101 from 7:00 p.m. — 11:45 p.m.

MARCH 15

Disco: Given by WCCR in Bittenwiser Lounge, from 12:00 noon — 3:00 p.m.

Career Day: In Bowker Lounge from 9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.

Baptists Want Black Replacement for Marshak

BY ALEX CORONEOS

President Marshak has resigned. He leaves office on September 1. To fill his vacant chair in the Administration Building may entail some byzantine politicking. (And, perhaps, such politicking is one reason why President Marshak chose to extricate himself from the quagmire.) In any case, the Presidency appears to the different number of minority groups at City College as a tempting prize which should rightly go to one of their own.

The Provost's Report for 1978 states that 31% of City College's students are black. The Baptist Ministers' Conference of Greater New York wants a black to be the next President of City. And, they may just swing enough influence to see their dream come true, due to a recent spate of that byzantine politicking between Mayor Koch and the Ministers' Conference. The Ministers feel that the Mayor has ducked, and reneged on, his responsibilities to the black community. They see this evidenced in such actions as the closing of Logan Hospital and the relocation of the Model Cities anti-poverty program from Harlem to City Hall. So, on January 15 they withdrew their invitation to Mayor Koch to attend an anniversary service for Martin Luther King at the Convent Avenue Baptist Church. At that service, the President of the Baptist Ministers' conference, Reverend Paul Vastor Johnson, proclaimed Mayor Koch to be a "neo-conservative Dracula" who wants to "suck the final drops of blood from our people." Then, Reverend Johnson called for a resolution on the part of the black community to organize a campaign to recall the Mayor.

The Mayor could not easily live with a sizable portion of the black community seeking to kick him out of City Hall. So, on Feb. 10, he called representatives from the community, including the Rev. Johnson, to meet with him and see what kind of truce the two sides could work out. Among the points scored by the black representatives at this meeting was the Baptist Ministers' Conference ability to help select a new President for City College. They are to do this by reviewing resumes for the position. Rev. Johnson said he was pleased by the



Reverend Paul Vastor Johnson — President of the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Greater New York

mayor's cooperation, but that he still stood by his January 15 resolution.

Could the Mayor care less? Does he see the Baptist Ministers' Conference and similar groups as groups of prattling, spoiled children, whom he must shut up with token favors — such as having them look at resumes?

Or, have the Baptist Ministers really bulldozed their way into the decision-making chambers of City Hall? Have they established a precedent whereby the Mayor will in the future take into account the wishes of his black voters without first checking to see if he meets the letter of the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action laws?

The Reverend operates from his office in the back of a ramshackle bookstore called the Empire Baptist Convention Bookstore on 125 Street. The bookstore is something of a religious flea market: it sells everything from Baptist T-shirts and plastic clerical collars, to certificates of Deaconry,

an ally who will twist quickly in the political wind. So, he feels that the chances of seeing a black President at City College are "good because of the timing and because across the nation we have some of the best educators that you'll find anywhere."

The white has left New York; left many non-white residents in the inner-city. And the Mayor has got to deal with these people. The blacks have been a viable community for many years, and we've got to be reckoned with."

While the Reverend does think his group has struck a blow for the cause of their version of neo-Black Power, he also realizes the game the Mayor wants to play with them. After the January 15 declaration of war, "On January 16 the Mayor's office called me to set up a meeting. He gave me the 31st of January as the first date he could have a meeting with me." The Reverend had to go into the hospital for minor surgery on that date, so the meeting took place on February 9. "It was a good meeting, but it left much to be desired," said the Reverend. There is a strong feeling among the Baptist Ministers now that the Mayor would like for his image to be changed in the black community." As evidence of this, Rev. Johnson says that "there have been calls from some of the Mayor's aides reminding us that they are available to us at all times."

What happens if the powers involved refuse to play ball with the black community? Reverend Johnson plans to orchestrate a concerted show of force in the voting booths. To that end, "we are planning throughout New York City a mass blitzkrieg of voter registration like we've never had. We are going to be asking for support and workers in the community for this registration. But, we want it done through the Baptist Ministers' conference; we're tired of splinter groups. I've appointed a voter registration commissioner. We're going to have seminars, and we will talk to people who are registered but who don't vote. We feel that the system discourages blacks from voting. We want to change this."

Outside on the sidewalk, speakers blast the recorded speeches of Martin Luther King — at whose anniversary memorial the Mayor was not wanted. On Reverend Johnson's desk sits at least one resume he has received from a hopeful contender for the Presidency. Now and then, he picks up the telephone to take calls from people inquiring information about another position the Conference is trying to help fill, for a black architect to work at one of the Manhattan Community Planning Boards.

Reverend Johnson feels it is only natural that a black be appointed President of City College: "City College is now about 66% non-white...and we think the reflection of that populace should be represented in the Presidency. The President should have some viable relationship with the community which he serves. This is important, particularly here in the black community." Reverend Johnson feels that the Mayor has given at least a perfunctory nod to such a proposal.

Reverend Johnson sees the mayor as

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Women's Center Needs Support

In Finley 417 there's a unique happening going on, and that happening is the CCNY Women's Center. The Women's Center is bursting with plans this term. In honor of the anniversary of International Working Women's Day, the Center will be sponsoring a series of events focusing on the past struggles and triumphs of women, as well as important problems and future struggles.

These events will be held during the week of March 5-9. Some of the planned activities include speakers on various issues of concern to all women (such as the Bakke case), struggles of women in Iran and Africa, and showings of the film *Babies and Banners* on Friday, March 9.

