

The Creative Magazine of Middle Tennessee State University
March 1981

My first rock 'n' roll album was Credence Clearwater Revival's *Willie and the Po' Boys*. My father bought it for me during one of his frequent trips to Nashville as an aspiring songwriter with two or three country hits tucked neatly into his guitar case. Up until that day, I'd been raised on country music little knowing or caring who the Beatles were. The only evidence of their influence in my life was that my hair frequently fell over my ears despite repeated attempts to brush it neatly behind them. The Fogarty brother's album changed all that. I was hooked for life buying rock 'n' roll albums like mad, worrying my parents that I'd go deaf at an early age, worrying my high school newspaper editor until he consented to give me a monthly record review column and worrying my girlfriend that someday I'd run away with Olivia Newton-John.

So, it was inevitable when I became editor of *Collage* last year that at least one issue would be dedicated at least in part to rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll is something very special to me and when I presented the idea to several friends and writers, I found it also meant a great deal to others. I was overrun with offers

to write reviews for "Rebirth of Rock 'n' Roll" and at least three people would have killed to interview Gene Cotton (I settled that: I'm a fan and I'm the editor and guess who does the interview?) So, to all those who helped on this issue, with stories, ideas or support, I say "Thank you." Well, this is it, *Collage* finally veers into the fast lane and greets 1981.

Enjoy!

Zane E. Smith

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zane E. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "Z" and "S".

Editor

Postscript: *Collage* would like to apologize to Bill Cook for failing to recognize his contribution as photographer of the December 1980 issue's cover.



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The Creative Magazine of Middle Tennessee State University

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Terminate With Extreme Prejudice

By D. Clifton Wright

(Based on an idea by Zane E. Smith)

(*Mercenary* by James T. Phipps, *High Roller*, No. 113, Oct. 1984.)

It is perhaps trite to say of any group that each album they release is better than the preceding ones. Nonetheless, when spoken of Weatherby Magnum, the statement is a patent truism. Weatherby Magnum's entry into the heavy metal scene some six years ago breathed new life into a genre which

many believed to be on its last legs. Their most recent album, *Mercenary*, places a benchmark on the musical charts whereby all continued efforts in this field must be gauged.

Although an album's title is no sure guide to its contents, the same cannot be said of Weatherby Magnum. *Mercenary* is about mercenaries, soldiers of fortune, or, if one prefers a literary allusion, the

"dogs of war." Side one opens with an incredibly heavy number entitled "Angola." Angola is, you will recall, the place where a number of mercenaries bought it, and the artistry of Weatherby Magnum is a poignant tribute to them. The so-called "machine gun" riff which has become Jim Weatherby's trademark appears almost constantly throughout this piece--one wonders at his

remarkable endurance in this regard--and one never grows tired of it.

It is rare to find a song written in praise of a rifle. Prior to this album, perhaps the closest was the Beatles' "Happiness is a Warm Gun," a tongue-in-cheek poke at gun nuts. With "FAL," however, Jim Weatherby isn't kidding: this is an honest-to-goodness song about how damn good the FAL--a Belgian-made assault rifle--really is.

"Knife Down My Boot-Top" is another song in this same vein: the humble combat dagger is herein glorified. The story line involves a young Corsican mercenary who gets his jollies by slitting folks' throats. Grisly. The Weatherby brothers share dual lead on this one, and they do a pretty nice job.

"I Left Her on the Plains of Jordan" is Weatherby Magnum's version of a love song; it is *not* your average love song. Opening with a siracco wind wail on the synthesizer, the cut devastates with lines such as:

"I last saw her with a gun in her hand,
While Arabian blood flowed red on
the sand.
She may be as ugly as a combat boot,
But oh my God! How she could
shoot!"

Not the sort of thing to sing to your woman. There is fabulous guitar work--both acoustic and electric--but the work falls short of being a masterpiece, as Brad Kelsey's synthesizer work just isn't up to his usual standard.

A companion piece to the above song is "Revenge is Sweet," which also deals with the Middle East. The mercenary's ugly but straight-shooting girl is done in by the PLO. Broken-hearted, he immediately signs on with the Mossad, and, in Weatherby's words, "Terminates Arafat with extreme prejudice," a CIA euphemism for blowing someone's head clean off--or worse. In this case, far worse. Again, grisly.

A quaint, almost nostalgic note is struck by the all-acoustic piece,

"Scumgags of the Earth," subtitled "Mercenaries I Have Known." Imagine the FBI's Most Wanted list set to music and you'll have a fair idea of this one.

There is one thing which any self-

"My own brother compares me to Hendrix! Hell, he's dead, and I'm going places he never even knew existed."

respecting mercenary must have, which is even more important than his FAL and combat dagger. This one thing is the subject of "The Will to Kill," which pays sly homage to G. Gordon Liddy:

"I tell you, Gordon Liddy's got his
head on straight,
Did some time in prison 'cause of
Watergate.
He knows when to talk, and when to
keep still,
You know that Gordon Liddy's got
the Will to Kill!"

Fred Macon shines on this number, with speed and precision which would leave Carl Palmer green with envy.

The album concludes with what I cannot but label as Weatherby Magnum's best song ever, "Back to Afghanistan." If you are still not convinced that Jim Weatherby is the greatest thing since Jimi Hendrix, this number will make a believer of you. His mastery of the instrument is absolute, sweeping to peak after peak of passion, never missing or fluffing a note in runs which boggle the imagination with their complexity. All this artistry is the product of one man, with absolutely no over-dubs! One is reminded again and again of the magic of Jimi Hendrix; Jim Weatherby has the same magic. He is

awesome! Kick-back in your foxhole manning the ramparts!

"I'm not altogether sure I know what to think about this," snarled Jim Weatherby.

"Think about what, man?" queried Fred Macon.

"Just read it--assuming you *can* read. I *guess* the guy liked the album, but why the hell can't he just *say* so, instead of all that hoo-ha?"

"What album, man?"

"The one we just released, you jackass! Which album do you think I mean? You're not hitting on all eight, you know that?"

"What are you raising hell about *now*, Jim?" yawned his brother, Bob, emerging from the adjoining room. "Jesus Christ in a Maserati, it's getting so you can't get a minute's sleep around here."

"Is sleep the only thing you ever think about?" bellowed Jim. "Odin Almighty, if you weren't my brother I swear I'd reach down your throat, grab your spleen, and turn you inside out!"

"Is that right?" chuckled Bob. "I think you're getting senile: I had it taken out when we were kids. Your senility notwithstanding, what are you on about now?"

"I'm on about a whole lotta things. Number one is this damn review of *Mercenary*. It's the best damn album in years, and this pansy can't come right out and say, 'It's the best damn album in years.' Hell, no! I guess he's afraid he'll hurt somebody's feelings. It makes me want to throw up!"

"What review?" asked Bob.

"The one in that damn liberal rat's-ass magazine--and I use the term 'magazine' with trepidation lest I be haunted by the ghost of Henry Luce and his *High Roller*. Damn rag caters to every fool, fellow traveler, and freak in America."

"I haven't read that one yet," said Bob mildly. "Where is it? Or have you burned it?"

"Fred's reading the damn thing--or at

least I *think* he's reading it," replied Jim. "He's probably just looking at the pictures."

"Hey, Fred," said Bob. "I'd like to see that when you finish."

"Huh? See what, man?" drawled Fred.

"Pass the magazine when you finish with it," Bob replied.

"Pass it?" bellowed Fred, falling into a familiar response. "Man, I can't even *swallow* it!"

"You see?" cried Jim, distraught once more. "This is the crap I have to put up with 24 hours a damn day from that moron."

"Now, Jim," Bob said soothingly, "you have to remember: he's a *drummer*."

"He's a *moron*," said Jim, with conviction. "If his I.Q. is higher than room temperature, I'll kiss your ass at Madison Square Garden and give you six weeks to sell tickets!"

"Very funny," said Bob. "You oughta hang up your Strat and hit the road as a comedian. But to return to the matter of reviews: we got some good ones, in case you didn't notice." Bob quickly searched his memory for the ones he knew would placate his brother.

"For example," Bob continued, "there was the one in *Rolling Stone*, that one in *Melody Maker*, and the one by...hell, what is his name? Anyway, the one that compared you favorably to Hendrix, and said that *Mercenary* is--and I quote--the penultimate expression of what heaby metal music is, and the standard whereby all other heavy metal albums past, present, and future must be judged." Hell, even *Nugent* says you're good; what more do you want?"

"I'll tell you exactly what I want," began Jim, pausing to light a Gaulois.

"Man! Will you look at that!" exclaimed Fred, eye glued to the eyepiece of his telescope. "What a *woman*! Man! And...My God!"

Jim walked calmly to the window and put a paternal arm around Fred's shoulders. He then peered intently out

the open window, as though looking for the woman in question.

"You say she's a really fine-looking woman?" asked Jim, the very picture of a sympathetic comrade.

"Oh, *man*! She's just...Man! I wish I could see her close up, man!" responded

In an instant, Jim seized Fred in both hands and hung him out the window.

Fred, all but drooling.

"Anything for a friend," said Jim, chivalrously. In an instant, Jim seized Fred in both hands and hung him out the window. The telescope sailed into space.

"Now tapast his brother's bulk.

"Say, Jim," he asked, "isn't that your Lotus down there?"

"Yeah. Hell he's probably splash on it when he hit. I'd never get the blood off the leather."

"I think you might be right." replied Bob.

"Alright, pervert, consider this a reprieve," said Jim as he hauled Fred back in.

"Man, I'm not a pervert," argued the shaken Fred. "I just like girls."

"Girls' is right," sneered Jim. "Like that 14-year-old in San Diego. It's like shining deer, or dynamiting fish: it's not sporting. It *is*, though, perverted. Perverted as hell."

"But, *man*, she was..." Fred started to explain.

"One more word, pervert, and you go back out the window, only solo this time. Understand?" snarled Jim.

"Uh, yeah," wheezed Fred, still shaking. "Think I'll go check my drums, man."

When the Weatherby brothers were alone, Bob shook his head.

"You know, Jim, that Fred's not a moron or a pervert. He's a damn good drummer--one of the best."

"Yeah, and that's just it. He's a drummer, so he figures he's gotta *act* like a drummer. Which means, among other things, drinking like a sponge, chasing everything even remotely female, ripping up hotel rooms, and acting like he's on an intellectual par with a Mrs. Pauls breaded fish patty. Hell, he makes Keith Moon look like a Jesuit priest."

