

CIRCLES

THE MOODY BLUES'
Miraculous American Tour

**Yes Sparks
'Close To
The Edge'
Controversy**

**Rod Stewart
Snatches Bolan's
British Crown**

**Deep Purple's
Newest Touring
Traumas**

**Cocker's
Ultra
Peculiar
Comeback**

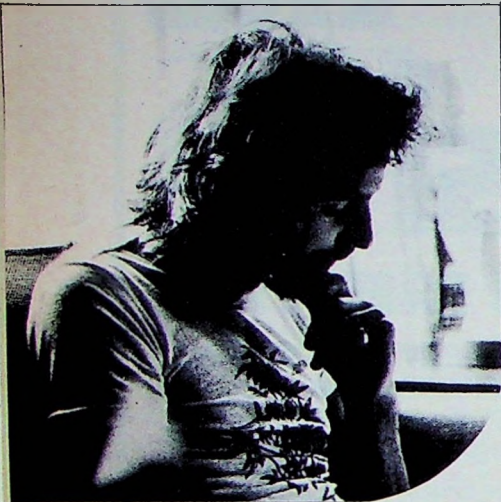
All In The Family's Rob Reiner

★★★
**DAVID BOWIE
FREE COLOR
POSTER!**

'All The Young Dudes'— Bowie Embraces Mott The Hoople

record reviews

by Janis Schacht



Cat Stevens: Making more music to cud-dle up with.

Cat Stevens—Catch Bull At Four (A&M)

Cat Stevens is a manic-depressive in the nicest possible way. He makes the kind of records that are great to crawl into bed alone with and listen to while pondering an old flame that simply refuses to die.

This is Cat's sixth offering in the last five years. It appears to be his least innovative and therefore his least spectacular; but after several listenings, songs such as "Sitting" and "Boy With A Moon And A Star On His Head" cry out for the attention they so rightfully deserve.

"Sitting" absolutely screams single. It has a distinctly Todd Rundgren-style riff, but it can't be pinned to any one Rundgren song. The sweet lilting piano and riddle-ridden lyrics give the whole thing a naive nursery-school quality. It has a melody that you'll be singing for months to come.

"Boy With A Moon And A Star On His Head" is a pastoral with all the nuances of an Anderson fairy tale, a Merlin The Magician spell or a Greek Myth.

Cat discovered a synthesizer this time around. He's learned to play one melody on it and uses it in "Angelsea" and "Freezing Steel." That wonderful "King Of Trees" song that Cat sang all over America last year never made it onto plastic, but "Silent Sunlight" has the same simple, majestic Elizabethan feel to it.

It's impossible to say that any landmark move forward has been made since this time last year, when Cat released *Teaser And The Firecat*, but he hasn't moved backwards either. Hopefully next year Cat will shake the world again. He's one of our finest writers, and sameness is not what keeps stars glittering on the charts.

Black Sabbath—Volume 4 (Warner Bros.)

From the first notes of "Wheels Of Confusion" onward through "St. Vitus' Dance" and "Under The Sun" all of Sabbath's usual heaviness is carefully controlled, powerfully maneuvered and as steadily driven as a tank making its way around a live mine field.

The purr and whine of Black Sabbath's German war-bomber sound comes to a halt long enough for two rather sensitive treaties. What a surprising Sabbath innovation! Is that really the heavy-handed foursome playing acoustic guitar, tinkling the piano and conducting an orchestra?

"Changes," the first acoustic piece, goes to prove that Ozzy Osbourne, as well as being an all-fired-head-shaking maniac, can really sing. "Changes" is a fine ballad, gently symphonic, subtle, actually far more tasteful than any of the latest Moody Blues extravaganzas. As Ozzy sings, "I'm going through Changes," you realize it's true, but if you hadn't heard it yourself, you wouldn't have believed it.

Side two elephants its way through "Snowblind" and "Cornucopia" before it hits upon the next acoustic/orchestral oasis—oasis is the only word for it. Off into the sunset, the satanic four now seem far more angelic. Gentle melodies leading nowhere in particular send pictures of lounging by a tranquil lake zipping off into the nerve cells.

Sabbath at their loudest have always been fine as long as you had the option of controlling the noise knob. The loud pieces on Sabbath's fourth volume are as fine as that consecrated classic of yesteryear "Paranoid." That old 4-4 beat is changing now, shifting as it pulsates its way into your mind. Having approached this album with some trepidation, it's a joy to be able to say *Volume 4* is a masterpiece.