In conjunction with Women's Week, the Center also has planned self defense classes, a newsletter, a women's film festival, and more. The Women's Center plans to devote time to what women are doing on the College campus. To do this they need interested women to come forward who will devote some time and effort to the Center.

—Naomi Brown

Letters

Poor, Poor, Pitiful Meade

Dear OP:

Just writing to say that I was sorry to hear about the death of OP's former editor, Nancy Meade.

I can't exactly say that I knew Nancy personally, but I do remember when she came to join CCNY's Cheerleading Squad. She seemed like a nice girl but she didn't quite have the rhythm that it takes to become a CCNY Cheerleader and she had trouble picking up steps. She knew it and I think that's why she left.

At the time, none of us knew how different she was. We found out a lot about Nancy Meade through your paper. We were shocked to say the least. I used to talk to her sometimes on the way to the subway after practice, but the only thing I knew about her was that she was 21, quite worldly and lived in an apartment in the Village with her boyfriend. Like I said before, she seemed nice.

Neither I nor anyone else has the right to judge Nancy or put labels on her because like all of us, she lived her life the way she saw fit. Unfortunately, the way she saw fit brought her to her end. It's hard to believe she's gone, but perhaps God knew best.

Yours truly,
Susan A. Gordon
Student

Address all correspondence
to Observation Post,
Finley Hall, Room 336

Suck on This

A report issued by Dr. Victor Hermont, California sex researcher, states that fellatio could become the miracle cure for a number of male maladies including heart disease, ulcers, hypertension, and lung cancer.

"The oral stimulation of the penis has an enormous effect on many male health problems," Dr. Hermont said in a telephone interview. "We are not yet certain how this works. All we know is that our test patients all responded positively to fellatio treatment."

The report also claims that chemicals found in the saliva of teen-age girls can prolong male life indefinitely. A daily oral ejaculation would permit most males to live "for centuries." Dr. Hermont has been censored by his fellow sexologists, and police have searched his clinic numerous times for underage girls. Dr. Hermont has taken the most severe criticism from female doctors, researchers, and women's rights advocates. "This is the ultimate in male chauvinism. It is not enough to withhold our rights and suppress us, but now to claim that a blow job will cure male diseases is the ultimate insult," screamed Bunny Becker, a New York based sexologist.

The National Organization for Women has called for the revocation of Dr. Hermont's license and an investigation of sexual improprieties at his Malibu Clinic, Inc.

"What about cunnilingus?" a NOW spokeswoman asked in an open letter in the Los Angeles Times criticizing Dr. Hermont. Dr. Hermont replied in a letter of his own the following day. "Cunnilingus," he said, "causes lip cancer."

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A Conversation with Writer/Director Jonathan Stuart

BY PAUL DABALSA

Jonathan Stuart, the 32-year-old writer/director of *Mary Jane*, a musical revue celebrating marijuana and currently previewing at the Park Royal Theatre, rolls a joint and explains how he decided on the subject for his new play. "I wanted to write something commercial that had to do with the things I know best, and what I know best is pot."

In 1964, Stuart received a two-year sentence for possession of less than one ounce of marijuana. "I was living in Connecticut at the time," he recalls, "and this guy who had been arrested a week before me tried to get himself off the hook by suggesting that I was a big dealer and that he would set me up. So, he tried to get me to sell him some pot and I wouldn't sell it to him, but I told him that he could come over and I would give him some. He came over and right behind him were 25 policemen armed with shotguns."

Although Stuart had just graduated high school when he was arrested, he had already cultivated a taste for theatre. In prison he used most of his spare time to read and write. He would read a play at the prison library in one sitting, and on Saturdays he would read several plays. About writing plays in prison, Stuart says, "I had to concern myself with totally uninteresting topics because if I had written anything serious, the prison authorities would have taken it from me and suspected me of being subversive. So I had to be careful to satisfy the censors who would occasionally walk into cells and read whatever you had lying around. If what you were writing seemed weird, they would come down on you."

Upon release from prison, Stuart had his first play, *Envelope*, produced in San Francisco by the American Conservatory Theatre. While in San Francisco, Stuart also worked as assistant director to Tom O'Horgan on *Hoor*, and helped form the Barbwire Theatre, an all ex-convict theatre company where he taught playwriting, and directed *The Cage*, which ran off-Broadway for eight months.

In New York, Stuart wrote and directed *The Second Hottest Show in Town*, a nude improvisational revue that ran seven

months at the Actors Playhouse. After that, he managed the rock group Barnaby Bye, but soon realized that what he really wanted to do was write, rather than sell other people's material.

Four years ago, Stuart conceived *Mary Jane* as a fast-paced musical romp which celebrates marijuana. The American Conservatory Theatre chose to produce the revue this year following Cheech & Chong's phenomenal success with the film *Up in Smoke*. Surprisingly, there is no bitterness in Stuart's work. He makes no moral judgments on marijuana laws. Stuart says, "I'm not going after shock or trying to be heavy. I'm going only after entertainment." Such an attitude from a man who has experienced the legal consequences of marijuana and has first-hand knowledge of the antiquated mentality that still pervades certain parts of the country, prevents *Mary Jane* from being the powerful or meaningful production it could be.

Also, in his unrestrained zeal to treat everything humorously, he celebrates paraquat rather than warn against it, in a tune entitled "Paraquat Trot." Stuart agrees that the people who have been exposed to paraquat may not see the song as being very funny, but others will. He says, "The people who have been directly affected by paraquat are fewer than those who haven't. And the bigger group is what I'm after."