"As I recall, brother, you've been known to pour down booze, chase women, and generally raise hell. Remember the time in New York when you blew up that commode--with Benny parked on it? He's lucky not to be guarding a harem." Bob chuckled at the memory.

"No danger of that," responded Jim, laughing himself. "It was a low-yield device: lots of smoke, but minimal flash and concussion. Anyway, he deserved it: if that fool had his way, we'd be playing teeny-bop love songs and other assorted drivel. What a manager!"

"He's no Epstein," Bob agreed. "But look: something's eating at you; what is it?"

"Well, this is something that's been building.... Hell, I guess the whole damn tour. You know, we had something at the beginning that's missing now. Maybe dedication; I don't know. Take Karl, for example. You know what his bass riffs on 'Angola' sounded like?"

"Well, let's see," reflected Bob. "They sounded soft of like a furnace register with the trots, to me."

"That's close," agreed Jim. "I was thinking more along the lines of a Tocatta and Pугue for Large Intestine. In C-minor. Also, what about Brad's synthesizer on 'Plains of Jordan.' What did *that* remind you of?"

"Hm. Maybe a kazoo with an air leak?"

"Not exactly. More like a snoring blue-tick hound. With asthma."

"Ah, yes," said Bob, with a malicious

grin. "But maybe you shouldn't be too hard on them: after all, not everyone can be a one-man band like yourself."

"These ears," snapped Jim, with an equally satanic smile. "Some things never change, do they?"

"Hell, no! Budro forever!"

"Budro uber Alles!"

"I thought that was '*DeutschlandUber Alles*,'" said Brad as he entered the room. "And what, pray tell, is a *budro*?"

"Something you ain't never gonna be, boy," said Jim, "because you are a poofter."

"A what?" asked Brad.

"A *poofter*," responded Bob. "P-o-o-f-t-e-r. Poofter. What you'd call a pansy."

"I didn't come here to be insulted," rejoined Brad. "I can be insulted anywhere."

"That's probably *true*," agreed Jim. "On the other hand, though, nobody could insult you as well as Bob and I do. For starters, I could discuss your canine ancestry--in Russian. How many poeple do you know who can do *that*?"

"Very few, I'll admit," said Brad with mock sadness. "I suppose that I should just be thankful to know someone who likes me well enough to go to the trouble of cussing at me in Russian."

"You know something, Bob?" said Jim, suddenly seemingly oblivious to Brad's presence. "I understand that when Brad was younger he was so ugly..."

"How ugly was he, Jim?" responded Bob, on cue.

"Thanks, Bob. He was so ugly, his momma had to tie a pork chop around his neck to get the dog to play with him."

"Is this the thanks I get?" said Brad with exaggerated dignity. "And after I go out of my way to be nice to you, Jim. I don't even mention that I seen better heads than yours on beers."

"Yeah. I appreciate your consideration," said Jim. "Listen, if you don't mind, Bob and I have to make a little medicine."

"I beg pardon?" replied Brad.

"We have to talk--if you wouldn't mind splitting for a while," explained Jim.

"Sure. I mean, no. That is," Brad shot a glance at Bob, "uh, I'll see you both later," mumbled Brad as he left.

"With all the effects and filtering, you lose the passion, and that's what rock 'n' roll is all about."

"By the way: what do we have to talk about?" Bob asked. His worry showed in his face and sounded in his voice. Bob knew only too well where this "discussion" was headed.

"We need to talk about where we're going; musically, that is," replied Jim.

"Okay. You know what I think: up the production standards," said Bob, mentally girding his loins for battle. "Everybody uses over-dubs; we need to move out of the Stone Age, too. Now, Jim, you're good; probably the best. But think for a minute just how much better you'd be if you used over-dubs and gadgets: fuzz, wah-wah, phase shifter, the works."

"Yeah. And you know what I'd sound like? I'd sound like all the other wimps who *call* themselves guitar players, and that's not worth a damn. You can count the really good ones on the fingers of one hand: Clapton, Buck Dharma, Nugent, Page, and Beck. The rest--by and large--are a bunch of damn no-talent bums who rely on mega-volume and a million effects to cover up the bottom line: they can't play guitar any more than Fred could do brain surgery."

"That may be true," agreed Bob, "but while gadgets may serve as the crutch of an incompetent, they augment the abilities of someone who's really good."

"But when you go through sixteen damn guitar tracks, with all the damn effects and filtering, you lose it--the passion, I mean. Goddammit, you lose all the passion! Hell, Bob, that's what rock 'n' roll is all about!"

"Passion doesn't matter a hoot in hell without something to back it up. A Hottentot screaming is passion, but would you buy an album of one? Jesus H. Christ in a Ferrari!"

"I thought that was 'in a Maserati,'" mused Jim, his enmity momentarily forgotten.

"If you were the Son of God, you could have two cars, too," retorted Bob, hoping the storm had passed.

"Yeah. But, anyway, a Hottentot in heat doesn't sell albums, we do--which I'm sure you're aware of. Unless, of course, your continued association with those clowns we call a band has turned your brain to Cheese Whiz."

"Nothing wrong with *my* brain, brother," snarled Bob. "It's yours I worry about. Jim, you've got to wake up to the fact that things just ain't the way they used to be! This ain't the Sixties! You have to move ahead--because if you don't, you get left behind; then you're better-off dead."

"Goddammit, even my own brother!"

"Huh? What are you talking about?" asked Bob.

"Even my own brother compares me to Hendrix! Hell, he's dead, and I'm by damn alive! I'm going places he never even knew existed. That's one of the damn reasons that I'm better than he was!"

"That's right," said Bob, "say *that* to the critics. See what kinda reviews we get *then*."

"I don't give a tinker's damn about reviews, or the pansies who write them," raged Jim.

"I guess that's why you read them all, right?" said Bob, sarcastically. "Silly old *me*: you read them because you don't give a damn."

"Yeah. And here's something else for

you to chew on," said Jim, still highly incensed. "I say no damn gadgets, and that's it. I'm still running this damn show, brother dear, and that's one thing you'd better damn well not forget."

"Achtung! Zu befehl, Herr Brigadeführer!" bellowed Bob, who leapt to his feet and clicked his heels. "All quiet on the Western front, sir!"

"That's not one goddam bit funny," Jim spat out.

"Is that so?" countered Bob, equally irate. "Well maybe you'll think this is funnier: the rest of us have had it with you acting like Ivan the Terrible. So we're going over the fence, see? We talked about it last night; hell, we've been talking about it the whole tour. We decided that if you wouldn't listen to reason, if you kept up this bullshit, then that was it. We're gone, Jim."

"Well then go, by God! Go to the devil and be damned, the lot of you! And good damn riddance!"

With that, Bob stormed out, leaving his brother in mid-oration. Jim continued as though he didn't notice. This bluff had been tried before.

"That's right, leave! Anytime you get ready. Take Fred, take Brad; I don't need any of you! I'm the best, by God! I'm Jim by damn Weatherby! I am Weatherby Magnum! The rest of you

are nobodies, and if you think that I can't make it without you all, you're wrong! Do you hear me? You're wrong!"

He sank into a chair, and buried his face in his hands. "Wrong," he sobbed, his bellows diminishing. "Goddammit, you've got to be wrong!"

(From *Smith and Simmons' Concise History of Rock and Roll*. New York: Hamilton International Press, 1987; pp. 723-724.)

Weatherby Magnum: Five-piece heavy metal band, founded in Detroit by brothers Jim and Bob Weatherby in 1978. Their first album, *Right Between the Eyes*, was released by Hunky Dorey Records. It was so successful, however, that in late 1979 Weatherby Magnum was signed by Scorpio Productions, Ltd., the multi-national entertainment conglomerate. Six albums followed in the next six years, before the group split in late 1984. Jim Weatherby went on to found another band (see *Hollowpoint*) the following year, and enjoyed phenomenal success. Personnel of Weatherby Magnum included: Jim Weatherby, lead guitar; Bob Weatherby, rhythm and acoustic

guitars, lead vocals; Fred Macon, percussion, vocals; Brad Kelsey, keyboards, vocals; Karl Reiner, bass, vocals.

Discography:

(JHP 5130) "Right Between the Eyes" (Hunky Dorey Records). Released Feb. 1979.

(Para 7318) "Death Watch" (Crystal Paradigm Records, a subsidiary of Scorpio Productions, Ltd.). Released Jan. 1980.

(Para 7330) "Nitro Express" (Crystal Paradigm Records). Released Feb. 1981.

(Para 7347) "Blitzkrieg" (Crystal Paradigm Records). Released Dec. 1981.

(Para 7363) "A Night at the Firefight"--double album, recorded live (Crystal Paradigm Records). Released March 1982.

(Para 7381) "Kriegspiel" (Crystal Paradigm Records). Released Jan. 1983.

(Para 7407) "Mercenary" (Crystal Paradigm Records). Released Sept. 1984.



Poetry

Untitled

My joy lies in your eyes
Loving, lively, and full of vigor.
My destiny just a smile away,
If only. . .

Our sorrow lies deep in my soul,
Dark, desolate, and cold.
The pain, the heartaches
If only. . .

Vickie Wells

Untitled

The things that seemed so right---
Went wrong.
The things that seem so wrong---
Continue on.
The light that I could see,
It is dimming in the night.
But I can see a flicker.
And as long as it still sparks
I will not lose this hope I have of
Rekindled flames, a righted wrong,
Remembered loves, and lines from a song.

Darlene Zills

Heritage

We are a race of gentle creatures
Silent like the approach of a wood animal,
Soft and purring low a hearth fire cat
On a warm November morn.
We are the South
Left humbled for a thousand defeats
But proud as the simple are proud
For a comfort of home, woods left virgin
By angry industry, illusions kept safe
In graceful song.
Easy poets in action
Children, all of us,
Bearing the violation of a dream
With soft-spoken acceptance,
Finding a home in mother's arms
Face buried in comfortable breasts,
Wafts of fried supper drifting lazily
In the afternoon
Calling us home,
Children from creek-bed baths
Race for the kitchen
"All the family's come"
Called home.

D. Michelle Adkerson

Sleepless

Dare I say that I still love you?

