

All Gazette staffers:

if you haven't applied for the position of Gazette editor by Monday noon then come to the meeting to vote for someone who has. Gazette meeting Monday, Jan. 28, 7:30 Rm 334 SUB



## Cat Stevens moves in new directions

Cat Stevens-Numbers (SP4555)

In many ways **Numbers** features the Cat Stevens we've known for many years but at the same time the album is a concept album which features Cat Stevens exploring new facets in his musical career. Both of these fragments of Cat Stevens when they are taken together create a very solid musical endeavour that shows perhaps for the first time the future direction of his music.

Cat Stevens over the years has been typified as an acoustic musician resisting all moves to progress towards a different orchestration in his music but **Numbers** sees him becoming more dependant upon the multiple keyboards that are so common in present-day music. Cat Stevens and Jean Roussel on the album together play eleven different types of keyboards ranging from the conventional piano to the harpsichord to various synthesizer keyboards. Yet in spite of all this electronic gadgetry Cat Stevens' music is still basically acoustic in character and he has not taken the path travelled by so many other acoustic musicians in becoming space-rock musicians who feature a melange of extra-terrestrial signals that only a chosen few can comprehend. Stevens is backed on the album by a vast array of talent including Gerry Conway, David Sanborn, Art Garfunkel and Lewis Furey (the latter two appear as vocalists). **Numbers** like **Foreigner Suite** (a past concept album) was not recorded in England as Stevens' past efforts have been, rather **Numbers** was recorded in Montreal in the summer of 1975.

**Numbers** deals with the planet Polygor in a distant galaxy from earth and if the cover is any indication of its true location, it would be in the vicinity of the gaseous nebula Trifid in Sagittarius. According to Cat Stevens' enclosed booklet, which accompanies the album the planet Polygor exists for the sole purpose of making and distributing to all the worlds the numbers that they use every day. The planet is inhabited by nine beings called appropriately enough Polygons: i.e., Monod, Dupey, Trezlan, Cubis, Qizlo, Hexidor, Septo, Octav and Novim. The album deals specifically with the day when things begin to change on the planet, which was unusual to the inhabitants for they were never able to remember anything that had ever changed in their long lives. It all started when a new being called Jzero came to their peaceful planet and wanted to stay and work with them.

The album opens with "Whistlestar" a wholly instrumental piece which features an acoustic blend between the guitars, keyboards and the percussion unit in a jazzlike number with a classical overtone and it readys us for Stevens' latest musical adventure. This mood is preserved in "Novim's Nightmare" which is a reflection by one of the Polygons on his existence and he ponders if anyone would really miss him. This selection is an acoustic piece carrying overtones of Cat Stevens' Greek heritage. "Majik of Majik" deals with the arrival of Jzero in a lively jazz number that reflects on the confusion of the nine Polygons and it is here that Stevens' new musical direction

blends best with his very familiar vocal expression. "Drywood" features a percussion unit being created between the Keyboards, drums and bass in a number that deals with the everlasting emotion of love which is stronger than material trappings (in this case the number each Polygon owns).

"Banapple Gas" deals with a certified, sterilized and non-toxic gas that is supposedly healthy to breathe. Stevens gives no mention of what it really is and this oversight seems understandable when most people very often do not consider the effects certain products might have on them. The selection is done in a jovial style by Cat Stevens, reminiscent of his past efforts. "Land O'Free Love and Goodbye" features Stevens accompanied by a children's choir from Ottawa and the harpsichord composition almost brings to mind the style of the madrigal. "Jzero" the song of the alien on Polygor is an accordion-acoustic guitar piece that once again features the familiar style of Cat Stevens in a song about trust and understanding. "Home" features the voices of the 'Magic Children of Ottawa' with a space-like electronic background that blends well with the acoustic guitar that accompanies Cat Stevens' vocals. The album closes with "Monod's Anthem", the national anthem of Polygor which features the children's choir backed by a String synthesizer.

In most cases the album is a surprise, particularly with respect to Cat Stevens' efforts to combine his acoustic style with the fast rising popular electronic music of the '70's. His efforts to fulfill this fusion of two distinct styles of music have been well executed. Perhaps **Numbers** will see Cat Stevens moving towards a more in depth interpretation of his music in the future.

**Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen-Tales from the Ozone (W.B. - BS2883)**

Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen return with another album that keeps alive their reputation as one of the best country boogie bands around. Once again the album has been recorded and refined to a high level of country purity in the deep south of the U.S.A., namely Southern California (It's not exactly Memphis or Texas but it is southern). **Tales from the Ozone** not to be confused with their **Lost in the Ozone** features not only their ever popular country boogie style but it also throws light onto their talents of playing more traditional country arrangements from Hank Williams and Hoyt Axton material to honky tonk music. They also feature material that touches on Cajun music, gambling songs, Tex-Mex music, '40's popular swing jazz, old radio plays and even gypsy music. So you can see that Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen do more than just churn out a good country boogie number. Although they hail from the south and are country-influenced musicians they aren't accepted by the Nashville country stars as 'bonafide' country musicians. Perhaps it's because they sing about barroom brawls, smoking dope and do the occasional number that isn't a commercial country product.

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