

Records in Review

Low Budget - The Kinks
By W.L. Meyer

Anybody with even a passing interest in the popular music scene can recognize some of the works that Lennon and McCartney, Jagger and Richards and Peter Dinklage made popular in the 1960s and early 1970s. However, mention the name of Ray Davies and you'll probably get a blank stare. Some people may recall "You Really Got Me" (probable the cover versions be Manzanera's 801 and Van Halen) or "Lola" but this is only the surface of over a dozen top sellers written by Ray Davies over the past fifteen years. These songs are easily on par with "My Generation" or any of the Beatles' early music. One of the reasons that few people nowadays can recall the great Kinks' classics probably lies in the fact that all of the old kinks albums up to "Sleepwalker" are nearly impossible to get. Deletions and poor distribution (due in part to the many contractual problems the kinks had gotten into with their employers) are common to many old kinks records. Albums like "Kinks Kontroversy", "Muswell Hillbilly" and "Schoolboys in Disgrace" are just too good to be out of circulation. Hopefully, like the Doors older lps, these old kinks records will become more available to the record buying public.

Ray Davies and crew seem to always have the above mentioned problems dogging them. From their battles with the music industry and its image makers, Ray Davies has developed a common theme to many of his records, that of the "Jeez Sverage" character. First appearing on "Arthur or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire" lp, Davies average person reflected problems of the band and English life in general. Money problems occur, ageing, kids leaving home, and general boredom with everyday English life were common themes for "Arthur's life". Thus Davies sand of li's underdog and eventually the band itself became an "underdog" band.

On "Low Budget", once again a total album by the kinks seems to be dedicated to the average guy in the street but with a more Americanized view of things. Thus unlike Costello's frustrated English middle class stance, the Kinks' "Low Budget" is bound to be more Accessable" to the average North American. We can identify with most of the material on Low Budget whereas sometimes we can't even understand material from a Graham Parker or an Elvis Costello album (note here that I still enjoy material by these two guys as well as other 'new wave' bands).

If Davies' lyrics are aried to describe everyday occurrences, then his music reflects many different styles. From "cowboy" style acoustic on "Muswell Hillbilly", raunchy electric music of Schoolboys in Disgrace to an inspired bastardization of disco (last years "Superman" EP), Davies and band can make any of these music forms work well with a song. But like all great songwriters, Davies does "borrow" some of his material. The opening music on "The Hard Way" ("Schoolboys in Disgrace") is a direct copy of the opening of "I Can't Explain" by the Who. Similarly, on "Catch Me Now I'm Falling" from "Low Budget", one can hear an unmistakable Stones' riff occur several times. However, Ray Davies blatant "rip offs" is totally excusable since he

adds his own music to the borrowed parts which give the impression of a new song. Thus Davies does not attempt to hide his borrowed pieces but uses them to catch our attention for the "real mes" of his songs. Of course Davies only does this on very few of his many songs and he does not use others' tunes due to lack of originality. In fact Ray Davies is probably one of the most unique and original minds of 1960s and 1970s British rock. Somehow it even seems that the lack of recognition of this fact wuits Davies fine as he can jen even more of his superb music dealing with the underdogs.

"Attitude" opens side one of "Low Budget" with Davies coming down hard on those not participating in life and who then complain about it. The song is forceful with a harsh electric guitar line and raspy singing at first leading to a more typical kinks style later in the song.

If "Attitude" condemns 'whiners' then 'Pressure' and 'National Health' tells them they have company in the line of life's problems. 'Pressure' (a rocker reminiscent of Status Quo and with a touch of Johnny Rotten) tells how easy it is to become under strain and basically the song offers us a bit of company. 'National Health' switches music style to something more like reggae in places. Davies does a neat take off of a Jamaican accent while putting forth his theory of "letting out your tension" by "loosening up your muscles." Ray Davies use of keyboards on this song is a pleasant surprise as the keyboards take over notes a reggae band would give the bass guitar.

"Wigh I Could Fly Like Superman" is different for the kinks to say the least. Released last spring as an extended play, it was a novelty item for kinks' followers and made its mark on the disco charts. Supposedly the song is disco but I can't bring myself to 'classify' as such. The lyrics of Superman are a bit too intelligent and witty and the mindlessness associated with that genre of music. Disco and its beat is great for dancing but lets keep it in the dancehalls and off the airwaves. If I had my way, we'd get the young people out of the discos and back into the streets where they belong. So much for today's sermon on disco. (If its any consolation to disco freaks, I do like some of Donna Summers material). Anyways, "Superman" seems to deal with the theme that you can't solve the world's problems especially if you're a "nine stone weakling". The song has superb guitar work by Dave Davies (Ray's brother) and a tasteful "beat" provided by long time kinks' drummer Mick Avory and newcomer, bassist Jim Rodford. While on the topic of music, I should say that the guitar work by Dave Davies is easily his best since "Schoolboys in Disgrace" and that is saying something. In places on "Low Budget", he just soars with his guitar line.