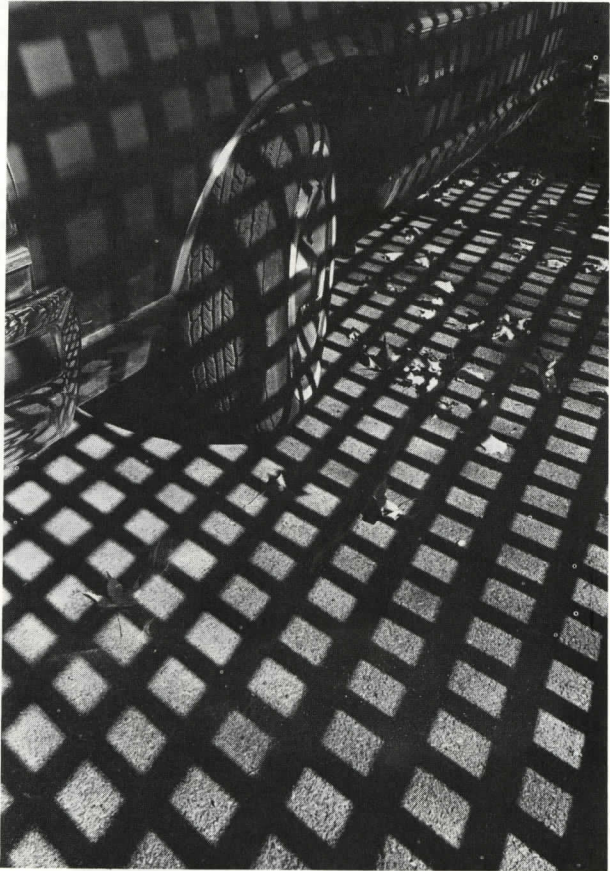
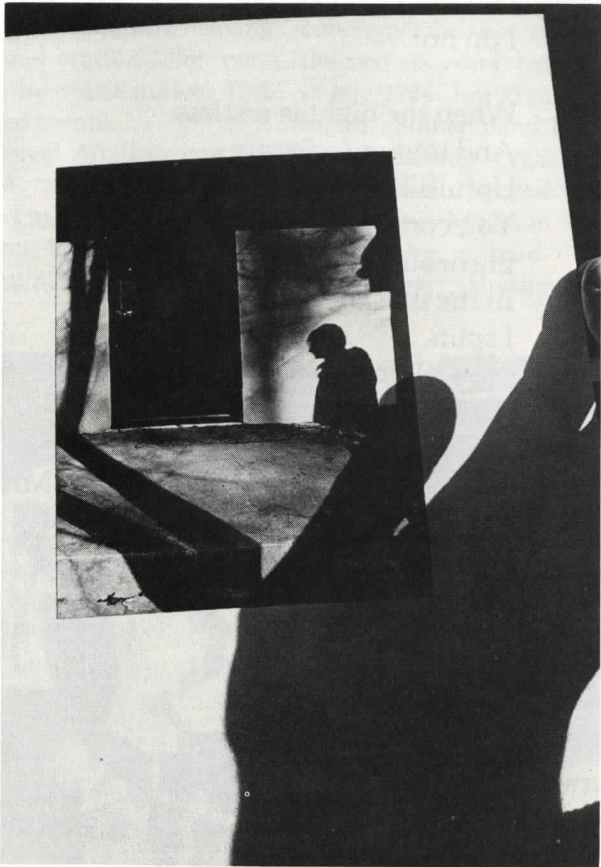
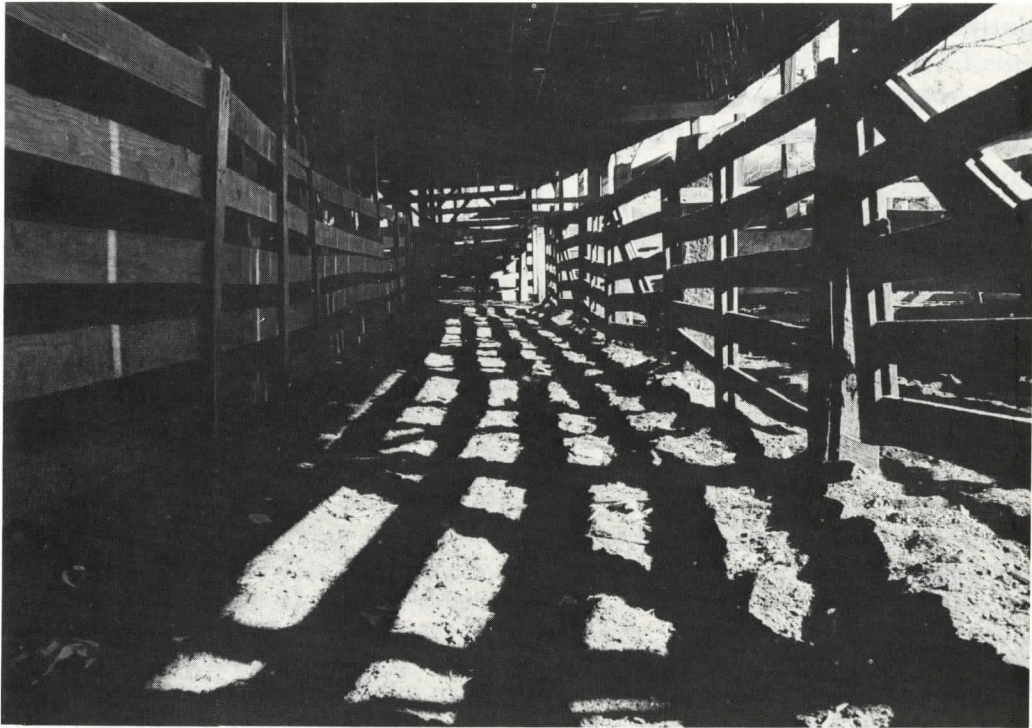
I do not.

When the night is restless
And my fantasies are
Unfulfilling,
You come to my mind
Enshrouded
In the illusive trappings
I spun
Out of loneliness
And fitted for you.

D. Michelle Adkerson

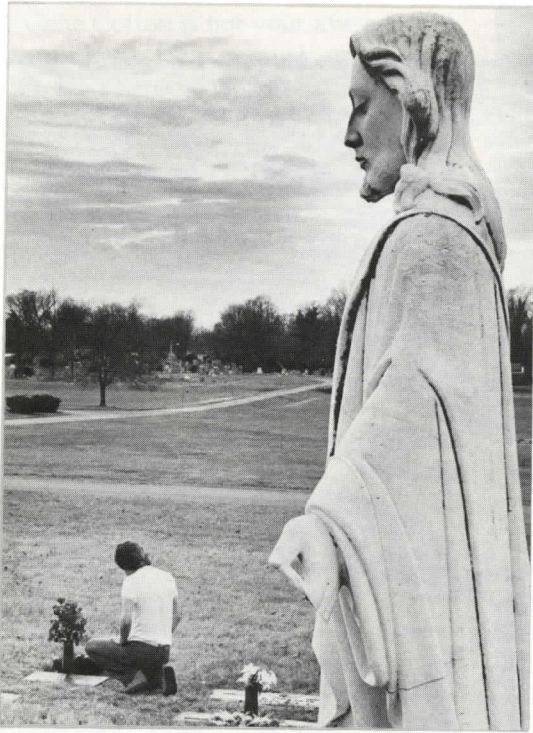
Portfolio

Robert Pierce



Portfolio

Rusty Harrington



Portfolio

Charlie Hunt

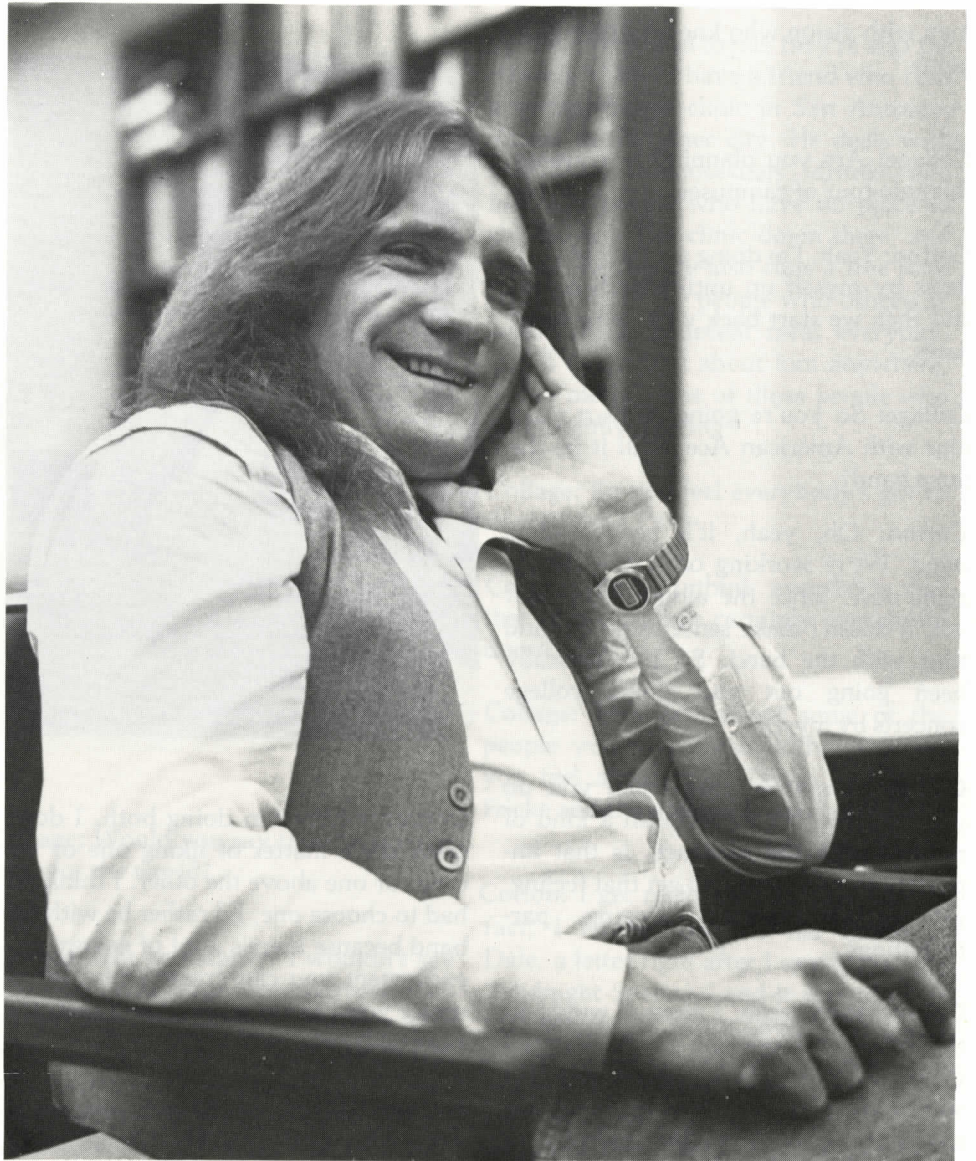


Nonfiction

Gene Cotton is not your average rock 'n' roll hero. He is a quiet, unassuming man who is content to live peacefully at his home near Franklin, Tn., with his wife, Marnie, and his two children, Christopher and Meeshon. Still, he is equally at home in that never-never land of music, be it on the stage with his band, American Ace, pleasing college audiences with solo tours or writing his own songs.