Besides "Paraquat Trot," there are some 39 other songs which have been written for *Mary Jane*, with others ("Ripped and Ripped-Off Again" and "Too High to Fuck") still waiting to be completed and added to the list. Any given performance only includes some 25 of these songs, with the material being alternated so that audience reaction can be measured to the different tunes. Since previews began on January 3rd, Stuart has been continually modifying the production, which is one reason why *Mary Jane* has not officially opened yet.

And it doesn't look like the play will open in New York until September. The producers of the revue plan to take it to San Francisco for the summer and return to New York in the fall.

HEAD LINES

BY HERB WEED

The State of New York used to have exceedingly harsh laws concerning pot. Passing a joint was a class C felony punishable by 1-15 years in jail. Possession of an ounce was also a class C felony, and possession of less than a quarter of an ounce was a class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail.

On July 29, 1977 the Marijuana Reform Act of 1977 decriminalized small amounts of grass.

Many people are quite confused by Decrim, and believe that marijuana is quasi-legal. Nothing could be further from the truth. Decriminalization simply removes criminal penalties for possession of small amounts, and replaces them with violations. Possession of up to 25 grams (just less than an ounce) is a violation punishable by a fine. Dealing is still a criminal offense with penalties varying according to the amount. Giving grass away or passing a joint is considered dealing. Possession of more than 25 grams, or smoking a jay in public, is a class B misdemeanor punishable by up to three months in jail. Sale of over 25 grams is a class E felony punishable by up to four years in prison. Cultivation is a class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail.

What all of this means is that marijuana is still illegal. Decriminalization is not de-facto legalization: it is simply a lessening of penalties.

Public use can mean anything from smoking a joint in a public park, at school, or even in a parked car. By the way, hash and hash oil are still covered by Rocky's legendary legislation, so be careful. Also, a word to the wise: keep the joints low for awhile. More information on pot laws is available from NYPIRG, Downer 203.

The Yippies run a little club called Studio 10 which is strictly anti-disco. The address is 10 Bleeker St. It costs \$3 to get in, and beer is \$1. The atmosphere is friendly, and joints are cool. No dealing is permitted on the premises.

WNET (Channel 13) is repeating its presentation entitled "Opium," a three part series about heroin. It will be shown on Feb. 23, and Mar. 2.



Tracks

continued from page 5

But as the film progresses we realize Jack Falen is much more complex than he appears. As time passes and the train cuts deeper into the country, he is beset by hallucinations, his perception of reality distorted with violent, paranoid incidents involving the other passengers that he imagines are happening around him. At one point he sees a girl gang-raped by Gene, Emile and others. Later Mark comes to his state room as a political fugitive pursued by the FBI and begs Falen to hide him. People abruptly turn ugly and threaten him. It becomes clear that something dark and dangerous is fermenting in this disturbed soldier, and we see what it is when he finally arrives at the cemetery with the body.

Jaglom's direction of the film is flawed for the first 45 minutes where the action goes nowhere, but once he begins to focus on Falen's neurosis, his expertise in handling his subject is clearly evident. Particularly good are the transitions from reality to fantasy causing even us to question what's real and what's not. Also good is Jaglom's incredible control of the flow of the movie, maintaining a dark, poignant gloom, and suspense throughout.

Dennis Hopper (of *Easy Rider* fame), performs with relentless intensity. In his role as Falen he creates a frightening and unsettling picture of a man who is driven to the edge and passes it. He is a raw yet subtle actor who, like the others here, seems to pass before the camera with the naturalness of a passerby caught unaware.



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Paul Newman and Brigitte Fosse in Armageddon

Quintet Anyone?

BY JEFF BRUMBEAU

The fantasy/science fiction film era is upon us. This new trend, originally initiated by 2001: A Space Odyssey and nourished by the overwhelming escapism attitude of the '70s, has shown that movies such as Lord Of The Rings and Star Wars can ring up box office receipts to the tune of millions. Types of films may vary, but one thing that never changes in Hollywood is the power of money to turn heads. So of course the word is out that the big movie merchants are all looking for viable, profit-making scripts in the science fiction department. Even the major networks have joined the search and probably more than a few directors, influenced by the quality and big bucks reeled in by the work of Steven Spielberg, et al, are considering similar projects.

Naturally though, with all movie trends, everyone gets into the act. So it's not surprising that Robert Altman should turn out a not-so-fantastic futuristic fantasy called *Quintet*.

The story takes place in the future, at a time when the world is in a state of de-evolution, the earth returned to an unrelieved landscape of snow and ice. Likewise, the few humans who survive have also undergone a transformation, their lifestyles and living conditions having descended into those of medieval primitives. Many live in shacks and abandoned buildings. Wild dogs feed on the frozen corpses of those who have been abandoned to die. All traces of a civil society have vanished in this world.

It is this type of community which Essex (Paul Newman) finds when he returns to the city he had known in his youth. Here he finds his brother, but not long after their reunion, the brother is killed when a bomb explodes in his room. Essex spots the murderer trying to escape, chases him, but when he catches up, his throat has been cut. Essex searches the body and finds a list of names including his brother's and a few mushroom-shaped objects used in playing the game *Quintet*.

In *Quintet* there are six players who roll dice and move their gamepieces around a pentagonal-shaped board. The object is to "kill" your opponents and "survive" as the last or "sixth man." It is a game known everywhere, but in this city it is played with neurotic obsession, the game taking on life-and-death stakes as the opponents literally try to kill each other. And before Essex realized it, he too has become a player and a target in this deadly game.