T. Rex: Bolan stands naked beneath the glitter.

Tyrannosaurus Rex—A Beginning (A&M)

My People Were Fair And Had Sky In Their Hair . . . But Now They're Content To Wear Stars On Their Brows, one-half of the Rex double set, grew originally during the dying days of 1968. "Tyrannosaurus Rex rose out of the sad and scattered leaves of an old summer," the liner notes tell you. What they really grew out of was a disillusionment with the summer of 1967, when Marc Bolan was playing in a violent sexist-type band called John's Children.

One of the nicest things about this early stage of The King Dinosaur's growth is that the voices were not drowned out by heavy layers of strings, choruses and electric instruments. The hypnotic beauty of Bolan's vibrato stands naked and alone on these records. "Wielder Of Words," which contains the all time great break "Robard de Font Le Roy," reaches its peak of strength when youthful enthusiasm meets incredible vocal versatility.

Listen to "Frowning Atahauilpa (My Inca Love)," easily one of Bolan's most beautiful melodies, and try to remember that these sessions were recorded on one lonely four-track tape recorder. Then do the wood-land hop to "Hot Rod Mama" and "Mustang Ford" and know what it's like to reach the heart of a thousand greasers' dreams. Filled with lots of low-budget rock and rolling, hand-claps, yelps and a shot of rhythm and blues, this album is a gem.

Prophets Seers And Sages The Angels Of The Ages, the second half of the set, has a lot more pomp and a lot less soul. Bolan was beginning to lose interest in his rock and roll roots

and was feeling at home being resident prophet at all-night, speed-freak London hangouts.

So, Steve Peregrin-Took (Tooky, to you) and Marc Bolan high-brow their way through "Salamanda Palaganda," "Deborarobed" and the most fascinating of all, "The Scenescrof Dynasty." "Scenescrof . . ." is a vast file of poetic eroticism sung *a cappella*. It's a pity A&M decided not to print the lyric sheets.

If you hate T. Rex and loved The Incredible String Band, then you'll adore these albums. If you love T. Rex, then you've probably been dying to find a reasonable way to get your hands on these collectors' items for years. But the very best reason to listen to *A Beginning* is the sheer magnificence of Bolan's voice. Sometimes under all the silk and glitter we forget why he became a star.

Jack Bruce—At His Best (Polydor)

Ginger Baker—At His Best (Polydor)

Eric Clapton—At His Best (Polydor)
Heavy Cream (Polydor)

This is definitely a good month for reruns, and these four two-record sets prove once again that the single strengths of Jack Bruce, Ginger Baker and Eric Clapton were never as strong as the unified power of Cream.

Oh, it's true. Eric Clapton is a great guitarist. Jack Bruce plays a mean bass guitar and sings up a storm, and Ginger Baker is probably the most energetic drummer around; but alone they never quite make it. Clapton easily fares the best, but even he can't fight with the 1968/9 Cream material, which today stands a head above most of his newer songs.

Allow yourself to drift into the past. Listen to the eerie "Strange Brew," the incredibly up "I Feel Free" and "I'm So Glad," and the driving "Sunshine Of Your Love." These sounds have often been imitated but never matched. Every song in the two-record set *Heavy Cream* paints a vivid landscape coupled with one of the world's most unique rock sounds. Bruce was singing at his finest, writing songs that seem fresh today, though some of them are five years old. Clapton proves once again that taste is everything. What music! *Heavy Cream* takes you through lush sensual experiences, and, much like *Sgt. Pepper*, the songs never leave you unsatisfied. Only the most perfect gems have been sifted from the Cream's recording history, and they shine so brightly that the losers will never be missed.

The worst of the four albums is, of course, Ginger Baker's *Air Force*. Never good, it sounds worse than ever when played alongside the other three LP's. It's a lot of off-key whining from singers who really should know better. Stevie Winwood does save the two records from total disaster with "Can't Find My Way Home," but even his vocal chords can't pull this package out of the grime.

When Jack Bruce went folk he also went boring, and as his solo efforts never really sold, you can be confident that most Cream fans agree with that statement. Clapton? "Let It Rain," "Layla" and "After Midnight" are all good stuff; but, once separated, these three master-musicians were never as great as they were together. It's one of those things that should have gone on forever.

