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Note: There are now two matinee performances with lower-scaled ticket prices—Sundays and Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m.

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Cockburn - solo debut

By BRIAN PEARL

The collegian crowd of students and girlfriends, all with neat, shaggy hair and expensive, cheap-looking clothes fills the Riverboat. They talk to each other quietly over their cokes while the Band album 'Stage Fright' cavorts in the background. We fake it as best we can, the rich visitors in Yorkville (the home of 'high poverty'), looking unconcerned and in place while the opposite is true. The straight collegian crowd armed with dough and one lonely, jotting parajournalist.

And the object of all this incongruity? One new, up-and-coming Canadian folksinger — Bruce Cockburn (no, that's Co-burn vocally) with a gentle manner, quiet and unpretentious, and a mind that cuts both ways. In one night he can sing, in tunes that match the lyrics with uncanny aptness,

"I'm goin' to the country,
Sunshine, smile on me."
or
"God has buttered the land with sunlight" and then, with that insight into the world that talent converts to meaning, he writes,

"You know, these city towers,
jewels in the Serpent's crown,
twist the space between them
'till every eye is blinded."

And Cockburn can tell the truth in other ways:

"By ornaments entranced
we trace in frenzied dance
the patterns carved by chance
on the pavement of memory."

Filling the Riverboat three times a night can still "blow my mind", admits Cockburn; he's new to solo playing. But Bruce Cockburn isn't new at all to Canadian folk music. A member of the remarkable group 3's a Crowd and several other less commercial groups, Cockburn's been getting into this thing for years, perhaps his entire life. He was born in Ottawa and after high school, spent several months in Paris, where he worked as a street musician until the police brought about his enforced retirement.

Cockburn's Canadian debut as a solo performer came at the Mariposa Folk Festival the summer before last where he enchanted an audience of over 5,000 people. He was offered a recording contract by a producer in the audience.

The only difference between his first, fascinating album and his live performance are an unnecessary shyness and quietness that tends to become self-effacing. The intensity that reached right through his album was still there but less obvious because Cockburn only says a little about even less between songs. A live performance is the best time to show the people who like your music what sort of person you are, basically, and while I feel that I know and like Bruce Cockburn's music, I still don't know much about him.

When Cockburn learns how to make "musical friends" (the title of one of his songs) in small groups and not just crowds or the massed audience of an album, he'll be closer to being the mature artist he can and should become.

Last year Bruce Cockburn wrote a fine musical score for Don Shebib's film, *Goin' Down the Road*,

including the beautiful title song which he recorded last week at the Toronto studio of True North Recording, the new Canadian label of Columbia Records. Cockburn's first album is numbered TN-1, True North's first release, and hopefully, the first of many equally good Canadian albums.

Canada has been the home of many fine folk musicians — Joni Mitchell, Ian and Sylvia Tyson and Leonard Cohen for instance — and it will be the home of many more, if we keep our eyes and ears open wide. The last song on Cockburn's album is called *Keep It Open*, and its about just that.



Blind faith dead but — members live on record

By STEVE GELLER

It should be noted that although the Blind Faith organization only lasted a few months and released six tracks in the form of a single album entitled *Blind Faith* (Polydor 543.035), yet it managed to combine the very best efforts of Ginger Baker, Stevie Winwood, Rick Grech, and Eric Clapton.

It is apparently true that the euphoric blues-rock created by this late supergroup may never be equalled in its excellence again, but it does not mean that Blind Faith is dead. The former members of Blind Faith live together on record and are creating new impressions on the music world individually and in the form of new groups.

Air Force

Ginger Baker's Air Force was born shortly after the break up of Blind Faith.

The Air Force album (Polydor 2262001) seems to indicate that the main aim of this group was to capitalize on the popularity of its personnel in order to make a quick buck with a double record set which was advertised as a "special low price" but which really contains a special low quality.

Air Force was made up of Baker, Rick Grech, and Stevie Winwood (also from Blind Faith) as well as a host of other percussionists, guitarists and wind instrumentalists including the well-known Graham Bond.

Musically the album appears to have good potential because it consists of some fine material such as *Toad*, the drum solo which Baker made famous for the Cream, and *Do What You Like* which was a great Blind Faith number. Unfortunately Air Force tries to mix the rock sounds of guitar and organ with the so-called rock movements of saxophones and flutes. The result is a terrible mixture of constantly clashing, uncontrollable noise. The arrangement on the album is poor but to top everything off the sound on the live recording suffers from a lack of careful engineering and production techniques.

John Barleycorn Must die - Traffic

Although Dave Mason left to make it on his own, Chris Wood and Jim Capaldi, with the musical genius of Stevie Winwood are on their way to make Traffic the most outstanding trio of the year.

The title tune, John Barleycorn, is an ancient ballad dating back to the 15th century. Winwood has handled the arrangement of this classic song about the efforts of people to give up alcohol distilled from barley, in such a way that the end result is a beautifully soft saga with a contemporary structure and arrangement. From this point Traffic veer to a soft rock premise in the form of *Empty Rages* and *Stranger To Himself* before trying,

with surprising success, two jazz-rock songs written by Winwood and Capaldi entitled *Glad* and *Freedom Rider*. It is this jazz element that could be worked upon and developed to a further, fuller extent in future Traffic albums.

In lieu of its overall quality it remains an understatement to say that John Barleycorn must die is fine album.

Eric Clapton

Since his departure from Blind Faith, Eric Clapton toured with Delaney and Bonnie and Friends while he worked on ideas for a solo album. His new recording, simply called *Eric Clapton* (Polydor 2383021) is really anything but a solo effort as well as being unoriginal in content and a rather total disappointment in general.

Clapton recorded his album with the help of perhaps some of the music world's best known people, Stephen Sills, John Simon, Leon Russel and Delaney and Bonnie to name just a few. Clapton, who is a superb blues guitarist did not write one cut; instead the songs were composed mostly by the Bramletts (Delaney and Bonnie) with a little help from Clapton himself. The result is that Clapton does not display his blues ability but is instead caught in the middle of and completely overpowered by the big band country-gospel sound of Delaney and Bonnie, who also produced and arranged the album.