Cotton has been in the music industry for quite some time now. Establishing himself firmly as a top-40 staple with his 1977 hit "You've Got Me Running," he then went on to record his most successful work to date, *Save the Dancer*, an album which contained "Before My Heart Finds Out" and "You're A Part of Me" (the latter a duet with singer-songwriter Kim Carnes), both scoring high on *Billboard's* "Hot 100 Chart." The album also contained Cotton's FM classic "Like a Sunday in Salem," a biting allegory on the life and times of Joe McCarthy, and the haunting "Save the Dancer." Two years later, Cotton, now teamed with his band American Ace, released *Tightrope Walker*, which exhibited a definite shift toward rock 'n' roll and which was highlighted by some of Cotton's strongest compositions.

Of Gene Cotton, interviewer Zane Smith says, "I've been a fan of his ever since I heard 'You've Got Me Running' on Casey Casem's American Top 40, so I was somewhat nervous about interviewing the man. Scheduling a meeting with Gene after his last solo concert here at MTSU, I anxiously prepared myself. Due to circumstances beyond our control, that meeting never took place. However, Gene graciously consented to reschedule the interview, coming back to campus one cold February afternoon. He immediately put me at ease with his easygoing manner, and I was pleasantly surprised by his eloquent opinions. Cotton is definitely a



An Interview With Gene Cotton

by Zane E. Smith

photos by Greg Cambell

man with vision who knows where he is going."

Collage: Are you planning to continue this solo tour of campuses?

Cotton: Yeah, I'm doing a bunch of dates by myself up until March or so, and then we start back with some band dates.

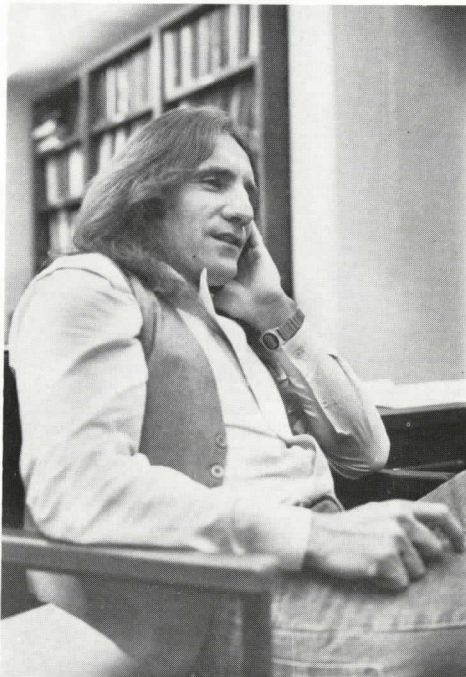
Collage: So you're going to start your tour with American Ace. Will it be the same band?

Cotton: Oh, yeah, it'll be the same band. We're working on a new album right now. Since the album is not out yet, it doesn't make sense to go out and tour with the band. So I've basically been going out and doing college concerts by myself.

Collage: I noticed that when you do your act you try to establish a kind of rapport with the audience. Is that important to you, that you get that feeling, get people laughing, singing, participating?

Cotton: Well, yeah. I guess it would be important. I guess one of the things I dislike when I go to a concert and hear somebody play, where they absolutely say nothing at all to the audience or they're just into a headrap, as opposed to just being themselves, you sorta come away from the concert feeling like, well, you heard some nice music, but you never really got to know that person at all or what that person thinks about, and, to me, those are the things people probably might be a little more interested in even more than music. I just try to let people know what's going on in my head to some extent.

Collage: Would you rather tour with your band or would you rather tour solo?



Cotton: I have fun doing both. I don't think it's a matter of liking one or the other or one above the other. I think if I had to choose one, I'd rather be with the band because there's a lot of energy and excitement you can create and a lot of music you can do with a band that you can't do by yourself.

Collage: How much do you respond to the audience, say, by the way of taking requests? I remember when you were here in '78 some people up in the balcony just started shouting out some of your songs and you'd do them.

Cotton: Oh, I'll do it. If somebody shouts something out I'll do it, if I can remember it.

Collage: As far as your material goes, you've recorded songs by Kim Carnes, Neil Diamond, Parker McGhee, and Randy Goodrum. Other than your own material, whose do you enjoy recording the most?

Cotton: Nobody's particular. I mean, for the exception of maybe two songs that I can think of off the top of my head, most have been by people who either have never had anything recorded before, or are just relatively unknown writers. It's not a matter of a particular person's material, it's the song itself that attracts me. Take Parker McGhee; he has written some really great stuff, but I haven't heard any great stuff from him in--three years. Probably at this point, I'm not really going to be doing a whole lot of other folks, material.

Collage: I noticed on your last album, *Tight Rope Walker*, you're starting to do more and more of your own work.

Cotton: Well, the first albums I did were almost all my stuff, and then I did an album in '75 called *For All the Young Writers*. I wrote only two songs on that one; it was basically an album dedicated to other songwriters. At that time, I was traveling a lot on college campuses, running into other songwriters. I did that in Providence, Rhode Island--met a guy in a small college up there who was an excellent songwriter. We ended up flying him to Nashville and we did three of his tunes on an album. And this time around my producer has insisted on my doing my own stuff.

Collage: Are you going to the same producer this time?

Cotton: No, Un-unh.

Collage: Well, do you think of yourself more as a writer or as a performer?

Cotton: Well, both I guess. I don't exclude myself, you know, to my own material. I mean, there may be some people who can write prolifically and do their own stuff exclusively. I have not found very many people who have been

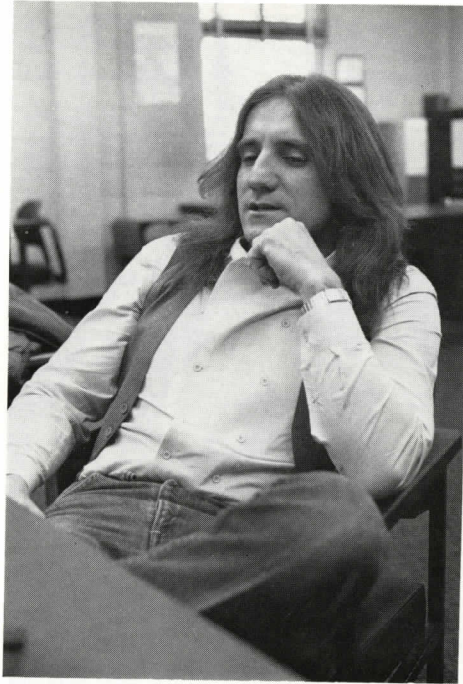
able to do that with any degree of success, simply because it gets a little boring after a while. I think one of the complaints I used to have about a lot of James Taylor's earlier stuff was that all his own songs sounded alike, like on *Sweet Baby James* and *Mud Slide Slim*. You could put on any side and you couldn't tell which album you were listening to. That happens a lot with writers. Lennon would be an exception to that, I think, because he was always thinking and always doing something different, but than again, Lennon didn't do an album for what?...seven years or so.

Collage: I've been listening to a lot of your stuff, and I think I see a theme running through a lot of it. It's very positive; I see a kind of hope for humanity. It's really evident on your album *Save the Dancer*, where you've got "Save the Dancer" and "Shine On." Am I just reading into it something that's not really there?

Cotton: Yeah, I really think there's some merit in not only thinking in a positive vein, but in perfecting or trying to do stuff in a positive way, whether it's music or whatever. But I think you're probably right. I don't know if it was a conscious effort or if it...well, I can't just put my finger on it and say, "This is why I do this kind of stuff."

Collage: It seems like *Save the Dancer* is for children, really, because you sang of the dancer in all of us and you dedicated that entire album to kids and all the children who will someday dance. You always mention your own children on your liner notes—how do you feel about children in general?

Cotton: Oh, I love kids. I think they're great!



Collage: Would you say that they're the hope for the world?

Cotton: Not necessarily. I wouldn't say that they're the hope for tomorrow; they certainly *are* tomorrow, whatever that may be. However, *we*, who are today, who have input into those children who are tomorrow, in reality are the hope for tomorrow.

Collage: What was the concept you talked about in concert the other night about the dancer?

Cotton: Well, there have been a lot of people who have made positive constructive inputs into human kind, whether their names were Buddha, Jesus, or Martin Luther King. I like to look at those people as being dancers. There is usually someone you can look to when everybody else is in despair, somebody who comes along and picks

up the pieces, and to me, they're also the dancers of life. I have a friend who runs a mental health clinic in San Antonio, Texas, in the inner city. He deals with prostitutes, homosexuals, drunks and basically people who have no place to go. He runs this clinic down there, and during the day he also runs a free food service for all the people who otherwise wouldn't eat a decent meal everyday. You'll never read about him anywhere, but to me he's one of those people who are certainly dancing.

Collage: So you feel everybody's got to dance?

Cotton: Yeah, I think everybody has that potential, but certainly everybody doesn't dance.

Collage: Let's talk about some of the people you've worked with. How do you feel about Kim Carnes and Janie Fricke and their recent successes?