Grand Funk—Phoenix (Capitol)

Terry Knight may have been one of the greatest DJ's of all time, but this new Knight-less Grand Funk album proves that as a record producer he really didn't know how to bring out the best in his star act. Grand Funk are out to prove they know how to play, and as Don, Mark and Mel lay their careers on the line saying "heavy is not necessarily the best," they show that they really do know how to lay down some tasteful, competent music.

"I Just Gotta Know" is one in a stream of never-ending message songs. Now, however, there's no screaming, no yelling, and no noise to make the message seem useless. You can't cry "peace" while playing at a war-time

frenetic level, not if you want people to take you seriously. With just organ, drums and guitar, G.F.R. is playing the way they really should have been playing all along.

Strangely enough, an acoustic birth-control song called "So You Won't Have To Die" is probably the strongest track on the album.

Now that Don, Mark and Mel have come out of the peanut gallery and into the major leagues, even their singles are worth more. "Rock and Roll Soul" is guaranteed to get you moving. There is still a lot of the old one-two-three-four beat and Young Rascals' style organ playing going down, but it's really nice stuff. Grand Funk Railroad, you may finally live up to the hype Terry pinned on you all these years.

Yes—Close To The Edge (Atlantic)

Yes have taken one step "closer to the edge" with this album, and if they continue along these lines they may just throw themselves over the cliff. There's nothing wrong with concept pieces, but when there are only two sides to a record, two concept pieces are too many! There's just nowhere to turn if you don't like it the first time out.

Rick Wakeman is out to prove he can be flashier (pardon the pun) than Keith Emerson. He sure can cut a mean synthesizer and play dat organ, but not on this record. Wakeman's lost his control, delicacy has been thrown to the wind, and he just doesn't seem to realize when the time comes to cut the noise and really play. Even those great Yes harmonies suffer amongst the racket.

Where *Fragile* was filled with short spurts of greatness, *Close To The Edge* is filled with long nothings. It's all unnerving. Those high voices which at one time were thrilling, even exhilarating, now lunge forward like prodding knives. When they do work at brief intervals (e.g. "I Get Up, I Get Down") they are even more painful because they throw short glimpses of the might-have-been into the musical chaos.

If you find Emerson, Lake and Palmer hard to listen to, and you've been turning to Yes as the palatable solution, perhaps you ought to try Emerson, Lake and Palmer again or stick to Yes's old albums. Or maybe Yes ought to try sounding more like Flash?



Grand Funk Railroad

Yes Triggers "Cold Heart" War With 'Close To The Edge'

by Barbara Graustark

When Wakeman created the steady pit-pit-pit of molten hot lava dripping into a volcanic-like Moog fury below, he sent critics writhing up the wall in frustration.



Classical music swells the air expectantly inside Los Angeles' Coliseum. An overpowering hush filters through the auditorium, now dampened by the beads of sweat on fifteen thousand faces. As the bright lights dim, ghostly shadows flit about the now-darkened stage. The excited audience, in an attempt to see what's happening, strikes a thousand matches, raising them upwards. They bathe the hall in a sea of flickering flame, heralding the arrival of England's Yes.

Bassist Chris Squire is the first to emerge from the recessed stage shadows, resplendent in a dazzling multi-tiered cape, a Gothic figure from a forgotten time. He is the most flam-



boyant member of the group—audiences still speak rapturously of his magnificent purple satin and pink and lavender chiffon wings. He hops to and fro like an injured butterfly. Keyboard virtuoso Rick Wakeman suddenly bursts forth from the camouflage of his five keyboard instruments. Bathed in the brilliance of the flashing lights Yes uses to create the aura of perpetual change within the hall, Rick's blond hair shines. His chrome jean-jacket seems to radiate a brilliance of its own.

While the staggered, strobe-like lights create the cinematic quality that the group employs, indeed, echoes in their music, Wakeman tests his instruments, then breaks into his long Moog

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parting thrust four months ago upon leaving Yes to join ranks with King Crimson: "Nobody plays any wrong notes, but that's a drag. I want to play some wrong notes." *Close to the Edge* had already turned gold two weeks before its official release date, and it was expected that over 400,000 copies would be sold before the album was out one month—yet critics kept complaining. Why? Perhaps the answer can be found in the way *Close To The Edge* was constructed in the first place.

