

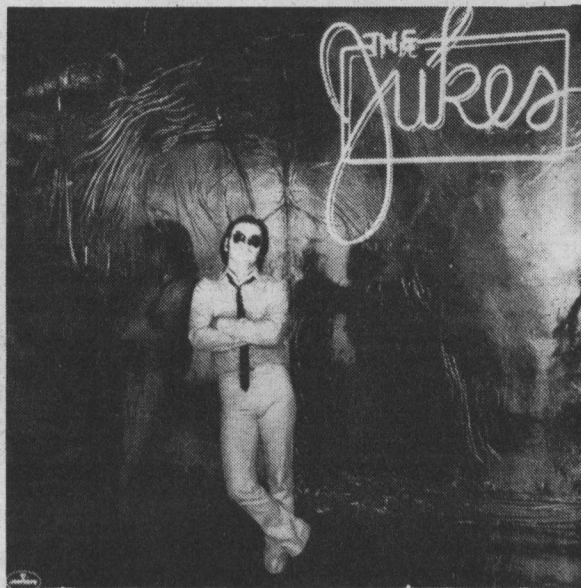
# The Jukes take break from quality

Record review by Gary McGowan

In the liner notes to the first Jukes LP, long-time mentor Bruce Springsteen wrote that the Jukes play "music as survival." It was an appropriate observation for the only other famous rocker from Ashbury Park, New Jersey to make. For while he continues to ascend the platinum heights with his increasingly popular blend of rock and roll classicism and personal statement, *The Jukes*, the fourth offering from Southside Johnny & The Ashbury Jukes, finds Southside Johnny mired in that never-never land between rock and rhythm and blues.

A washroom wall offered this pearl of wisdom the other day: "Disco is rhythm and blues for people who have neither." While I'm not sure about the latter, the former certainly holds true and goes a long way to explain why the punks of Middle America have lost interest in black music. If your memory dates back only five years (i.e. to the beginning of the disco explosion), it's difficult to relate to a time when it was hip for EVERYBODY to like Otis Redding. Similarly, while that same audience can explain the difference in styles say, between Iggy Pop and Lynyrd Skynyrd, the less than subtle nuances between the R & B of New York, Chicago, and California and the later soul styles of Motown and Muscle Shoals has always seemed beyond the fringe. It's from this rather unfortunate situation that Southside Johnny's dilemma springs.

For better or worse The Jukes have been tagged with the "archivist" label for much of their recorded career. Despite a strong body of original work (much of it contributed by now departed guitarist Steve Van Zandt), it's been the covers that have made the group's reputation. The Jukes always approached the R & B numbers they record with a certain reverence, going so far as to invite old stars like the Coasters, Lee Dorsey and Ronnie Spector to sing on their albums and play live with the band. It was always done within the context of a living, breathing style of music. They say



that when Southside and Ronnie Spector hit some notes together it made audiences forget that the Beatles had ever blown the Ronettes away. Yet, somehow, all that power failed to impress a wide audience and after three poor selling LP's (culminating in last year's brilliant *Hearts of Stone*), the group was off Epic and facing an uncertain future.

The future has proven to be uncertain in musical as well as contractual terms. Released on Mercury, *The Jukes* is an ill-focussed, uncertain effort. "All I Want is Everything" opens up the album with a big surprise for long-time fans. In place of a snappy horn number we have some frenetic guitar riffing from Billy Rush (lead player who also emerges as number one songwriter on this album), while the horns play a muted, weak melody. Unlike earlier efforts, Southside's voice sounds distant and not in command of the song.

Q. Are these the Jukes, or has Foreigner discovered Ray Charles? The by now obligatory Bruce Springsteen song is missing replaced instead by a song called "The Time" that sounds so much like Springsteen's "Fever" that The Boss might consider suing if he wasn't finished with lawyers forever. Even the songs that do depend upon the horns for definition, songs like "I'm So Anxious," "Living In The Real World," and "Vertigo," seem merely to be treading water, recycling old ideas that the band themselves have done better on their three previous releases.

So why has the wealth of talent that comprises Southside Johnny & The Ashbury Jukes failed to produce a winner? Basing my opinion on only three songs on the LP, I'll go out on a limb and put it down to songwriting. Recording in New York, the Jukes have always laboured under the shadow of Springsteen and the specialized taste of sometime guitarist and producer Miami Steve Van Zandt. *The Jukes*, however, was cut at the Muscle Shoals studios in Alabama, far from the maddening crowd as it were. Johnny Lyon and Billy Rush have written all the songs themselves, a new experience even for these master interpreters. The results were generally mediocre as previously chronicled, but three tunes hold hope for the future. The slow ballad "Paris" features a beautiful sax solo by way of requiem for the lover whose "Memory and desire can only bring pain."

The pursuit of the "little man lost" theme highlights the album's other two standouts, "I Remember Last Night" and "Wait In Vain." In the latter, a forsaken man, *Gripped by indecision/Paralyzed by Pride*, waits for something, anything from the lost lady. With lines like "Can't even find the strength to hate you anymore" set against an aching brass melody that pulls the heart down to the ground, Southside Johnny and The Jukes transcend their limitations and have me, at least, crossing my fingers for that next album.

## Dance company to perform in SUB Theatre

by Megan Collins

The Brian Webb Dance Company begins its second season with performances November 1st and 2nd at SUB Theatre. The performances by the six member company will include two new dances completed recently by Webb in collaboration with local composers Wendy Albrecht and Bob Myers.