Cotton: I get really excited about it; in fact, I wrote Kim and her husband, Dale, a letter right after I saw her on the "Midnight Special," and it was obvious that her song, "More Love," was going to get a lot of airplay. I was just congratulating them on seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and acknowledging the fact that those things are not seen without some kind of pain and injury along the way. It was really neat to see that somebody was really doing it. I'm always kinda disappointed in terms of Janie Fricke's career because I don't know her as a country singer, and that has been the majority of her success at this point. Now, when I say disappointed, I don't mean there's anything wrong with being a country singer, but I think she has so much more potential in terms of a broader audience than what country music is going to afford her. It's always fun to see folks that you've had some association with somewhere along

the line all of a sudden burst on the scene. Think of Mary McGregor. When she had her "Torn Between Two Lovers" hit, Mary had been living in our house in Nashville singing on the "Noon Show." And Michael Johnson with "Bluer than Blue." I first met him back in '73-'74 when I had recorded one of his songs. Anytime he was in the area he used to stay at our house. I always tried to get him to come to Nashville and record and he never would do it, but he came in and played a cut on *Rain On* or *Save the Dancer*, and that's where he met Steve Gibson and Burt Maher. Burt was my engineer and Steve was my producer at the time, and they kinda got together with Michael. The man who was managing Michael at the time called me and asked me about Steve because Michael liked him a lot and asked if I minded if he produced Michael. What would I care? That's how he got together with Steve Gibson and those folks. It's really great to be able to play a small part like that and see somebody's career bloom, to see people you've known have some measure of success.

Collage: Do you think you're going to stay in the MOR field, or do you think you're going to drift toward rock 'n' roll.

Cotton: I think it's a matter of perspective as far as the producer's concerned. I had more say-so the last album and the first few albums I did. Those albums were certainly more in line with me as to how I would approach a song. The other albums had a lot of strings and vocals dumped on it. I was always fighting it. You were more apt to hear it on SM-95 than KDF, although "Sunday in Salem" did get quite a bit on MOR airplay.

Collage: Are the rest of your albums going to be "Gene Cotten and American Ace?"



Cotton: The next one, hopefully, will be that way, yeah. And who knows how it will go? My guitar player, Marc Speer, is working on an album of his own. And my keyboard player, Diane Darling, is going to get herself a record deal, and so who knows?

Collage: Do you want to produce your own stuff or would you rather someone else take over that responsibility?

Cotton: Well, someone else basically had the responsibility, but, like on the last album, I've had a greater degree of input. Norman Putnam, who produces Dan Fogelberg and Jimmy Buffet, has said he will produce my next album. The only reason for that, at this point, is that the new labels said that they were interested in seeing a "name" producer. Whether that is going to happen or not, I don't know. I'd probably rather produce it myself. So far the stuff that we've recorded for the album I've done myself.

Collage: This album is coming out within the year?

Cotton: Oh, yeah. It'll be out in June.

Collage: On your last album some of the cuts struck me as being somewhat personal, like "Michael" and "Billy the Kid." Are they autobiographical in any way?

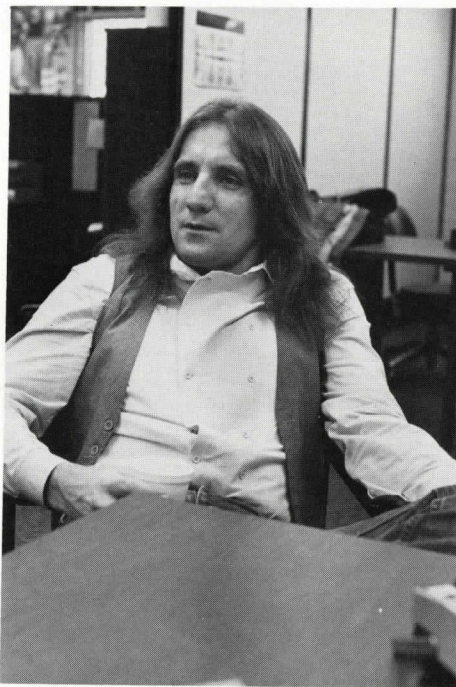
Cotton: No, they're about two different people. I probably should preface this by saying my particular philosophy about songwriting is that I don't think you ever really write a song; you sort of catch them as they pass by. An example of that would be "Sunday in Salem," about Senator Joe McCarthy. I had the chorus and the first verse written, and I had no idea what the song was about. I mean, I didn't intentionally write a song about McCarthyism. A lot of that stuff just sort of happens, and I'm sure it comes from that frame of reference, that input, throughout your life. For example, the song "Michael"--I had written most of that before I realized what the song was about, that there was a guy I knew whose name was Michael who ended up killing himself. Depressing thing to write about, but that's just what came out. The song "Billy the Kid" is not about *the* Billy the Kid (they didn't have telephone lines then). That's really a hard song to talk about for me. I had a younger brother who killed himself. He was just screwed up because of a lot of reasons, most of it outside input into his life.

Collage: Your love songs are usually about women leaving and are in general depressing, like in "Ocean of Life": "I'd rather be lost on an ocean of life than to be stuck in a harbor with you." I mean, that's kind of bitter.

Cotton: There, I can relate the last two verses better than the first. I'll let people

deal with that however they want to. But the second verse has to do with my involvement with the music business. A lot of people sell themselves out, and I've just always refused to participate in that kind of nonsense. I mean, I could have just as easily been a carpenter, a farmer, or anything else. I'd rather be a farmer sometimes. But, to me, the epitome of all the bullshit that goes on in the music business was the group Boston. Boston came out, you know... "Wow, Boston is a supergroup...incredible writers...they did it in the basement..." and it's true, they had some good stuff on their first album, it was well done, but it certainly wasn't a new era for music by any means. Their second album certainly bore that out. Did you ever see their second album? Inside the jacket was a blueprint of a guitar. Now, what I did was I took song titles from that album and write them into the second verse. It says, "Now don't be afraid to look back on the journey," and there was song on there called "Journey" and "Don't Look Back." "It's easy to feel satisfied," there's another one on there called "Feelin' Satisfied," "For a would be man blues singer;" they had a song on there called "A Man I'll Never Be" and I kinda turned that around, and they had a song on there "Used to Bad News," "Used to bad news bringer showed me the blueprint that lied."

The blueprint, of course, being the blueprint of the guitar. And then to kinda just pour it all through the funnel I said, "Maybe Dorothy," referring to Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, "Maybe Dorothy was right, we should all live in Kansas. But the keeper of time," whoever that person might be, "holds it true, hell, I'd rather be out there on the ocean of life," which is just my way of saying, "Hell, I'd rather be out there tossing and turning and struggling with life than to sell out." And the last verse is just simply referring to politics and



things. Uh, the last verse of that song goes, "Now there's smokin', jokin', and discretionary cokin', and laughing their way to the sky," which was obviously written during the Carter administration which is in reference to the drug abuse that was going on. "But the leaders and bleeders and clearly deceivers are not left alone to get high," and this is making my stab at the military and the Pentagon. "So you take all your sadness and self-destruct madness, 'cause you don't give a damn what you do. Hell, I'd rather be lost in the ocean of life than to be safe in the harbor with you." Venting my frustrations more than anything else, you know.

Collage: You just mentioned religion, and you debuted a new Sunday night, "The World's Religion Zoo." Now that one was not discrete in any way.

Cotton: I know, there's nothing between the lines in that one. Well, that song

basically is just a commentary on the fact that there's an organization called the Moral Majority, which means that there is something out there called the immoral minority. So I say to myself, "Now who are those Moral Majority folks and what do they mean?" I mean, you walk into about half the churches and you see an American flag on one side, and a Christian flag on the other side, and a picture of Jesus in the middle. I've even seen in pictures in some magazines where there is an American flag with a picture of Christ hanging above it. What does Christ have to do with an American flag or democracy or a republic? Absolutely nothing. It's always amazing to me traveling around, listening to the radio, particularly late at night, that you hear a lot of radio preachers. I've done a lot of studying of religion and history, and it's always amazing to hear all those people talk about "Let's get back to the Bible in this country." When was this country without it? I mean, they talk about it being founded on the principles of God and seeking religious freedom, and it's just all bullshit. I mean, you look at what really happened, most people who first came here were not looking for religious freedom. If you call coming into this country taking advantage of Indians, killing them, murdering them and to this day still taking advantage of them, if you call that the Bible or following some kind of positive philosophy, then people don't understand what the Scriptures say. They're continually saying, "We've got to get back to the old way," but wasn't 1945 when we dropped the bomb on Hiroshima? And Reagan gives a credence to all this political-religious stuff and wants to boost the military budget from 160-200 billion dollars.

Collage: Obviously you're outspoken on prejudice.

Cotton: Yeah. It really upsets me. Meeshon, our daughter, is obviously adopted. She is half-American and half-Vietnamese. Her American half is obviously black. I had a concert cancelled one time when the promoters found that out. But it didn't surprise me because it was at George C. Wallace Community College in Alabama...but, you know, it's amazing some of the stuff you can come up against.

Collage: Would you like to think that your music is helping to open some people's eyes?

Cotton: Oh, I hope so. I think that's true, because I get too many letters to think otherwise. I also get a lot of letters telling me I need some help. I did a concert this fall at Southwest Baptist College in Boliver, Missouri. I went down in front and started shaking hands, saying "hi" to some folks, and this guy who was apparently a theology major walked up and asked, "What do you believe?" I mean, he didn't even say his name or "hello," he just came up and said, "What do you believe?" I immediately knew what he was after, so I played with him for a while. I said, "About what? About that light switch over there? About my guitar?" He said, "About God, about Jesus." I said, "Well, have you got about six months, we might be able to get over it all." What difference does it make? You wonder after things like that. I get a lot of positive stuff, though. One of my songs, "Mrs. Oliver," is basically about an old lady who lived next door to me in Nashville. It describes the plight of old people. There are old people who are not getting an adequate nutritional diet simply because they don't have enough money. There are people who are in walking distance of this school who eat dog food because they don't have enough money. Sure, that subject makes for a depressing song, but this is an issue



that needs addressing. I got a letter from one girl saying, "I haven't bothered writing my grandmother who I haven't seen in almost five or ten years, but she was a very significant part of my life when I was growing up. That song really made me stop and think about her." She's now really in close contact with her, and she said it really make a difference in her grandmother's life because all of a sudden somebody was interested in her.

Collage: You obviously think a lot about the world. I mean, you go out and give your time, and you don't just give them garbage, you give them something to think about.