The concept of a futuristic earth, regressing into a new ice age and populated with a dying civilization of emotionless people, is an intelligent, even believable

creation. The invention of this game which cultivates and mirrors this culture's cold view of death, and ultimately violence for the sake of violence, is equally brilliant. But in *Quintet*, this brilliance doesn't make it to the screen.

In *Quintet* Robert Altman (who produced and directed), has fixed his attentions more on the playing and intricacies of the game, less on its consequences on the players and their lives, which is possibly, I think, the greatest dramatic potential of the film. In fact the actors, when compared to the plot, seem to be sacrificed in importance of development, which results in characters who never come to life. Another problem is Altman's images, which however intriguing, are not simply ambiguous but just plain confusing in connection with the story. What *Quintet* then becomes is a mundane, underdeveloped film that should have been better.

But this isn't a film that's easily written off — Altman's too good for that. With any story which concerns a futuristic view of the world, there's the inevitable question of whether it's conceivable for us to evolve into this new civilization. Altman is aware of this and plots a world that is genuinely plausible, creating a universe where the only aspects that remain intact from the past are religion, violence, social classes, games, and to a lesser degree, business.

Besides this, *Quintet* has incredible set designs which are constructions of modern, technological architecture, the structures encrusted almost everywhere with encroaching decay and ice. Scott Bushnell, costume designer, created fantastic outfits which have a sense of both the primitive and future.

Quintet doesn't produce any spectacular performances but then, the script doesn't make this possible. Paul Newman, Bibi Anderson (as Ambrosia, a game player), and Fernando Rey (a game judge), all do solid, effortless jobs. Vittorio Gassman, however, who plays St. Christopher, an eccentric, self-proclaimed missionary of his own church for vagabonds, has the most dramatic part in the picture, and of course eclipses the other performances.

Finally, *Quintet* is one of those frustrating films with all the necessary tools for greatness and *should* be great, but when committed to celluloid, somehow doesn't live up to its potential. Its failure could be attributed to big-name director indulgence, or perhaps a misguided script, but whoever or whatever the culprit, as futuristic fantasies go, this one will be remembered as the best of the bad.

An Evening of Improvisation with 'Monteith and Rand'

BY PAMELA JOHNSON

If you're bored with Broadway's predictable dramas and musicals, *Monteith and Rand*, currently at the Booth Theatre, provides a most entertaining alternative. John Monteith, 30, and Suzanne Rand, 29, make their debut performance on Broadway with a slightly different twist. Monteith and Rand perform on an almost naked stage (two barstool-height director's chairs are the only props) and perform as a comedy duo with only about two-thirds of their routine being preconceived. The rest of their performance consists of improvisations based on suggestions from the audience. This technique works remarkably well and seldom do they fail to make the audience laugh.

One cannot help but wonder how they do it. Both Monteith and Rand obviously thrive on the improvisation scenes in their act. They are completely at ease with the audience and encourage audience participation. In the one musical number of the play, Rand improvises a blues song on two lines taken from two different members of the audience while Monteith accompanies her on the piano. No matter how dull the suggestions are that emerge from the audience, Monteith and Rand always meet the challenge with tremendous creativity and humor. The team seems to enjoy working under this kind of pressure and the audience never tires of watching and waiting for what they will come up with next.

Monteith and Rand play characters trying to survive in a neurotic world. They presume to be performing before a relatively hip-thinking audience. We see them dealing with such contemporary issues as marijuana, cocaine, X-rated photo machines, sex-change operations and radical politics. Their routines generate smiles

of recognition and gut laughter.

In one particularly funny scene, Rand is sitting alone taking away on a joint. She is thoroughly enjoying herself until her mood is disrupted by a fly (the buzzing sound is made by an off-stage Monteith). The fly continually pesters her until she can no longer ignore it. What follows is a hilarious scene where a very stoned Rand tries to catch the fly who evades her wild swatting hands and dive-bombs her head. Finally Rand catches the fly in the cup of her hands and violently shakes it up and hurls it on the floor presuming it to be dead.

Rand sits down again and resumes taking away on her roach, very satisfied with herself. Suddenly the audience hears a very faint and meek buzzing noise coming from the floor. You imagine the fly gathering all the strength it has left and pleading with her for mercy. Rand now feels terrible that she has hurt the fly, and picks it up. She tries to remind it, by example, how to fly again. This doesn't meet with much success until suddenly the fly's buzzing takes on a different tune and you know that the fly is stoned too. Rand then administers her roach to the fly in her palm, who takes deep tokes (again, the deep sucking sounds are made by Monteith backstage) and then flies happily off.

Monteith and Rand, who perfected their act on the New York club circuit, are two comedians who have mastered the art of improvisation. They create new humor each time they work. Improvisation never works when it's repeated—it's just not funny the second time around. Monteith and Rand work so well together that the audience suspects they're following a script, but they're not. Monteith and Rand should be seen to be believed.



Suzanne Rand and John Monteith

'Tracks': A Post-War Character Study

BY JEFF BRUMBEAU

A faithful old tactic used by writers of all genres in order to isolate a group of characters for close scrutiny, is to put them in a situation like a long train ride or a party which more or less confines them for close examination. Chaucer did it with a party of travelers in the *Canterbury Tales*. Agatha Christie used the technique in *Murder on the Orient Express*, and Henry Jaglom now uses this trick on his just-released film *Tracks*, by situating his characters on a train.