The Yes work ethic: It was several weeks after a triumphant American tour, in the heat of the English summer, that Yes returned to a three-dimensional reality—the Advision Studio, isolated on a narrow side road, obscured from view, at 23 Gosfield Street, London. Several blocks away beats London's downtown pulse: Oxford Street, the heart of the shopping area. But within the new brick walls of the two-story building, past the uniformed guard at the door, all is silent. Walking upstairs, one hears the drifting of taped vocal harmonies, lead singer Jon Anderson's plaintive, little-boy voice weaving harmonic patterns from the floor below. While producer Eddie Offord mixes tapes, Jon Anderson rests wearily before a TV watching a family comedy, his health food craving satisfied temporarily by a raisin and cheese snack. The group has been working furiously, putting in one twelve-hour day after another, in an attempt to rush *Edge* to coincide with their next fall tour. Often called a super-perfectionist, Jon explains his tight work schedule: "You

gotta be strict with yourself. You gotta be able to spend ten hours a day rehearsing a minute's worth of music. You can spend hours and hours just going over a piece of music, and then throw it out 'cause it just doesn't work."

Simultaneously, on the floor below, Eddie Offord tangles over a piece entitled "And You And I" with guitarist Steve Howe. Steve nudges Eddie, as if to confirm Jon's unheard words from upstairs. "Play the ending again," Steve says. "Because after today you'll never hear it again." Fifteen minutes later, the ending to the song was tossed into the garbage pail.

Temper tantrums with a purpose: Their day has begun at about 3 p.m. They will not leave the studio until the wee hours of the A.M., usually about three. Nerves are taut, violent arguments frequently shatter musical interludes in the concert-hall-sized recording area. Behind the glass enclosure mouths are seen moving frantically, excitedly as the group struggles to get closest to the sound they want. Critics who call the group "inhuman" should be transported to the inside of a Yes argument, whose strength and noise level approaches the level of an Apollo 7 liftoff—if you're standing under the ship. Their arguments are so fiery that Rick Wakeman, upon entering his first Yes studio session after leaving the Strawbs, was convinced the group was breaking up.

Par for the course, an argument erupts over the title of a complex track to be released as the album's single. "Total Mass Return?" questions drummer Bill Bruford. "What's wrong with that?" asks Jon. "I had to think of something quickly." "Why not call it 'Puke'?" suggests someone else.

As the taping struggles on, the air of urgency is further complicated by another Yes album in the works: a long-awaited live LP scheduled for a Christmas release. Some critics have suggested a live album might capture the true spirit of Yes, away from their studio wizardry. Jon Anderson agrees. "I think we'll do everything live from now on," he reveals. "Some of the sounds Eddie has got down from concerts have really been surprising—better than the studio albums."

Moving Closer To The Edge: While some think the group has intergalactically hurtled over the abyss, most feel the music is uniquely moving, due, in part, to the effects of keyboard man Rick Wakeman. His influence, felt on the *Fragile* album, has been adventurously expanded on *Edge*, where he plays a lead role. His mas-

tery of the keyboard allows him greater freedom in expressing Yes' cosmic sound. His Mellotron drifts in and out mysteriously, adding the sweep of an entire orchestra. Each instrument is used as an integral part of a piece: his electric piano is transformed into a graceful violin; a grand piano carries both the melodious rhapsody and chaotic intensity of the flute; an organ in Rick's hands belows the brassiness of an entire horn section; the electric harpsichord becomes the mellow, meadow-awakening of the clarinet; and the Moog sounds its deep-throated bassoon tones. Solos are conspicuously absent from the album as Wakeman joins forces with Howe and Chris Squire's instrumentation to complement the plaintive tones of Anderson's vocal harmonies, giving the album a sweep that critics often miss. Indeed, the very criticism of the group's structural approach to music is precisely what Anderson aims for: A total group approach to music, an integrating of talents to complement each other, rather than the "divide and conquer approach" that creates superstars (and seems to delight critics).