Cotton: What purpose is it to become a group, to make millions of dollars, to disband, and looking back and having it all, but having nothing, you know? And, who cares about all that stuff anyway? I mean, that stuff's important

if you're thinking about a career in music. Airplay is important, appearances are important, but those are not the primary goals--for me, anyway. That's one of the beautiful things about Lennon. I think--he just said, "To hell with it."

Collage: McCartney is doing the exact opposite, but he's putting out positive stuff.

Cotton: Which is OK, too. I mean, we're all McCartneys. I've just always followed Lennon more than McCartney. It was obvious Lennon was doing what he wanted to do in his new album. There is room for criticism because, musically, I'm not all that excited about Yoko Ono. But he split the album up between himself and Yoko. From a musical standpoint I want to be critical and say, "Well, you knew better, musically, than to put something like that on your album. Would you have done the same thing had it been McCartney?" But there is another aspect of him saying, "This is who she is and she's a part of who I am, so here it is."

Collage: It shows that much love he had for her.

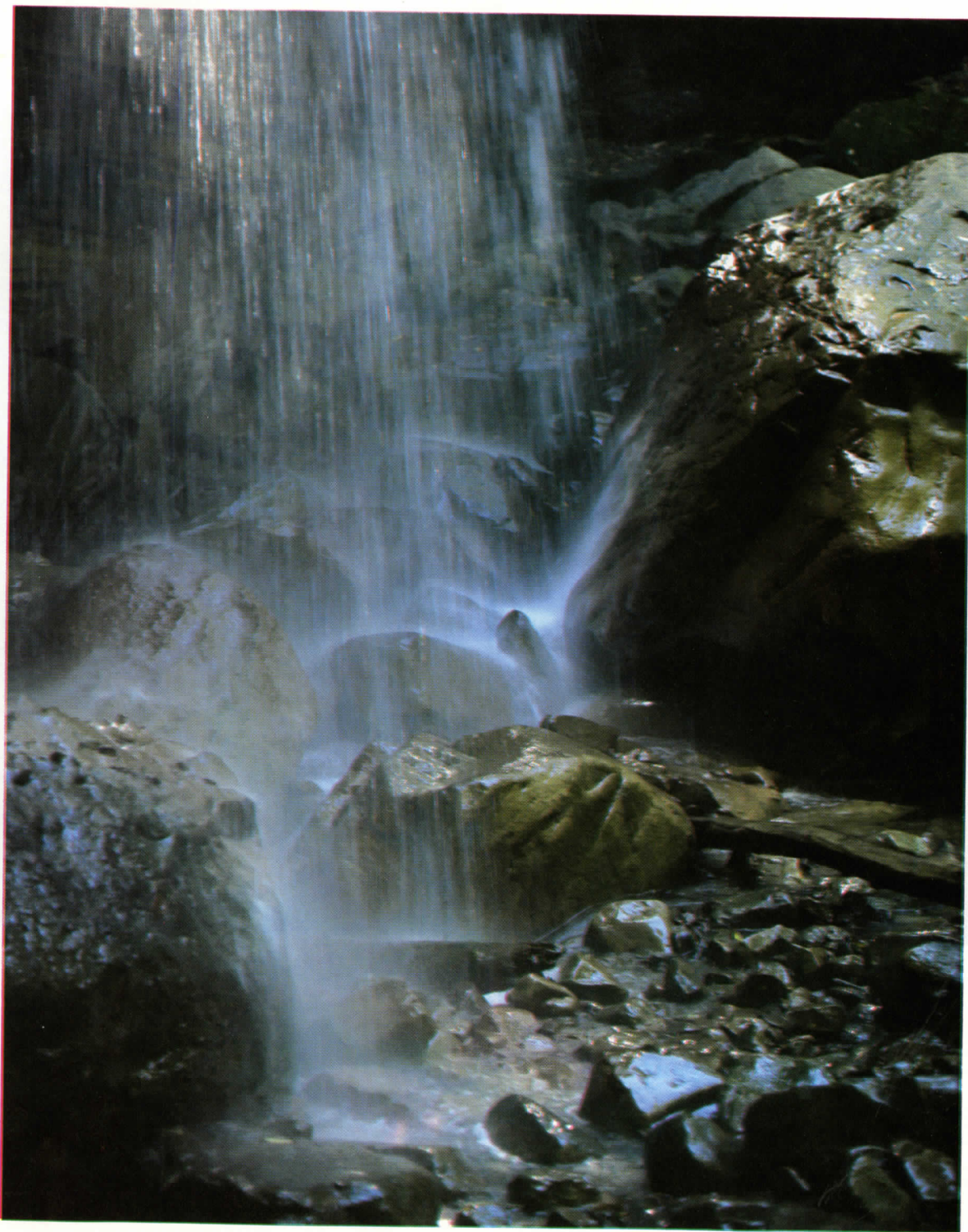
Cotton: Yeah, exactly. So there's two perspectives. Well, there's probably more than that, but basically there's two.

Collage: Are there any profound words you'd like to end this interview with?

Cotton: I don't have any great statements to make. I really enjoy the times I play my music, and I enjoy meeting the folks I've met along the way. Oh, and if I could, I'd like to thank Julie Bingham for getting me to this last MTSU concert. If it wasn't for her, I'd still be snowbound in East Tennessee in a truck with no wheels. Thanks, Julie.

Portfolio

Andra Fuson



Portfolio

J. Hooper Williams



Poetry

What We Are

There's no doubting what we are
It's the memories of what we once were,
 On the right side of living
 On the right side of loving
But she's gone, with good reason
She's gone. . .
And she won't be coming back
 Bad lives of communication
Time to relapse
 Plenty of time
It's so hard to adapt
 So long with something to believe in
Now I'm looking back,
 Just above crying. . .

Poor babe, now she's a cutlet--veal
 In the market of strangers
Not knowing what to feel,
 When there's danger (there is)
Some high-and-mighty rollers,
 Come down to earth to play
So hard-up, she reaches for the confusion,
 Cause "That might be the way"
But she's gone, for good reasons
She's gone. . .
And she won't be coming back
 It's still hard to believe it
She's quick to attack,
 'Bout wasting time
Sharp as a tack
 So sweet yet awfully deceiving
Now she's looking back,
 Just above crying. . .

There's no doubting what we are
It's the memories of what we once were. . .

Will Reynolds

Woman

The goddess rests peacefully,
Calm against the earth;
Her limp form suggesting
A light transparent gown.
Hair loose,
Trembling in the soft breeze.
A slender hand carved of ivory flesh
Reaches out
And delicate fingers encircle the ripe gift.
Is this Eve?
She is wisdom,
Grasping fruits to satisfy desire.
Imagination envisions a golden javelin and bow
Resting beside her
And she becomes the Huntress.
Her presence demands sensuality
And masters obey,
Touching her to canvas or song.
What goddess is this,
Radiating innocence with sensuousness,
Simplicity of form and complexity of thought,
She is what Artemis is not.

D. Michelle Adkerson

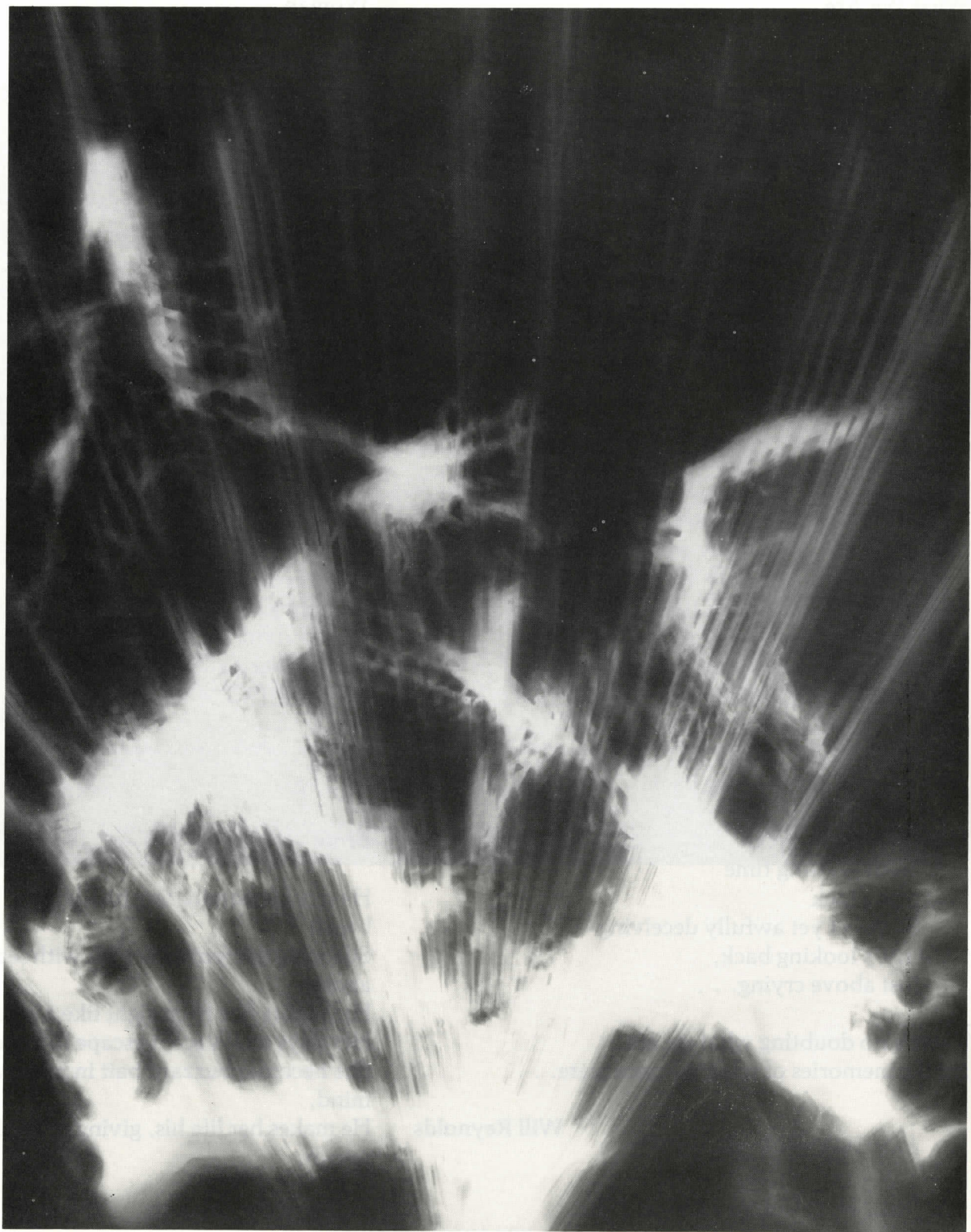
Brute

He sets his dominating hands upon her tongue and
breast
Silencing her feminine pain with fear-charged
agony.
Her nights flee from sight like a meteor burning out,
Her days seek vacant escape in her dark eyesockets,
She becomes buzzard bait in his small and empty
mind.
He makes her life his, giving only his pleasure in
return.