Obviously, if the action is restricted in a story, or in this case a movie, to one location, all the action, all the drama, everything that's entertaining, has to happen within or between the characters. So for this type of project to work, either the characters themselves or their relationships must be interesting. Concerning *Tracks*, this is true and it isn't. If this sounds like a contradiction of terms, well so is the movie.

In *Tracks*, a train is crossing America, at about the time of the end of the Vietnam war. On board are two soldiers who have just arrived from overseas — Jack Falen (Dennis Hopper), a shy, often ill-at-ease

man, and his friend, who is dead and in a coffin in the baggage car. Falen is escorting the body to the dead man's hometown to be buried, a fact he tells everyone he meets.

Traveling with the soldier are a varied mixture of characters, all of them the undistinguished types you'd expect to meet in a supermarket or on the street. There's Gene (Zack Norman), a balking, middle-aged but feisty land agent who puts the hard sell on all misfortunate enough to come in contact with him. There's Mark, a thin man of about 30 who considers himself a lady-killer. There's Emile, a "progressive thinker" in his late 40s who likes to discuss his theory on the connection between sex and chess ("They're both aggressive pastimes, aren't they?").

At first, these characters are interesting as accurate interpretations of middle-Americans and are sometimes even funny in their conversations (as when Emile tries to sell the hard-nosed fundamentalist Gene on his sex/chess theory). But when the dialogue starts to drag and nothing develops with the character or between them, we begin to feel just as bored as the train riders appear to be.

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Looking at Lifestyles with Quentin Crisp

BY WAYNE NOTO

Quentin Crisp admonishes us "never try to keep up with the Joneses, drag them down to your level—it's cheaper." Crisp is overflowing with suchaphorisms, mixed with florid theatrics. He resembles a dissipated John Barrymore with the razor-sharp acuity of an Oscar Wilde, and more than a little of the *schtick* associated with the self-help pep talk of the How to be Your Own Best Friend genre of literary hucksters. All of this is delivered with inimitable style, and indeed style is what Quentin Crisp is all about, and style is an integral part of his arch but honest philosophy.

An *Evening with Quentin Crisp* is theatre only by dint of Crisp's innate theatricality. He does not sing or dance, or play any role except himself. The "show" is divided into two parts. Part One is a lecture by Mr. Crisp about his concept of lifestyles, and survival in a hostile society. Part Two is a question and answer session in which Crisp first reads questions written during intermission by the timid, and then tackles the live questioners. In essence, though, it is High Theatre, with Crisp delivering each line with the grand flourishes of an antique theatrical tradition.

Quentin Crisp himself is a complete anachronism, Edwardian in tone, but always the iconoclast. The crux of his philosophy is the need in each of us to develop a lifestyle, project an image, based on the realization of who we are as individuals. This sounds simple, but Crisp rings enough

ramifications from it to keep the audience laughing and thinking from start to finish. He steps on quite a few toes along the way, but is so amusing, sincere and ultimately benign that few people are offended.

He is fiercely non-partisan, and delights in shocking his audience by denouncing, among other things, gay activism, marriage, the right to strike, minority militancy, the pursuit of art and religion. Gay rights rob the homosexual of his individuality by attempting to present the homosexual as ordinary, and Crisp has little tolerance for the merely ordinary. Artists are engaged in a counterproductive pursuit, since they are inevitably upstaged by their creations. He does not believe in the existence of any deity who could care at all about the insignificant actions of insignificant men. Strikers are dismissed as misguided fools trying to keep up with the Joneses. Since Crisp has lived in the same studio apartment in London for 34 years, and has never cleaned it, he obviously views many accepted material concerns as superfluous. As he says, "after four years the dirt doesn't get any worse."

How did this eccentric old Englishman (Crisp is 70) wind up on the stage in New York, hamming it up each night before almost worshipful audiences? His notoriety undoubtedly began decades ago, when he shocked London society with his flagrant homosexuality. "I wore makeup at a time when even on women eye shadow was considered sinful." In 1968 his autobiography, *The Naked Civil Servant*, raised a few

eyebrows, and a few years later Thames Television in England mounted it as a TV play, which became an international sensation and was seen in New York on both PBS and WOR. This launched Crisp on a series of international tours which have taken him to three continents. It is part of his charm that despite his sophistication he allows the audience to see that he is still childishly thrilled with his new celebrity and success.

His manner is best understood in the context of those whom he singles out as masters in the art of creating lifestyles. Andy Warhol, Eva Peron, Somerset Maugham, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford and a gruesome *signeur* of medieval France who murdered 150 choirboys, all earn Crisp's admiration. He concedes to a questioner that, yes, Hitler had style. "Germany today is full of old German men saying, 'I don't know what came over me.' That's style."

Crisp himself declaims and gestures as if he were performing the death scene from *Camille*. He moves furniture (the stage, Crisp-like, resembles a sparse Edwardian parlor), fusses with his flamboyant cuffs and plays tricks of intonation while regaling the audience with an amazingly researched variety of archaic, high-camp facial expressions and poses. Not a gesture is unintentional. Crisp plays the game of style like a grandmaster, and coyly professes to be surprised that audiences find him funny.

An *Evening with Quentin Crisp* is an uplifting experience, since Crisp convinces

us that anything is possible by his very presence on stage. He says that the secret is to know your own strength, that there is one subject on which we are each the world's foremost expert—ourselves. Crisp's record of survival despite adversity ("people used to change their seats on buses in order not to be near me"), testifies to his indomitable optimism.