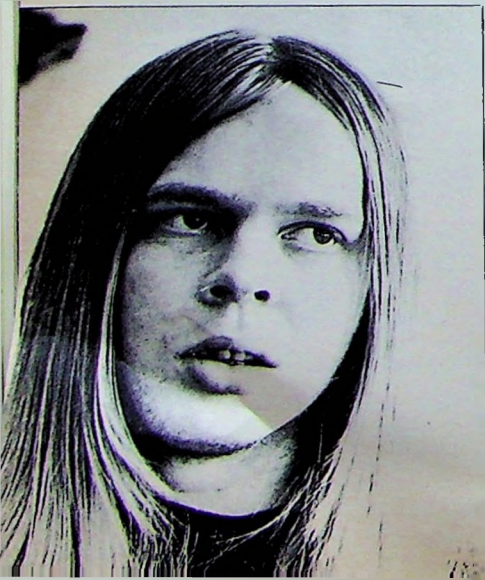
Chris Squire's striking bass effect complements Howe's guitar work as he lays down one melody line after the other, without, as one observer has noticed, "losing sight of the basic function of his instrument." The rapidly-changing guitar lines that seem to grate on the nerves of some harsh critics, the complex, shifting melody scales that make some gnash their teeth in overbearing frustration—both are what Yes, in fact, strives for. It is Squire's piercing stabs at numbers, intertwined with Howe's guitar and Rick's keyboard work, that, in fact, breathes life into numbers, while simultaneously creating a structural framework within which everyone will work. The sound thus soars like an eagle—rather than getting shot down in flight by an overzealous soloist.

Musical space odyssey: Besides being their most far-out effort to date, *Close To The Edge* has a cinematic quality that leaves the listener feeling as though he has just participated in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. The theatricality that many complain of works positively on numbers like "Total Mass Retain," with its ragalike pattern imitating the swirling of volcanic fiery liquid within the crater's midst. The steady pit-pit of scalding lava dropping into the center completes a three-dimensional image that puts the listener directly into the musical action.

For those who claim "Yes has gone so far into the technical beyond, they

Photo: LFI

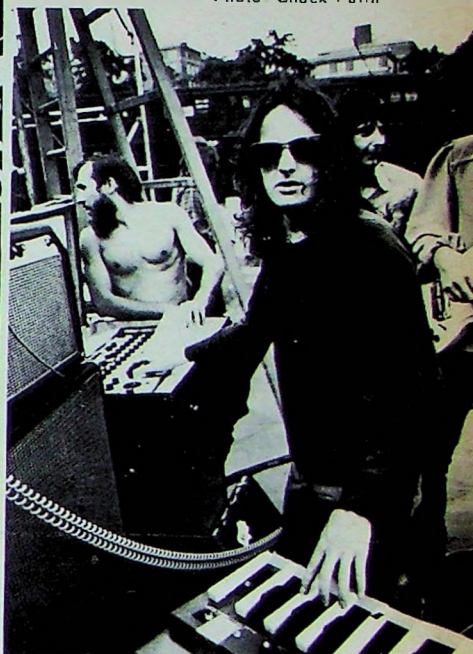
To keyboard virtuoso Rick Wakeman, Yes means more than an "E" type Jaguar and his neo-mansion.



MUSIC

Chris Squire: During the making of *CLOSE TO THE EDGE*, he took charge whenever Yes battled ferociously in the studio; but Jon wished he'd get the vocals right.

Photo: Chuck Pulin



Jon Anderson: Yes' Napoleonic super-perfectionist repeated vocal takes with Chris and Steve a thousand times. The result? The plaintive vocals still set critics' teeth on edge.

Steve Howe: During *EDGE*'s taping breaks he kept his guitar in tune at the Royal Academy of Music, performing with the London Philharmonica.



are lost forever," the movement's closing piece, "Siberian Khattru" (roughly translated as "Do what you wish," in South Yemen) proves that technical know-how need not destroy feeling. Yes returns to earth in an explosive, powerful driving rhythm; the band takes off with Rick and Steve in a blasting unison, cascading into a Stravinsky-influenced machine-like violence at the end.

Score one for falsettos: Those who search for imperfections in Yes' "too perfect" vocal harmonies might delight in occasional off-key notes, a definite source of worry to perfectionist Anderson. Numerous overdubbings are employed to get the right sound, the "perfect match" that sends some critics shrieking in anguish. The group laughingly recalls one horrifying taping during which a single line from the piece "Apoca-

lypse"—"Turn around, Glider"—was muffled again and again by back-up soloist Squire. Take after take, two straining voices were heard to merge tentatively, then wobble off pitch, as those in the control room collapsed laughing. Finally Anderson's overdubbing allowed them to obscure some of the raunchier vocal discord. But despite all of Anderson's hard work, critics still attack Anderson's wailing voice and demand a more balanced sound; they cite the need for a deep voice to counter Yes' falsettos. What they miss is the fact that a bass voice would destroy the band's vocal identity. The distinctive, high-pitched singing is as vital a part of the Yes music as is its keyboard leadership.