Lee Ahrens

Portfolio

Kimberly Caldwell







art by Mark Powers Terry

Born Again Rock 'N' Roll

by Zane E. Smith

"Still like that old time rock'n'roll
That kind of music just soothes my soul"
--"Old Time Rock'n'Roll"

George Jackson and Thomas Earl Jones

In early 1980, *Variety*, the entertainment industry's bible, proclaimed disco was dead. Finally, after a year and a half of banal lyrics (if lyrics is the right word) and a strong back beat, disco passed into the limbo of hula hoops, klackers, and other flash-in-the-pan fads. The beautiful disco went scurrying to find something else to latch onto and found it in country music. Suddenly everyone wanted to be an Urban Cowboy, go to Gilley's and ride the goddamn bull.

And while the plastic people flocked to embrace the original cowboys they had scorned just a few months ago, the rockers, who had been biding their time, let out a Banshee wail and were reborn.

Initially, "New Wave" became the watchword on these born-again rockers. Punk by now was passe both musically and as a lifestyle. After the floodtide of groups had ebbed, the best of the lot emerged from a crowded sea of imitators. The Pretenders, led by lead singer Chrissie Hynde, scored big with their single "Brass in Pocket," and their debut album also charted high. The Clash emerged as the best of the British New Wave bands, followed closely by The Police. Characterized by a sparse musical style and terse, often angry lyrics, the better of the New Wave groups seem to be influencing the established acts such as Linda Ronstadt who attempted New Wave with her *Mad Love* album. According to Susan Stanfill, an employee of Century 21 Records, a local record store, there is a growing New Wave audience in Murfreesboro, although, as of yet, "they are quiet and not a vocal majority on campus." She cites such albums as The Police's *Zenyatta Mondotta* and the B-52's *Wild Planet* as big sellers among MTSU students.

Jerry Jones, owner of Century 21, states that Murfreesboro audiences are more into "a softer rock, a more adult-contemporary type thing." Sales at his store and others in the Murfreesboro area back up this fact. Campus audiences are still listening to the more established artists.

1980 did mark the return of artists who had been absent from the market for long periods of time. Bob Seger's *Against the Wind*, his first album since 1978's *Stranger in Town*, reaffirmed the fact that this Detroit rocker had not lost his touch. Jackson Browne's *Hold Out*, his first since 1977's *Running on Empty*, gave Southern California rock a much needed boost in the arm. Possibly the most layered and complex album of 1980 was Bruce Springsteen's *The River*. It creates a world peopled with losers, dreamers and others who must deal with the realities of love, death, and personal self-destruction. It is an awesome testament to the lyrical and musical talent of the self-styled "prisoner of rock'n'roll."

Traditional, guitar-dominated rock'n'roll received a shot in the arm from groups like AC-DC, Van Halen, and the new sex symbol of rock, Pat Benatar. While concentrating on heavy-metal riffs, however, these artists neglected lyrics, and they chose to make sex the dominant theme of this genre.

The best-selling album in Murfreesboro, as well as in America, was Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. This double-album set was a superb synthesis of jazz and rock, coupled with an esoteric background story. Quite obviously, heavy-handed rock is not dead. An interesting development in Murfreesboro is that Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*, released in 1975, ranks as one of the top-selling albums of the year.

This brings up another trend among students here at MTSU. They, like millions of others, flocked to record stores to snatch *Double Fantasy*, John

Lennon's last album before his untimely death. This was coupled with the purchase of most of the Beatles' catalog. According to Jones, students here in Murfreesboro concentrated on *Sgt. Pepper*.

1980 did see the rebirth of rock'n'roll as well as the establishment of trends. New Wave seems to be the most influential innovation in the rock field in years. Established acts seem to turn inward more, producing more personal albums with thematic basis. Obviously, rock is influential, for more money is spent on this music than any other--but while filling the pockets of record industry moguls, it is ignored by the industry itself as seen by the nominations for 1980 Grammys, the awards of the recording world. Ear candy like Christopher Cross, Barbra Streisand, Billy Joel and (shades of Ronald Reagan!) Frank Sinatra are nominated, while all rockers but Pink Floyd are ignored.

And if nothing else, 1980 was also a year of brilliant rock singles. "Sara," pulled from Fleetwood Mac's *Tusk* and "Real Love," from the Doobie Brothers' *One Step Closer* LP set excellent production standards for future Top 40 singles. Springsteen's "Hungry Heart" returned to a rough early '60s production style and gave fans a hard-hitting, passionate taste of rock'n'roll. Blondie combined rock'n'roll with disco producing "Call Me," the best dance tune of the year. New Wave also flexed its new-found muscle with The Clash's "Train Vain," the Vapor's "Turning Japanese" and Devo's "Whip It." Rounding out a best singles playlist of the year: Dire Straits' "Romeo and Juliet," Seger's "Against the Wind," and Lennon's "Woman." All excellent yet all ignored.

So that gives me the premise for this article. After assembling this group of rock'n'roll refugees, I ask each to name his choice for album of the year. Quite obviously, none chose any MOR

and writing. Meisner's forte seems to be slower, more sensitive songs. There are only two kick-ass country-boy-good-time rock'n'roll numbers: the opener, "Hearts on Fire," and "Deep Inside My Heart," sporting a stunning duet with Kim Carnes, winner of this year's Michael McDonald backup singer award. Carnes raucous voice perfectly offsets Meisner's polished styly. Predictably, Epic Records has chosen to release these cuts as the album's first two singles. While they are good, they pale when compared to the rest of the cuts.

"White Shoes" is a strange little ditty penned by Jack Tempchin which maintains that the proper way to start one's life over is to buy a pair of white shoes. "Come Back to Me" and "Trouble Ahead" would be negligible save for Meisner's vocals and expert musical arrangements. "Anyway Bye Bye," an old Poco tune, is completely negligible. Don't bother.

As was the case when he was with the Eagles, Meisner does his best work on slow ballads that either odes to women or contemplates the direction of his life. In "I Need You Bad," Meisner's tenor is counterpointed beautifully by Michael Jacobson's saxophone solo, and the entire cut is skillfully underscored by Bill Cuomo's synthesizer. The title cut is an old Jack Tempchin song that was 'touched up' for Meisner by Jackson Browne. It tells of Meisner's new life on the road, playing bars and honky-tonks, playing for people who really enjoy music. Meisner has also stated this is the song that sums up his true feelings on leaving the Eagles. He sings with a natural passion and conviction here, something that has been missing from his vocals since 1975's *One of These Nights*. High harmonies by Eagles' Glenn Frey and Don Henley push this one beyond contrived kitsch. However, the best cut on the album is "Gotta Get Away." It is this song, rather than "One More Song," that I feel speaks of Meisner's reasons for leaving his former

band. It is a song of quiet desperation in which he is convinced he must leave, even though he does not know where he is going. To be true to his dreams, he has just got to pack up and go out into the world.

Meisner has always spoken in terms of dreams. In "Take It to the Limit," he states that "I've always been a dreamer, spend my life runnin' 'round." Now he cries out that those dreams still haunt him, and although he turns away from them, they keep calling him. This is an extremely personal and important album for this singer, yet it also has something to say to every listener about those frightening dreams that beckon despite one's better judgment. And what Meisner says about dreams makes this a great album.

"Damn The Torpedoes"

by Tony Simones

For years, success undoubtedly teased the very soul of Tom Petty, flaunting itself just beyond the reach of Petty's clutching fingers. Petty reigned as king of the critics' darlings, but disappointed both his record company and accountant with his critically accepted, but financially deflated, first two albums. Adding insult to injury, Petty was mired in legal troubles, and eventually was forced to file for bankruptcy. Released in late 1979, *Damn the Torpedoes* helped to make 1980 a year of establishment for Tom Petty, and a year of rebirth for rock'n'roll.

Petty maintains the correct perspective of his music, regarding it as a mere phase of a large movement, while realizing it won't be preserved in musical archives alongside the likes of Gershwin and Beethoven. This is a major factor in considering the excellence of this album. It is basic two-guitar rock, with production at a high level not often achieved on albums of this kind. Credit for this production goes to Petty and rock veteran Jimmy Iovine. After the 1970s gave us some of the most pretentious efforts ever conceived on vinyl, *Damn the Torpedoes* ushered in a new decade with a much-needed sense of simplicity.

This attitude is reflected in the album's opening track, "Refugee." One of the cockiest songs ever written, "Refugee's" hair-raising opening chords alone inspire the listener to stick a fist through a wall. Layered within this violent music are lyrics being sneered by Petty, who realizes "Everybody's Got to Fight to be Free." However, midway through the song, it becomes obvious that what we thought was a threatening sneer is in fact a cynical smirk, as Petty starts singing of someone who was "Kidnapped, tied up, taken away, and held for ransom." This merry tune ends with a repetition of the opening chords, as the wailing organ of Bermont Tench and the Banshee-like screams of Petty fight for center stage.

Whereas "Refugee" presents us with a wall of music, "Here Comes My Girl" is dominated by Petty's celebration of his sanity-saving woman, a theme too often examined in rock songs; that Petty can turn a cliché into a monologue which makes us relate to his feeling is concrete evidence of the talent of the man. While the focus here is on Petty's vocal, it would be ludicrous to say the music is secondary. The band, the Heartbreakers, provide instrumentation which serves as the most effective of backgrounds, supplying the emotional variations Petty's spoken monotones do not quite meet.