Even institutions which he despises are not hopeless in Crisp's overview. He considers marriage to be a particularly onerous form of slavery, but says that Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton have raised both marriage and divorce to an art-form. He cannot endure pessimism or defeatism, and it is the various forms of negative attitude which elicit his deepest knife-thrusts.

Quentin Crisp's message is so warmly and stylishly delivered that we can't help but feel some affinity for his slightly aberrational philosophy. His personality is too engaging, and his message too appealing, for us to dismiss him lightly. As the Seventies fade into the Eighties, we have all too few eccentrics of this sort left, and so Quentin Crisp is a cultural treasure.

Incidentally, Mr. Crisp announced that *The Naked Civil Servant* will soon be mounted on Broadway (if his incredible string of good luck doesn't run short), and that David Bowie has been approached for the lead. He refrained from any description of the planned production, other than to say that it will be a musical comedy.

OPOP RECORD REVIEWS



Do Ya Think He's Sexy?



Rod Stewart
Blondes Have More Fun

Who could have guessed that the hottest disco hit in the country today would belong not to The Village People, Chic, Gloria Gaynor, or Donna Summer, but to a blonde Englishman who has built his reputation playing rock n' roll. Taking his cue from the Rolling Stones, who scored big this summer with "Miss You," and to a lesser extent from David Bowie, who connected before that with "Fame" and "Young Americans," Rod Stewart flirts with disco on his latest album and comes up with a monster hit, "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?," which is currently topping the singles charts and has catapulted the album to an equally lofty position, at once embodying and ridicules the genre which has dominated musical styles in the late seventies. Unlike the Stones or David Bowie, however, Stewart is not so much catering to the disco masses as he is mocking their chosen style. The seductive melody of the single is typical of Stewart's music in recent years, but here it is exaggerated and disintegrated in an attempt to poke fun at the overly mechanical sound and

hypnotic repetitions of the form. Stewart's singing is so uninvolved that it barely conceals the snickers. His phlegmy vocals are set against a lush keyboard/strings/horns — dominated production characteristic of current disco, in an undisguised parody of the music. But more important than being a lampoon on a musical style, "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?," is a fitting anthem for today's narcissist society.

Stewart's status as one of rock's foremost belter/crooner, plus the fact that he is no stranger to the sales charts, prompts us to believe that the new album would have found its way to a million turntables with or without "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?." In fact, the other nine songs on *Blondes Have More Fun* are all potential hits. Therefore, we can laugh along with Stewart and dispel any cynicism concerning the singer's motives for recording the song.

Stewart emerges from "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" with integrity intact because powerful rockers like "Dirty Weekend," "Attractive Female Wanted" and "Blondes Have More Fun" convince us that the momentary deviation in style is a product of his playful eccentricity and not of excessive ambition. The listener almost gets the feeling that Stewart has purposely placed the cold and mechanical "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" next to scorching, sweaty rockers to demonstrate how much harder the band has to work on the latter.

Stewart's playfulness is not confined to "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" On "Attractive Female Wanted" he offers such lines as "I'm tired of buying Penthouse

and Out and Hustler: It's Friday night and I'm all alone still a bachelor: I'm looking for a single girl for my single bed," and rhymes Warren Beatty with Muhammad Ali. Song titles like "The Best Days of My Life," "Is That the Thanks I Get" and "Ain't Love a Bitch" are tongue-in-cheek reflections on lost love, while on "Dirty Weekend" he's sneaking off with his best friend's girl and crying out "I'll bring the records, you bring the lads."

Since his early work with Long John Baldry, Jeff Beck, and the Faces, Rod Stewart has come a long way to the macho stance he's adopted in recent years, and which he seems to be mocking everywhere on the new album. But whether in the role of the charismatic lead singer with early rock groups or the current stud rocker, Stewart has long been an extraordinary talent. His distinctive rasp has become one of the most familiar in all of contemporary music. His flexibility in tackling songs allows him to rock and celebrate in the most convincing fashion, and then to capture the hurt, painful side of love like no one else.

Rod Stewart above all else is an unsurpassable rock n' roller, one of few contemporary artists who is sincerely dedicated to the form. I guess I won't enlighten my younger sister to the fact that Stewart is not as she claims "a promising newcomer."

—Paul Dabalsa



Various Artists
No Wave

This compilation of new wave bands — six from England and one from San Francisco — turns out to be a lot less curious than it sounds. True, the term "no wave" seems to carry more defiant implications than "new wave" or "punk," because it rejects both of these labels, but here "no wave" is nothing more than a gimmick. The groups on this record are disassociating themselves from other new wave bands not because the music is any different, but as a means to somehow distinguish themselves commercially from the hundreds of new bands which have proliferated in the last few years.

The best offerings of *No Wave* have all previously been released. "Take Me I'm Yours," by U.K. Squeeze appears on the

group's John Cale-produced 1978 album, "Nice N'Sleazy," from the Stranglers, appears on their 1978 release *Black and White*, and the group's "Bring on the Nubiles" appears on *No More Heroes*, which was issued in 1977.

The only other interesting musical moment on the lp is provided by the Secret, a two-man band from South London, who perform a driving piece of power pop entitled "I'm Alive." The song combines the catchy cheerfulness of AM with the furious pace of new wave. The competent instrumentation, and tight vocal harmonies, shows the Secret to be a band with strong potential, and one which I hope to hear more from in the future.

