

record review

Manfred Mann mixes progressive and hard rock

By CHRIS HUNT

I wandered into the bookstore the other day and began browsing through the albums when this fellow who supplies the bookstore with records said to me, "Looking for anything in particular?"

"Yeah" I replied, "Some Bruce Springsteen."

"I think they're all sold out," he said, "but we should have a new shipment in soon." I grunted an acknowledgement and continued browsing. Suddenly he said "Are you into the heavy thing?"

"Yeah," I answered, "I guess so."

"You should try the new Manfred Mann album. It's really

good - very tight." So I took the album out of the racks and looked at it, while he went into a rap about the history of Manfred Mann. My wallet was burning a hole in my pocket and it looked good so I said to myself "Why not?" and bought it. It was worth it.

Manfred Mann's Earth Band is probably one of the most underrated groups around with 60's antecedents. It possesses in Mich Rogers both a fine singer and an excellent guitarist, while Manfred Mann is one of the most skilled synthesiser specialists in the field and his organ work is quite impressive as well. They are backed by an excellent rhythm

section composed of Colin Patten on bass and Chris Slade on drums.

This album, although containing its fair share of, shall we say, freaky music, isn't quite as space oriented as some of the earlier recordings like "Solar Fire". It opens with an excellent version of Bruce Springsteen's "Spirit in the Night". I don't know how else to describe it. Everything about it is good - guitar, singing, bass, drums and Manfred adds some nice colours to the final section with his synthesiser.

Following that is an instrumental cut called "Countdown". It's a fast heavy tune that leads the album away from Springsteen's

'Greasy Lake' and back into outer space. There is some fine synthesiser work in this cut. Then comes "Time is Right" and we are still wandering in the outer realms of rock and roll but with an R & B feeling. The last cut on the first side is "Crossfade" which is another good cosmic instrumental.

The second side opens with a song called "Visionary Mountains" which is a really great song. It's kind of a heavy-light song. The guitar and synthesiser are outstanding and yet not dominating. A good rocking version of Bob Dylan's "Quit Your Low Down Ways" follows with the title cut moving in slowly and eerily after that. The next song "Fat Nelly" is

a very good song with biting lyrics, and the final cut "As Above So Below" is another instrumental recorded live with a tape of nightingales and bombers incorporated into it. According to the jacket notes, the tape was made by an English ornithologist during the Second World War, who intended to tape nightingales but the bombers flew over at the same time and were recorded accidentally.

"Nightingales and Bombers" is a remarkably good album and can fit easily into the collections of nearly all rock fans. It's both progressive rock and good old hard rock - the perfect compromise. Thanks mister.

Hearts of the West:

a nice mild humourous movie

By LYN WILSON

According to the critics I shouldn't be writing this column, what with my simple language and lazy style. Nonetheless, needless to say, irrelevant to the matter, I am still on the staff and again this week shall give you a personal opinion of a movie. If, should you find the time and fortitude, you continue to read on, I thank you.

Last night, I went to see *Hearts of the West*, a long awaited 'comedy surprise'. Jeff Bridges filled the starring role adequately, putting most of the comedy into the movie himself. Andy Griffith only succeeded to devalue his acting abilities and accentuate the fact that the man is getting old, very old. For the rest of the cast, Donald Pleasence, Blythe Danner, Alan Arkin and the extra extras, there is little to be said. They fit into the scheme of things and performed their roles well, giving a semblance of support to the star and the story. But, inevitably, you can't do everything with nothing.

Hearts of the West is a funny movie, after you drag through the first half hour of a slow beginning,

and of course if you drop the last hour of a dying end. The story line is simple, a young, romantic dreamer hoping for fame and fortune to come from his heart rending tales of the west; he goes west for education and learns some strange lessons on the desert and on the 'set'.

There are only about thirty-five minutes of entertainment in this movie but the laughs are fantastic during that time. Jeff Bridges is a natural at comedy with his sweet and innocent boyish face. I enjoyed Jeff in *The Other Side of the Mountain* as the boy wonder and to see him again was my basic reason for going to *Hearts of the West*. If the movie isn't a great success it's surely not the fault of Jeff Bridges.