It would seem that what irks Yes critics most is what keeps Yes (and their fans) happy. Eddie Olford believes that the group's harshest critics

would probably prefer a funkier sound anyway. And Jon Anderson greets criticism with, "You obviously go through this kind of thing where some people are willing to criticize us rather than listen to us. So guys'll come along to us and say, 'It's too mechanical,' or 'they're trying to be intricate for the sake of intricacy.' You know, we're only trying to create entertainment musically."

In the Yes "Cold Heart" War it might appear that the group's overwhelming popularity speaks for itself. Yes' strongest supporters find the music far from heartless, and claim that the musical complexity only increases the excitement, moving the music out of the realm of the studio and into the mind of the listener. Yes appears to be sailing away with their "great debate" victory—and many critics appear to be missing the boat.

the record lover's guide

by Ed Naha

An A to Z listing for the ravenous record buyer.



Ginger Baker—Stratavarious (Atco)

When most people talk about taking rock music back to "da roots," they're usually speaking about tracing modern musical trends back in history for a century or two. Not Ginger Baker. When he goes back to the roots he means business! To get to the essentials of drumming, Baker journeyed to Africa to observe firsthand what rhythm work was all about. The pulsating product of his voyage can be heard on this churning LP. Assimilating rock, African and jazz ingredients into his new, improved style, Baker weaves a voodoo-ish spell of foot-pounding power that is positively unrelenting. After a couple of false starts with his Airforce, it's really good to see Ginger take off on the wings of Afro-rock.

Cactus—Ot 'n Sweaty (Atco)

If you have ever, EVER loved REALLY HARD ROCK you owe it to yourself to pick up on this new Cactus release. What? Cactus? Are you kid-

ding? That lumbering bunch of inept rock clowns who butchered "Long Tall Sally" and endless other tunes? Nope. This was a brand new, spilled-up Cactus. Before they dashed off to form a trio with Jeff Beck, Messrs. Bogart and Appice gathered together three new nasty rockers in the personages of vocalist Peter French, keyboard player Duane Hitchings and guitarist Werner Fritzchings. The results were amazing. Hitchings and French proved to be vital additions both as performers and writers, and Werner ain't bad on axe either! The short-lived new Cactus was fresh, funky and full of life . . . just ready to stick it to you with the rockin'est boogies heard on wax in a while.

Harry Chapin—Sniper and Other Love Songs (Elektra)

Break out the hankies, gang! Harry's back! This time 'round, the list of Chapin tear jerkers (or is that just jerkers?) is enhanced(?) by the presence of an amazingly sprightly ditty entitled "The Sniper." ("Oh it was raining hard, when I shot her.") The song is breathtaking in its melodramatic treatment of the subject, rivaling only Raymond Burr's Ironside in terms of sheer poetics. Although his style is antiquated enough to make Glenn Yarborough seem modern, Chapin does manage to shed some light on the plight of the snipers of the world. At least he gives the listener a chance to feel what it's like to want to kill! Empathy at its finest hour.

John Denver—Rocky Mountain High (RCA)

Friends, are you tired of the hum-drum, push-pull, drab existence of city life? Are you longing to get back to the country, back to nature . . . even though you've never been further west than Philadelphia? Why not give a listen to nature boy John Denver. John, as you recall, is that silver throated imp who last year took your AM radios down lush country roads. Well, John is now out

in Colorado somewhere singing about nature and assorted good stuff like "Summer," "Fall," "Winter," "Late Winter, Early Spring," and of course, that crowd pleaser, plain old "Spring." Classics all. A trip to the country with Denver is a pleasant, melodic journey indeed . . . and a hell of a lot easier to take than trying to hitch across the country to Colorado . . . or even Philadelphia.

Grand Funk Railroad—Phoenix (Capitol)

The phoenix, as you may recall, was a mythical bird who supposedly rose from the ashes of its own funeral pyre to soar high into the heavens filled with new life. Well, Mark, Don and Mel don't quite make it in the phoenix department. Turkeys maybe. Phoenixes no. They get their wings scorched somewhere on side one of this LP and lumber about until the conclusion of side two. Still, this newest Funk fest is a step in the right direction for this tormented trio, with the boys holding their own both in the writing and producing fields. And, in spite of the tendency to criticize Grand Funk just for the sake of criticism, their new sound is a bit fuller and a shade more interesting than their past "epics." A spunky group that won't let itself be counted out of the competition yet, GF may one day win their wings.