The Police, who have just released an album on A&M Records, contribute two numbers to *No Wave* — "Roxanne," and "Next to You." The former was released six months ago as the band's first single. It is a synthesis of rock and reggae which now appears in three different versions — as a single, on *No Wave*, and on the group's debut lp, *Outlands d'Amour*. "Next to You," is a less impressive, but passable hard rocker with repetitive lyrics and a borrowed melody. Given a little time and opportunity to develop, the Police may evolve into a durable rock act.

The Dickies, a group hailing from the San Fernando Valley, provide the two shortest tracks on the lp — "Give It Back" and "You Drive Me Ape (You Big Gorilla)," each clocking in at under two minutes. Their sound is concise, fast, and furious, but as a result the songs here never reach a climax.

The throwaways on *No Wave* come from Joe Jackson and Klark Kent. The former displays pedestrian licks plus limp melodies on "Got The Time" and "Sunday Papers." Klark Kent's "Don't Care," is rendered immediately dismissible with lyrics like, "If you don't like my hair/ You can suck my socks." These lyrics, which smack of calculated decadence, would surely drive Wayne County to tear his hair out.

While far from flawless, the twelve tracks on *No Wave* hint at the potential of some of these young bands. It is good to see the current crop of new bands finding their way onto vinyl, particularly British bands which might otherwise never be heard on these shores. And with the bewildering number of new bands performing today, collections such as this may be the best way to familiarize record buyers with the best of these groups.

—Paul Dabalsa



George Thorogood
More It On Over

Since he first came to our attention last year with a knockout debut album, George Thorogood has promised to revitalize the blues singlehandedly. On his second album, *More It On Over*, Thorogood extends the rhythmic momentum of the first record without exhausting his traditional influences. His imaginative choice of covers here, presents him as a resourceful artist who might be a strong force in securing that the blues are not forgotten in the eighties.

As a guitarist/vocalist, Thorogood combines energy and feeling with technical proficiency. His heated guitar work on rockers like "Move It On Over," "Cocaine Blues," "It Wasn't Me," and "That Same Thing," shows him to have consummate command of the instrument, while the urgency in his vocals presents him as a skillful blues shouter. Thorogood is not so much a creator as he is a dedicated fan of the blues. While there are no Thorogood-penned tunes on *More It On Over*, the songs are gushing with enthusiasm and delivered with all the passion of the originals.

The album's opener, Hank William's "Move It On Over," is Thorogood at his best. His stinging guitar work and passionate phrasing combines with Billy Blough's busy bass and Jeff Simon's steady drumming to form an impenetrable dense sound, without smothering the infectious melody of the song. In fact, the density and raw edge of intensity that dominates everything on the new album demands comparison to the new wave rock n' roll. There are other similarities such as the irrepressible, nonstop energy of the music. Thorogood's urban punk intonations, Thorogood's noticeable cockiness, and the raw, unproduced sound quality of the lp.

Yet, instead of having been influenced by the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Who, like many new wave groups, Thorogood's style is derived from Elmore James, John Lee Hooker, Bo Diddley, Willie Dixon, and Robert Johnson. These blues masters' music is now highly amplified and filtered through a rock n' roll attitude. Also unlike new-wavers, Thorogood has not yet fully absorbed his sources into a

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Grateful Dead

The Music Never Stops

BY THOMAS MCGEE

Who would have thought back in 1962 that members of two San Francisco bands, The Warlocks and The Zodiacs, would combine their talents to form what has become a rock and roll legacy? The Grateful Dead have not just garnered a loyal fanaticism, but something that transcends all that is usually associated with a rock band's following. The Grateful Dead and their most loyal followers, the Dead Heads (who trail their idols from one show to another and from state to state) have a unique relationship with each other. There is more to a Grateful Dead concert than just having the band and the audience getting together for a few hours and having a good time.

The average Grateful Dead concert runs anywhere from three to four hours long, with a half hour break. There are periods of highs during which the Dead will have everybody in the house dancing on the tops of their seats and then almost magically the Dead will tone down and have the hall so quiet you can hear a pin drop, only to crank it back up and have the place on their feet and dancing again. Call it crowd control or whatever you want, but you get the feeling that there is more than just a rock concert going on.

At Madison Square Garden on January 7th, after a month's delay due to a case of bronchitis affecting Dead lead guitarist Jerry Garcia, the group were finally getting around to playing their first show in the arena that has been called the "Hall of Horrors," because of its terrible acoustics. For years the Dead refused to play gigantic indoor halls like MSG, but they finally succumbed and decided to give it a try. Surprisingly, the results were not bad.

Ironically, the only problem during the two shows at MSG was the fault of the band, and not the Garden. During the clos-

ing numbers on the first night, the Dead blew out part of the PA system, which forced them to tone down two of their favorite show closers, Chuck Berry's "Around and Around" and the Rascals' "Good Lovin'." Besides this inconvenience, the Garden shows, especially the second night, were memorable Grateful Dead affairs.

The opening night's first half featured such well-known songs as "Jack Straw," "Cassidy" (from rhythm guitarist Bob Weir's first solo album) and Dead perennials "Tennessee Jed" and "El Paso." The second half opened with some new material, namely "I Need a Miracle" and the title track from the new Dead album *Shakedown Street*. Both songs were enthusiastically received, getting the Garden crowd up and dancing. The Dead's customary extended jam featured "Estimated Prophet," a song which seems to be one of the band's favorites since they play it in nearly every show. "Eyes of the World," which included a drum solo by percussionists Bill Kreutzman and Mickey Hart who displayed a couple of instruments that they had brought back from their historic pyramid shows in Egypt, the classic "Not Fade Away" and "Black Peter." During "Black Peter," a slow tune, you could clearly hear Garcia struggling with the vocals. It was obvious that his case of bronchitis had not fully cleared up.