Giving *Hearts of the West* a rating of '6' on my little insignificant chart would be a kindness and so there it is. The movie is not atrocious or vulgar, just slow, simple and, yes funny. I give Jeff a rating of 9, which doesn't count for the movie, only him.

The Cinema up the hill is showing 3 days of the *Condor* starring Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway. I'm not a Redford fan so if it sounds good, go see it.

Humanities Association

announces meeting

There will be a meeting on Tuesday evening at 8:30, Feb. 3, in Marshall d'Avray Auditorium, of the Fredericton Branch of the Humanities Association of Canada.

There will also be an Open Contemporary dance rehearsal by the UNB Dance Theatre directed

by Nenagh Leigh.

This is to be followed by an informal discussion.

More information is available from Marion Owen-fekete, President of Humanities Association of Canada.

Purcell String Quartet to perform

The Purcell String Quartet of Vancouver will perform at UNB in both Fredericton and Saint John next week.

The quartet will play Tuesday, Feb. 3, at 8:15 p.m. in the Fredericton Playhouse. They will perform Sunrise Quartet in B Flat, Opus 76, No. 4 by Haydn and The Bullfighter's Prayer by Turina.

They will be joined by the Brunswick String Quartet for the performance of Two Pieces for Octet, Opus 11 by Shostakovich and Octet in E Flat, Opus 20 by Mendelssohn.

The visiting quartet will perform in Saint John Thursday, Feb. 5, at 8:30 p.m. in Ganong Hall theatre.

The program will be Sunrise Quartet in B Flat, Opus 76, No. 4 by Haydn, Quartet in G Minor, Opus 10 by Debussy and Quartet in A Minor, Opus 51, No. 2 by Brahms.

The Purcell String Quartet, Violinists Norman and Frederick

Nelson, violist Phillippe Etter and cellist Ian Hampton, is the quarter-in-residence at Simon Fraser University.

Formed in 1969, the group has enjoyed success through concerts in British Columbia and on tours in North America and England. They have recorded performances for CBC radio and the British Broadcasting Corporation.

In addition to performances at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Wigmore Hall in London and Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto, they have performed at New York's Carnegie Recital Hall and in San Francisco.

Their visit to New Brunswick is being sponsored by the Creative Arts Committee in Fredericton; the Lorenzo Society in Saint John with travel funds provided by the Touring Office of the Canada Council.

Halfway There

By PATRICK O'BRIEN

The wind slashed through the naked trees. The icy twigs shattered beneath the frequent gusts of the North West Wind, and flew like shimmering darts across the forest path.

He pulled at the strings to tighten the hood of his parka. The exposed skin of his face was red, and burning inside. The moisture of his breath froze upon his beard and moustache.

The air, brittle as the branches, felt heavy and lifeless; his face was a mask of unfamiliar torment that he longed to cast away.

Tying the drawstrings with his gloves on was impossible, but he could not remove them because his numb fingers could never replace them. His hands hung like useless hunks of wood attached stiffly to his wrists.

Giving up on the hood, he plodded on for a time, then turned to watch his footsteps filling with the drifting snow. Until there was no trace of his progress.

He thought of turning back again, but he was nearly halfway there, halfway at least - so he was forced to continue. Again adjusting his hood as best he could. He stumbled on.

The moonlight reflected off the endless snow would have provided more than enough light, had his eyes not been frozen nearly half shut by ice and driven snow.

So he squinted and stumbled through the cold. The snow scrunching beneath his boots, squeaking in protest as he made his way slowly and mechanically along the path.

Nearly halfway there.

He did not hear the sharp crack, as the larger limb broke; nor did he feel the blow upon his neck, or see his blood coagulating in the snow.

Only a soft red glow.

Warm . . .

He opened his eyes and the red faded slowly to pink, but nothing would come into focus - only floating shadows or shapes, reflections of movement.

He rose slowly and stood on unfamiliar feet, then, without a backward glance; he trod off towards the shadows dropping his gloves and letting the breeze wash his hair he took off his parka and wandered off - leaving what was left of humanity behind him.