The second side opens with the title cut another driving rocker. Along with the blues style "A Gallon of Gas", "Low Budget" laments the poor economic situation of today's America. Indeed, "A Gallon Of Gas" exaggerates that its easier "to score some coke and grade one grass" than buy a gallon of gas. Future truth?

Misery is the other hard rocker on side two (along with "Low Budget") and offers a few more lessons on life. There's an excellent piano accompaniment as well as buck up on vocals reminiscent of old spiritual songs. "In a Space", "A Little Bit Of Emotion" and "Moving Pictures" provide a bit of calm to Low Budget. "In a Space" is Davies note on population increases and has a different type of middle verse. "A Little Bit of Emotion" is Ray Davies asking just that from people.

About the fifth verse in this song, a low, sullen synthesizer sound comes in setting off the mood perfectly. At first listen the singing sounds a bit contrived but by my fifth or sixth listen, I really got to like this song. The album's final song, "Moving Pictures" reaffirms the fact that as long as the Davies brothers are together, the kinks will go on exploring new music styles. New wave, punk and disco all had their influence on Ray Davies for "Low Budget". As usual, Davies made all these types of music sound even more original than they really are. Another perfect album by the kinks, possibly their hardest rocker yet. Only one minor complaint and that's the ridiculous price (\$7.98 list) one has to pay for "Low Budget".

Drama society

By Theresa Bunbury

Rehearsals have started for "Killing Game" by Eugene Ionesco, UNB drama society's fall performance. The play, described by society president Vaughn Fulford as a black comedy, is in fact one of those plays which constitute the Theatre of the Absurd.

The play consists of many short, apparently discontinuous scenes, which may be both humorous and tragic, inducing an audience reaction from tears to laughter.

Kevin Backs, a student at UNB is the director of "Killing Game". This will be Backs' first major production but he has had extensive experience with drama in other areas.

The cast, very content with the choice of play, is larger than last year's full production cast. While final casting is as yet incomplete (the play allows for great flexibility in this area) the total cast will probably number between sixteen or twenty as compared with six or seven the previous year.

Production is tentatively scheduled for late November. As usual the production will take place at Memorial Hall.

Food for Thought

THE DELI

56 Regent Street
455-4733

Open: Monday to Wednesday - 9:30 to 5:00

Thursday - 9:30 to 6:00

Friday - 9:30 to 9:00

Saturday - 9:30 to 5:00

Closed on Sundays.

About six months ago, Tin and Mike Tobias came to Fredericton from Saint John and began renovating the old shoe repair store at the bottom of Regent Street. It is now converted into a delightful delicatessen, unambiguously named "The Deli".

All the treats of a true "deli" are available: an array of cold meats and pates as well as Kosher meats, cheeses, danishes, bagels (fresh on Thursdays), Greek and Lebanese pastries, homemade cheesecake, and a small assortment of gourmet and ethnic dry and canned goods, pickles and olives. Their specialty is a Lebanese Dagwood with three kinds of meat, tomatoes, lettuce and cheese on pita bread. If smoked meat is on your list of favorites, then this is your haven: it is brough from Ben's in Montreal, and Ben's is purported to have THE best smoked meat - I have never run across anyone who would dispute the fact. Other sandwiches are Roast Beef on Kaiser, Liverwurst and Cheese, and Bagel Lox and cream chese - the mark of a true delicatessen (for the uninitiated, "lox" are thin slices of smoked salmon), ranging in price from \$1.25 to \$2.90. For a light snack have an egg roll, homemade baked beans on Saturday mornings, a bowl of daily homemade soups or a choice from a dozen different kinds of ice cream.

The Deli is only in its third month, but the locale is very small, but plans are in the making for increasing the seating capacity. Considering the wild success it is enjoying, I wouldn't be surprised if we saw *The Deli* undergoing expansion in the near future (dare we anticipate another *Dunn's*?). The decor is not all in the elegant vein, but very charming and relaxing with calm colors and painting depicting Maritime and country scenes. Initiative to deviate from the norm demands courage as the risk of failure is everpresent. Tina Tobias' innovative venture has been successful - let us reap the benefits.

For what it is, I rate *The Deli* as a big 9 out of 10.

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