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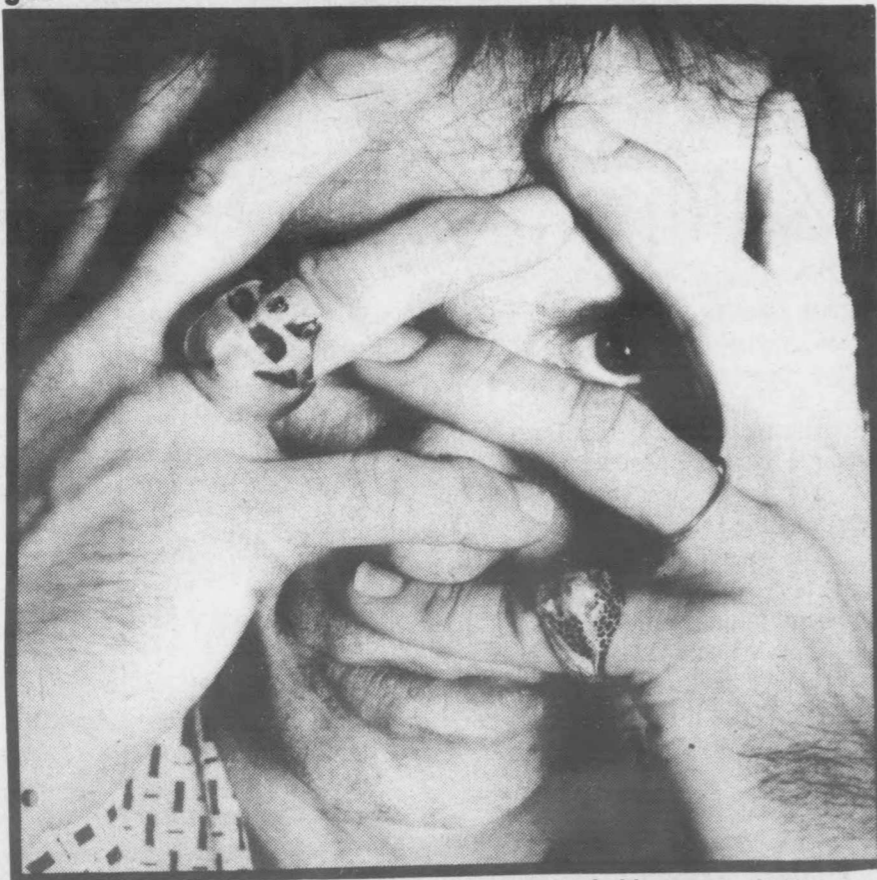
MEAT

Keith Richards

Talk is Cheap (A and M records)

Any one see that New Music special on the Stones? It was quite a hoot. It was proof positive that Wyman and Watts have in fact been dead for quite some time now, Jagger has become the quintessential pop philosopher, Woodie still sparkles like some beautiful electrified Zombie and keef well...he kinda reminds me of my Dad.

Dear old keef. Here is a



"oh, my gawd! - You mean the 'Meat gotta holduv my reckid?! I'm Doomed!!' KEEF, the face of a thousand fixes.

man that speaks in a voice that may be the chosen manifestation of Old Nick himself: it literally melts you, commands attention. The Richards soul has been repeatedly wrenched of its corporeal existence and dunked screaming and yelling into every hideous concoction known to man. Yet here he is talking to a bright young gal in his boat off the Carribean somewhere, sticking every which way in his old training pants and any minute now he's going to ask her if she'd like a cup of tea. Lawks-a-mercy!

"Would you change anything keef?" she asks, starting to feel a little nervous as he nonchalantly rearranges himself. He looks at the clear blue tropical sky and scratches his noggin with an outsized skull ring, which he will have brought off some pygmies in central Africa. "No not all...not anything." Wotta guy!

On 'Talk is Cheap' keef tries his hand at more or less everything the Stones have shaken a plagiarism at over the past twenty five years. It's a sad thing to report, but the result is a real bodge.

Here he has a go at some funk (with Bootsy on the wax lord help us!), there he'll take a stab at an Elvis hand-me-down, now he's baiting something that he's found crawling around in Motown's garbage pail. You get the idea. The worst thing about it all is that most of it DOES come off sounding like really bad Stones tunes with keef filling in for blubber lips. His delivery is far too flat and the entire can of worms lacks any enthusiasm. In fact parts

are down right embarrassing. If you can show me a creature that can endure 'Make no Mistake' without giving rise to a cringe for examples, I could probably show you a chartered accountant.

Simple changing riffs are what keef is especially good at and sure enough, there are a couple of these lurking about in the corners; old crusty things that are content to sit in the old rocker and yang on about the golden days. The

whole affair is rather like inviting a whole bunch of world weary bohemians and bauch-merchants around for a party and serving up warm milk and cookies. The premise anticipates a lot of punching, yelling and general good-tunes but the actuality is little more than a damp squib.

In brief, extremely dull and quite bereft of any excitement.

STEVE GRIFFITHS



(Island Records)

Live albums. What can you say about 'em? Well basically they perform two basic services to the listener. The first of these I suppose, is to allow the printer to remember those vivid memories of being shoved around, ripped off and puked on; the joy of three days tinnitus subsequent to the concert and of course being able to boast to all your friends "Oh yes? Well I've actually seen them/him/her LIVE! The second *raison d'etre* is undoubtedly the possibility of being able to capture a certain amount of spontaniety, unbridled energy and enthusiasm that is otherwise lacking on a carefully constructed sutdio album. Other than that, there is always the

chance to hear several hundred thousand North American Idiots screaming 'WHOOOOEEEE!' Then it is obvious that the live album must contain a certain bit of *Je ne sais quoi* (pretentious? moi?) to retain any credibility for being on sale at all. This is why Rattle and Hum (U2) and Kiss Alive II are laudable efforts from the genre and Springsteen's 5 box blow out is a failure, even though I respect the latter by several orders of magnitude over the former two.

So where does Tom Waits fit in? Mr. Waits is certainly not the sort of person to be found playing arenas nor indeed be expected to fill them. Instead you'll likely find him on some