Buddy Guy and Junior Wells—Buddy Guy and Junior Wells Play The Blues (Atco)

Buddy Guy, Junior Wells and Eric Clapton . . . three big guns in the world of modern blues. What kind of album would you expect from a collaboration of the three? Hot stuff, right? Wrong. It's only lukewarm. The LP, recorded nearly two years ago, features Clapton on rhythm guitar (and co-producing), Wells on harp and vocals, and Guy on lead guitar. The arrangements are dull and the solo work is nothing to write home about. Sadly, this record stands as a

tarnished monument to what could have been a blues milestone.

Mickey Hart—Rolling Thunder (Warner Bros.)

Yikes! Another Grateful Dead solo LP! This time it's Mickey Hart (ex-Dead drummer) taking the plunge. What makes Hart's disk totally different than Weir's and Garcia's is that . . . uh . . . umm . . . well . . . he does "Playing in the Band" really nicely, no . . . uh . . . that was Weir . . . or was that the Dead's live LP . . . no, it was Bob Garcia, I mean Jerry Weir . . . aww Hell! ALL THREE ALBUMS HAVE THE SONG ON IT! To Hart's credit, he does attempt to sound as un-Dead as possible, getting a good assist from an army of name musicians like Alla Rakha and Zakir Husin. Anyone for Phippen?

Humble Pie—Lost and Found (A&M)

Before their hot and nasty days, Humble Pie was a cool little British band that hovered precariously between Steve Marriott's hard rock whims and Peter Frampton's lilting folk influences. Their total sound was often confusing, but always enjoyable. This double helping of pounding Pie melodies is composed of their first two albums, *Safe As Yesterday* and *Town and Country*. Besides featuring a host of Frampton-Marriott compositions, the double LP presents the group's first recorded hard rocker, an amazing cover of Steppenwolf's "Desperation." Humble origins indeed.



Humble Pie

Pick of The Month



Yes

Yes—Close To The Edge (Atlantic)



Let us marvel at Yes. Just when everyone was smugly sitting back analyzing the complexities of *Fragile*, along comes Yes with a new release that makes *Fragile* look like a James Gang LP. So let us marvel, my friends, at the computer-like precision of Yes. Not only is this album more complex and intricate than its predecessor, but it is more unified, containing only three pieces. (One taking up one whole side, the others glomming but a half side each.) The title track (the biggie) utilizes the usual high-pitched harmonies and synthesized sounds that have become Yes trademarks. As a matter of fact, this LP makes use of every sound device imaginable, with the possible exception of the kitchen sink. (But don't worry, Yes fans, rumor has it that the plumbing's coming on their next release.)

Tyrannosaurus Rex—A Beginning (A&M)



A MODERN FABLE
Once upon a time, in a mythical and made up kingdom called England, there lived two down and out musicians named Marc Bolan and Steven Peregrin-Took. "Let us form a unique two man band," said Marc one day to Steve. "Yes," spake Steve sagely. And so it went. The two formed a magical little band called Tyrannosaurus Rex. "We'll call our magical little band Tyrannosaurus Rex," said Marc to Steve. "Yes," spake Steve even more sagely than in the preceding sentence. The very magical band made two very magical albums in England; *My People Were Fair And Had Sky In Their Hair* and another one with a title too long and ridiculous to recount here. "Someday when we have proven to the world that our simple music is great, these two albums will be released outside of our kingdom, like in the States, and garner us big bozo bucks," said Steve . . . not too sagely. And so, the two friends shook hands, taking an oath to keep their friendship and to preserve their very magical folk sound forever. "We will never sell out to cheesy rock and roll," said Steve with a grin. "You will never sell out to cheesy rock and roll," said Marc flatly.



Tyrannosaurus Rex

Johnny Rivers—L.A. Reggae (United Artists)



Johnny Rivers has always been a difficult artist to try to hang a label on. Like a chameleon on a crazy quilt, Rivers' style has changed with the times, from folk to rock to folk, and now back to rock again. Aided and abetted by a crew of rock die-hards, Rivers manages to do alright with some of his "new" material, like "Rock and Roll Pneumonia, Boogie Woogie Flu," but his treatment of songs like "Mother and Child Reunion" are laughably bad. Non-Rivers fans may find this one a bit too shallow for their tastes.