Webb says his work is the result of "self-searching meditation." He is striving for "earth-bound realism"

in dances he characterizes as "dramatic and athletic."

Webb is inspired in most of his work by literature and painting. In creating "The Garden," his most recent piece, he was inspired by Zen sand gardens. In it he explores exhaustion and rejuvenation through the experience of a runner. Webb commissioned Bob Myers to write the music as a separate entity, which he collated directly to the dance he had created.

Another recent piece, "Ennui," "depends on boredom," says Webb. It is a "surrealistic" sequence of "unrelated, fantastic images," a "movement theme repeated to the bizarre."

Webb's goal is to raise dance in Alberta from entertainment to art form. His use of dances in more than one performance is not mere repetition. It allows the audience to develop a rapport with the dance as a living and changing organism.

Webb intends to commission the music for future dances as well. He insists that performances combining music and dance must have the dynamism of a meeting of separate people: not movement set to music but dance and music happening at the same time.



## The American friend

Movie review by Marni Stanley

Wim Winder's latest film, *The American Friend*, now playing at the Varsona is a highly stylized thriller fortified by some wonderful characterizations.

The film tells the story of Zimmerman, a Swiss framemaker and art restorer who is tricked into believing he is dying of an incurable illness, and then talked into committing a murder in order to leave a legacy for his wife and son. The man who instigates the con and then interferes on Zimmerman's behalf is Ripley, the American friend.

Bruno Ganz plays Zimmerman as a true artisan, a man with a perfect color sense and a house full of whimsical toys. His integrity in his craft is matched only by his loathing for the crime: when he must phone the man who ordered the hit, he puts a sheet of gold leaf over his hand as if the purity of the metal could somehow shield him.

Dennis Hopper's Ripley is the "cowboy in Hamburg." He wears a stetson, draws, and smokes Marlboros. Incongruously, he also lounges on red satin sheets and mutters cliched malaise ("I know less and less about who I am or who anybody else is") into a tape recorder. Ripley doesn't make things, he makes money, but the relationship he strikes up with Zimmerman is as fine as any painting.

It is the friendship between the two men that gives this film its value. Separately they are interesting characters, together they are funny and sad and always believable, which is quite remarkable considering some of the lapses of the plot. As hit-men, their incompetency is only equalled by their efficiency — two contracts quickly snowball into six bodies.

The film is based on Patricia Highsmith's novel *Ripley's Game* and it owes much of its style to the thrillers of the 40's. The gangsters especially are Hollywood types and their escapades give the film a nice campy humor.

People tend to walk on precipices or down the middle of roads in this picture. They live in toylands or old mansions decorated in plastic wrap and early pool hall, but they also meet, bind together and grow alienated from each other. Ganz's performance alone makes the film worthwhile and Hopper's enigmatic Ripley is a fine balance. In French, German, and English (with subtitles in all the right places), *The American Friend* gives you your money's worth.

## English grads out to bag some poems

by Allen Young

A new poetry magazine produced by two U of A graduates should be appearing on campus and in city bookstores this winter.

It's a magazine with a difference. Hoping to combine "economy and aesthetics," English graduates Elanor Verbicky and Ruth Sanborn are collecting poetry to be included in a 16 page publication entitled *Paper Bag Poems*.

"The response we have had so far shows there is a need for something like this."

*Paper Bag Poems*, self-financed by the editors, should appear in early December for about 75 cents a copy. About 250 copies will be produced.

If all goes well, Verbicky and Sanborn hope the magazine can be released up to four times a year.

"That depends on what sort of response we get," says Verbicky.

Submissions are being received from poets throughout Western Canada — as far off as Vancouver, says Verbicky.

Any poet may submit up to three poems for consideration until November 9.

"There are closets full of good unpublished poetry," says Verbicky.

Poets can send their work with a self addressed, stamped envelope to *Paper Bag Poems* #10-9938-88 Avenue, Edmonton, T6E 2R5 (Phone 439-6868).

## Former Gateway columnist makes good

Jon Whyte, Banff poet, author, freelance journalist, art critic, book designer and a graduate of the University of Alberta, will present a reading in the Students' Union Art Gallery on Thursday, November 1, at 12:30 p.m.

Whyte's writings are diverse and fascinating. They range from children's poetry — fast, facile and tongue-twisting — to lyrics and longer poems, many of which are concerned with the mythology of western Canada and the Rockies in particular. Whyte is a superlative reader of his own poetry and is an engaging entertainer. At the same time he is a serious reader of the poetry. "The best readings," he supposes, "are those in which the audience approaches both tears and laughter."

While he was a student at the University of

Alberta in the 1960s, Whyte was a writer and columnist for the *Gateway*, and editor of the literary magazine *Inside* which on one occasion embroiled him in an argument with then President Walter Johns. Whyte's issue of *Inside* had printed some scurrilous versions of Christmas carols and a send-up of Garner Ted Armstrong and Ernest Manning called "God's Great Plan."

In addition to being a columnist for the Banff *Crag and Canyon*, Jon Whyte has also written *The Rockies: High Where the Wind is Lonely*, published by Gage, and co-authored *Great Days in the Rockies* (Oxford) and *Beyond Exceptional Pass*. An exhibition of his concrete poems has toured Canada from the Dalhousie University Art Gallery to the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in Lethbridge.