



SOUND TRACKS

by Mark Teehan

"KING BISCUIT BOY" (a/k/a Richard Newell: Epic). Dynamite stuff this is. It cooks with a solid funky sizzle that'll really get to your soul. Really. In the last couple of weeks "Biscuit" has practically lived on my turntable, and with each playing it sounds even better. The Biscuit Boy is of course Canada's harp man *par excellence* whose paid his dues with Ronnie Hawkins and made that goodie of 4 years back—"Official Music" with the help of Crowbar et. al. Since his last album with Daffodil Records, which spawned the likes of "Biscuit Boogie", the Biscuit has split to Columbia and this gem is the result. Aside from the KBB's naturally good soulful vocals and harp work, the other things that make this LP so good are that it was made in New Orleans and produced by **Allen Toussaint**. Besides writing 6 of the 10 songs here, all of which are up to snatch, Toussaint has backed the Biscuit with his own band, the Meters. And can those cats PLAY—they lay those rhythms down like they was born with 'em. Even old **Dr. John** adds a few choice licks on the album's fine closer, **River Boat**. So you can't lose. Go on and take a few bites outa this Biscuit, 'cause it tastes mighty good.

"APRIL WINE LIVE" (Aquarius). "Dead" would have been more appropriate for this disappointing LP. Surely the Wine set higher standards with their previous 3 LPs, 2 of which (the 1st and "Jewels") really worked well, and carved a niche for themselves as the Canadian hard-edged guitar band to check out. Their main problem has been sounding too derivative. But with this mistake they just about blow it all. "Live" LPs are always somewhat suspect and are often released when a group has temporarily run out of new material and their record co. wants to bring in a little more bread. Usually they come after 3 or 4 studio albums. Predictable as hell. I just can't see the point of this one. Why?? The two new songs, "Mama It's True" and "Druthers", are mundane rockers done up in a "complex" Status Quo style. Unimpressive at best. Then you've got that dammed single, "I'm On Fire For You Baby", which has to be the lamest thing this group has ever done. The lyrics are a joke. As for the 4 "oldies" that have appeared already in studio form, "Cat's Claw" gets the best treatment here and saves Side 1 from being a total waste. The 2 former singles ending the whole album are OK but add nothing at all to their studio cousins. "Band" is a stupid choice, while the excessive drum solo called "Fibes" is merely mediocre. With an improved selection of songs this would probably have been a better LO, but that still leaves the proverbial "Live" LP problem: transcending studio versions and generating some of the spirit/flavor of a group on stage. A few, like "Uriah Live" have done it but I'm afraid this one fails totally. Forget this and stick to the group's studio LPs unless you just have to get smashed on April Wine.

10cc—"Sheet Music" (UK/London). This was inadvertently left out of the "Good" section of recommended summer albums from last week. 10cc are a talented British group that in just 2 LPs has come up with some engaging, cleverly-arranged pop-rock music that effectively synthesizes a number of 60s pop styles (Beatles, Beach Boys, Move) while transcending this particular genre. In a way, they're like an English Steely Dan with their weell-crafted songs, tight instrumentation, and witty lyrics that convey a sense of subtle irony. And 10cc are real masters of the studio, using stuff like "synthesizas" and "melatron" (that's their spelling. . .) tastefully, employing all the

tricks of the trade, and even producing the whole thing themselves. The current single off the album, "The Wall Street Shuffle," is a good example of what they can do and will give you an idea of what the LP is like—you can check it out on Dal Radio where it's been no. 1 for awhile.

MOUNTAIN—"Avalanche" (Columbia/Windfall). What *is* this shit? It was good to hear these churning hard rockers had reformed after West, Bruce and Laing disbanded, but if this is the best they can do they oughta pack it back in. It's had to believe this is the same group that scored with an explosive "Mississippi Queen" back in '70. The bulk of the original songs here just don't cut it, and the group sounds slimy, sloppy and muddled. If you wanna hear Leslie West the big grubball and Felix Papalardi battle it out for fuzz-tone honors, step right up. Be prepared to hear "Satisfaction" completely massacred. Really, I thought Felix was above such atrocities as this.

HAWKWIND*—"Space Ritual" (United Artists). You'll either luv this a lot or hate the hell out of it, 'tis that kind of record. If you can get into it, you'll find it a Total Experience that zooms beyond the group's sludgy sound to far-out galaxies where no man has trod, where light years are as plentiful as seconds on earth, where minds can project themselves across space, etc. etc. No doubt about it, these guys (humanoids?) are dead serious with the "we gotta get outta this place" jitters. Supposedly this double set (recorded way back in Dec. '72 in England) captures their eerie stage show, said to be so far out that Pick Floyd looks puny in comparison. Don't know anything about that, but as a "live" LP this works. I'm hooked already, having been prepared to shrug it off after reading numerous put-down reviews in the rock press. For example Lester Bangs in Creem called it "merely weird glutz for failed aspirant Mansanoids too lame to implement their lurid fantasies." Hmmm. Scary, huh? Turn the lights out with this thing on and you might not be there when it's all over... As Always, decide for thyself, but this is still the only way I know of to hear Black Sabbath & the Floyd Together As One. (with only one turntable that is)

Check out some of these titles: "Born To Go, Space Is Deep", "Orgone Accumulator", "Brainstorm", "Sonic Attack". Truly the Cosmik Drone, and perfect for the Halifax-Dartmouth Jan-March doldrum period when you wanna Get Away From It All. Oh yeah, one more thing before I lose power and fade away: "Flying is trying is dying; we were born to go as far as we can fly; turn electric dreams into reality..."

NOTES: BTO went from nowhere to no. 27 in their first week on the *Cashbox* Top 175 LPs with "Not Fragile". That's slightly astounding—will track it here next week... Word on giant CSN&Y U.S. tour is that it's goin' down real well musically—no fights among the group, everybody seems to be gettin' along. Young really plays the Loner this time around. A "Best Of" double set has already been released, and a "Live" album from the tour seems to be in the works... Alvin Lee has split from TYA and is already working on a solo LP... Add Turtles to list of Reformed Groups... Artists recording with LPs due in the near future: Jeff Beck, Lou Reed, Joni Mitchell, Leo Kottke, Linda Ronstadt, Jackson Browne, Dave Mason, Gene Clark, Steve Stills, NRPS, Traffic, Commander Cody, Poco, Santana, Jefferson Starship, Black Sabbath, . . . Rock on.

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