The second night's performance at the Garden was one of the greatest Dead shows I have ever attended. Although the next day at a press conference Garcia would say that the band wasn't so hot on Monday night, I for one enjoyed every second of it. The show included their slowed-down version of "Friend of the Devil," "Me and My Uncle," "Candyman," "It's All Over Now" (a song popularized by the Rolling Stones), "Brown-Eyed Women," "Lazy Lightning" (from an album Bob



Grateful Dead: An Anachronism Still Very Much Alive

Weir did with Kingfish), "Playing in the Band," "The Other One," "Wharf Rat," and a rousing encore of "U.S. Blues," a crowd pleaser if there ever was one.

On January 10th and 11th the scene shifted out to Nassau Coliseum, where the Dead had played back in '72, but swore never to return because of the mass numbers of drug busts. How times change.

Bob Weir, who had played Nassau a couple of months previously with his own band as a warm-up for the Jefferson Starship, was responsible for convincing the rest of the Dead that those days of mass arrests were over. Although not present at the first show, I heard it was quite a night since the Dead performed two classics not often done, "Dark Star" and "St. Stephen."

The Dead put on another fine show the second night at Nassau which included "Sugaree" and "Deal," two songs from one of Jerry Garcia's solo albums, *Ramble On Rose*, and the two songs they will always be remembered for, "Truckin'" and "Casey Jones." It was quite an event to see and hear thousands of Dead Heads dancing and singing in unison during "Casey Jones,"

the final song of the evening.

On January 17th, the Dead went on to New Haven, Connecticut, the site of their first postponed date on the tour. Bass player Phil Lesh first apologized to the audience for having postponed the original concert date and then the band broke into "Shakedown Street." It is rare for the Dead to open with a new song, and the experiment did not go over as well in New Haven as it did in New York. The song seemed to set the tone for the rest of the evening. The group played a fine set of music, but much of the crowd, particularly those not sitting in the orchestra, were far from enthusiastic. There were times when the band purposely slowed down the pace and tried to encourage some hand clapping, but there was not much response. The audience did finally get up and dance towards the end of the night during "Good Lovin'" and the encore, "Casey Jones." It was a fine show, but there seemed to be something lacking that kept this show from being a totally satisfying one.

You certainly cannot say if you've seen one Dead concert, you've seen them all.

Records

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style of his own, and has not yet proved himself as a songwriter.

Other highlights on the new album include a smoky version of "Who Do You Love?," high-powered blues numbers like "It Wasn't Me," "That Same Thing," and "Cocaine Blues," plus a slow blues tune entitled "The Sky Is Crying," which Thorogood uses as a respite from the fast rockers.

Thorogood is a fine white blues guitarist, and vocalist but his true potential will not be explored until he assumes responsibility as a songwriter.

—Paul Dabalsa

J. Geils Band
Sanctuary

The J. Geils Band's bold disregard for commercial success which spanned the course of eight albums since 1970, came to an ab-

rupt end in 1977 with the release of "Monkey Island." Although the band had gathered enthusiastic journalistic support consistently since their first release, their record company by then had become dissatisfied with the group's middleweight selling status. The speculation that the band was under administrative pressure to prove themselves on the charts with *Monkey Island*, was affirmed when the group was dropped by Atlantic Records soon

after the album failed to make a significant dent on the charts.

Sanctuary, the group's tenth and latest album, finds the J. Geils Band with a new record label, a new producer, and a clear sense of direction. While the commercial strategy of "Monkey Island" blunted the group's principal strengths and severely compromised their white R&B approach, the new record is more typically J. Geils. The group has returned to their traditional

approach, as evidenced on highly-charged numbers like "Wild Man," "One Last Kiss," "I Could Hurt You," and "Sanctuary." Their strongest assets — hot guitar licks, wailing harmonica, boogie piano, forceful drums, heavy bass bottom, and distinctive soul-influence vocals — are once again in the forefront, wisely replacing the strings, horns, and Cissy Houston vocals which characterized the ambitious *Monkey Island* lp.

Of the nine new songs, the most impressive track is "Wild Man," a piece of raunchy blues funk which boasts an inescapable guitar/piano hook, plus fiery harmonica from Magic Dick. "One Last Kiss," is the obvious single here, with its catchy chorus, guitar-driven energy, and propulsive backbeat. "Take It Back," is a funky blues shuffle structured around harmonica, piano, and hand clapping. "Sanctuary" is a riff-rocker powered by Jerome Geil's slashing guitar and hushed vocals, while "I Could Hurt You," strikes a rhythm groove that is, both relaxed and assertive. The latter serves up a juicy melody which is toughened by stinging guitar and riffing harmonica.

At their best, the J. Geils Band has always performed with magnificent raucous energy of the Stones in their prime. But because their raw synthesis of blues, R&B, and rock may not be particularly fashionable in an era of high-gloss, saccharin productions, the J. Geils Band have not achieved the commercial acceptance they justly deserve. If talent and dedication are not today's basis for success, perhaps musicians should begin concentrating on their marketing skills rather than on their musical ones.

—Paul Dabalsa



J. Geils Band — Ten years without a personnel change.

Dennis Hopper stars
in 'Tracks', Page 5

Quentin Crisp
See Page 5



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