Two of the most solid hard rock songs come back to back on the album. "Even the Losers" is musically tight enough to break guitar strings, with Petty straining to scream out the autobiographical advice that "Even the losers get lucky sometimes." "Shadow of a Doubt (A Complex Kid)" continues both the impressive musical display and Petty's strained vocals, this time describing the wonderful state of mind that results when "I think she loves me, but she don't want to let on." Especially impressive on these songs are the talents of drummer Stan Lynch and bassist Ron Blair. Manic rock 'n' roll on this album is much like a very large tiger. When it is properly presented, caged and restrained, as it is on these two songs, it is breathtaking and awe-inspiring. However, when it is loose and wild, it is something most people want put to sleep. This is the case with "Century City" and "What are You Doin' in My Life." Don't misunderstand me--these are definitely passable songs. But, when looked at in comparison to the album's other excellent songs, they sound like amplified electrocutions.

"Don't Do Me Like That" has an undeniably commercial sound, rather pre-adolescent lyrics, and is one of the most fun songs ever recorded. This time, there seems to be a reason for Petty's bizarre vocals: Surely he is grinning all the way through this extraordinary tune. The two most different songs on the LP are "Louisiana Rain," a rockabilly number, and the bluesy "You Tell Me," which features bass by Duck Dunn and superb slide work from Mike Campbell.

At one point between two songs, a throbbing bass and ruffling drums fade to a wonderfully nasal female voice screaming out, "It's just the normal noises in here!" This is a flawless example of irony; if anything, Tom Petty's *Damn the Torpedoes* is not just the normal noises.

"Hold Out"

by Mike Murphy

"Hold Out" presents the new, Springsteen-inspired Jackson Browne of the 1980's. The changes in Browne's music, and the reasons for those changes, are obvious after listening to this album.

One obvious reason is a new co-producer, Greg Ladanyi. Ladanyi, who also co-produced Warren Zevon's "Bad Luck Streak in Dancing School," brings a much needed sense of hard-nosed rock into Browne's sound. Another change is the addition to Browne's line-up of keyboardist Bill Payne. However, Browne's gain is the music world's loss. The reason Payne was available was because of the disbanding of Little Feat, which resulted from the death of guitarist Lowell George. George is eulogized by Browne in "Of Missing Persons," a stunning song capable of moving those who knew him and those who thrived on Little Feat's music.

Another change is that "Hold Out" is not as whiny as some of Browne's past albums. While they were definitely excellent, the albums contained moments which were mildly depressing. Some were offended by what they considered Browne's preaching. Jackson still offers advice to his listeners, but it is

no longer the apocalyptic ravings of a rock and roll soothsayer. Browne now sneers his prophetic offerings to the audience much in the same way a street punk would show the ways of the world to a twelve year old kid. Grab it if you want, kid, you'll be better for it. And, if you don't, there's no skin off my nose. This is the attitude taken in "Boulevard," as he warns "nobody rides for free, nobody gets it like they want it to be."

"That Girl Could Sing," the album's best song, reveals a tale not unfamiliar to Browne's listeners: the building of a romance, the feeling of being mired in the confusion of love, and the inevitable attempt by the girl to break our narrator's heart. The only difference now is that our boy can handle the situation. Rather than go sit by the highway, mourning and strumming his guitar, Browne is now able to reflect back on the relationship, realize what he has gained, and respond to the situation by dismissing it with the lines, "She wasn't much good at saying goodbye-but that girl was sane." This song is one of the hardest Browne has ever attempted, highlighted by the frenzied slide work of David Lindley and the pounding percussion of Rick Marotta. Browne flirted with this style on "Running on Empty," but the songs on that album fall short of the impeccable combination of emotional, yet intelligent, lyrics, and break-neck rock exhibited by "That Girl Could Sing."

"Disco Apocalypse," while not a blatant parody in the vein of the Eagles knifing indictment of the disco lifestyle, "Disco Strangler," is a song full of contradictions. First of all, it is a contradiction for the enlightened back-packer to sing of a disco. Another contradiction is the title itself. The two words have little in common, and actually sound bizarre when spoken together. More contradictions are found

upon listening to the song. Amid the chorus of the supposedly romantic "Tonight's the night I'm gonna make you mine, gonna dance right out onto the edge of time," we are blasted with verses of unhappy homes, hungry children, and prowling prostitutes. What makes this song is the music. Rosemary Butler's vocals provide a wonderful contradiction and a stirring accompaniment to Browne's. The ultimate touch is the extensive use of Bill Payne's organ, an instrument not often associated with disco.

"Hold Out" and "Call it a Loan," while excellent, are pretty much the same thing Browne has been doing in recent years. A departure from the ordinary on this album is "Hold On Hold Out." Browne uses the longest song to express a new point of view, "If you hold your ground it'll turn around, keep a hold somehow." At one point, Browne quits singing, the music drops, and he begins a monologue aimed at his new love. Who else but Jackson Browne could actually get away with *saying*

"I love you,
Well just look at yourself,
What else could I do?"

At this point, the music and Butler's vocals explode in a magnificent crescendo, a split second catching the listener totally off guard, providing the perfect end to this extraordinary album.

Browne has set a precedent for using the album's last song as a summation of that particular record's various statements, a tying together of loose ends. This was the case with such tunes as "For Everyman," "Before the Deluge," and "The Pretender." "Hold On Hold Out" captures a new Jackson Browne, one who has traded melancholy for meditation, tears for smirks, and a bland pessimism for a very welcome, if cautious, optimism.

"London Calling"

by Steve Spann

The first thing I can remember reading about The Clash involved a concert performance of theirs in some East European communist country. I recall the author describing in detail how an angry youth was attempting to tear down a tall, menacing barbed-wire fence that separated the audience from the band on stage. I was amazed at the courage this erstwhile youngster displayed in that very symbolic act.

That angry young man, the author went on to say, was the lead guitar player for The Clash.

Needless to say, my expectations from that then virtually unheard-of band were rather high. On *London Calling*, a two-record set with 19 songs, my high expectations were not only met--they were surpassed.

Complex in depth and lyrical merit, *London Calling* tells of apocalyptic doom. Just another band crooning about sorrow and woe? Hardly. The opening title cut sets the pace:

"The ice age is coming, the sun is zooming in,

Engines stop running and the wheat is growing thin,

A nuclear error, but I have no fear

London is drowning--and I live by the river."

Those lines avoid pretentiousness and become believable only because they *really* mean it. That song's about worldwide political turmoil; "The Guns

of Brixton" is a tale of government and individuals, as the song asks what your reaction will be when the police break in armed and ready to kill.

At this point it would seem that *London Calling* in purely a political album. However, personal loss is just as important and terrifying. For example, the child in "Lost in the Supermarket":

"I heard the people who lived on the ceiling

scream and fight most scarily,

Hearing that noise was my first ever feeling,

that's how it's been all around me."

Nuclear disasters, shootings by policemen and alienation make for a pretty bleak climate. But just as it seems the last nail is going to be driven into the coffin, The Clash say The Hell With It! Let chaos reign! All the old traditions are exhausted, and the top rung is up for grabs. All bets are off!

The title tune tells us to 'forget it brother, an' go it alone'; while another states positively, "I've been beat up, I've been thrown out...but I'm not down!"

Who are these guys?

In "Guns of Brixton," the song about guns and policemen, they give us a hint to their identity when they make a play on the word "guns."

"You can crush us, you can bruise us,

But you'll have to answer to,

Oh...the guns of Brixton."

It becomes clear that the guns are no longer those fired by policemen for no reason, but rather the band members themselves, to whom everyone in this rotten world must answer. Emotions have become stronger than bullets.

Perhaps the vision of doom and the possibility and demand for something better are best put into perspective in one of the most gratifying numbers on the album, "Death or Glory."

Over a harsh guitar riff, singer Mick Jones offers the final blow: "Death of glory," he resentfully announces, "becomes just another story." His words

fade and he music scatters, only for lead singer Joe Strummer to re-enter quietly and unassumingly, as he whispers the words "We're gonna march a long way, gonna fight a long time." The guitars return to the firing line, and the bass of Paul Simonon and drums of Topper Headon fuse together into a beat.

The singer picks up the pace, and his voice gains strength and an authoritative quality:

"We gotta travel--over mountains
We gotta travel--over seas
We gonna fight--you brother
We're gonna fight--till you lose
We're gonna raise--TROUBLE!!"

The whole band then reunites and shouts the chorus: "Death or glory, just another story." You realize they are really saying: I'll be damned it is!!

The vision of dread is consistent throughout the album: fascism in "Clampdown"; the sorrowful demise of actor Montgomery Clift in "The Right Profile"; the drug dealer who's the singer's only friend in "Hateful"; and the advertising executives' mechanical corporate world in "Koka Kola."

After the band has characterized its own music in "Revolution Rock" and invited you with a wink and a grin to "smash up your seats and rock to this brand-new beat," they slip in a love song (its not listed on the album jacket.)

It's called "Train in Vain," and it begins almost as if the listener were overhearing it. A simple song about lost love and survival, it seems almost out of place on a record about the world's failure and revolution. But actually it couldn't fit in any better, because if this record means anything, it's that small personal battles are just as important as large ones--there's really little difference between a love affair and a revolution.

Clearly, The Clash is a band that takes it to the hilt as a matter of course, and these days, that's just about equivalent to being rock's last hope. They're out there on the edge of punk

and reggae, listening to heartbeats from every continent. The Clash defy categorization as they toss everything over their shoulders and provide White Youth with a hope that out of all the

chaos will come a light that stands for world-conquering noncompromising ambition.

I don't think that's too much to hope for.



Portfolio



Billy Spurgeon



A Welcome To Spring

The world rests at last;
Scorching winter is past
Leaving cinder-toned scenes
All black and all gray--
The exhausted earth sleeps.

Frigid peace rules the land
With a drows'ly-weighted hand;
But sleepers will wake
And the lazy must stir
And Nature must Spring colors make.

Solemn darkness is slashed
Modest night is bright-flashed
And riddled with hints of the day.

The silence is blasted
With roaring and crashes
As thunder rolls in the far away.

The world writhes and twists
With the shriek and the hiss--
The wind with changeling agony plays.

The scarred earth is ripped
Sleeping houses are whipped
Frozen winter is drowned in the rain.

In the frightening comfort
Of Spring's healing storms,
Winter is torn
From its firm, icy grasp
As the frigid peace yields
To clamorous, joyful
New Life!

Sandy Wright