

Keeping up with ex-Beatles

Re-union rumours, but the solos keep on comin'

By RICHARD GOULD

"Has the persistent talk about a Beatles re-union album annoyed you over the years?" asked a Los Angeles Times reporter in an interview with John Lennon.

"It used to bother me, but I'm sort of resigned to that talk."

"Do you think a re-union album would be a good idea?"

"If you had asked me last year, I

would have said, 'No. No way. I'm not going back one step.' But I just think anything is possible now."

Ever since the Beatle's liquefaction a few years ago, there has been much hope that the group would re-unite. And judging from Lennon's mellowed tone, the last obstacle may have fallen.

Unfortunately, the trouble now is territorial. John, Paul, George and

Ringo all played on the latest Ringo album, but on separate cuts. The two songs on which McCartney played were recorded in England, while the rest of the album was recorded in the U.S.

According to Wilder Penfield III of Capitol Records, if Lennon leaves the States, he may not be allowed back in, due to a previous drug bust. (In fact, it is rumoured that the U.S. is trying to

deport him.)

As for McCartney, one source says he can't enter the U.S. because of (you guessed it) a drug bust. But both Variety and Zoo World reported that he and Wings would be doing an American tour.

Apple Records has denied this report, stating that McCartney has no plans to tour North America with Ringo this year. If so, the only chance for a new Beatles album would involve laying down tracks in one country and mixing them with tracks laid down in another.

While this procedure is not too complicated, the trans-continental album may have poor continuity and be extremely expensive to produce, thereby rendering it unfeasible.

Meanwhile, the Beatles are still ac-

tive. On Ringo Starr's latest album, Ringo, Sunshine Life for Me features most of the members of The Band, while Oh My My and Step Lightly reflect the earlier cuts of the Beatles.

The only cut written and played by Lennon is I'm the Greatest, apparently an answer to the National Lampoon's parody of Lennon on their Radio Dinner LP.

John Lennon's own album, Mind Games, is somewhat of a letdown. The lyrics in particular are far weaker than the hard, ironic "working class hero is something to be" lyrics of John Lennon (SW 3372). The only saving grace is the guitar playing and some good vocal harmonies.

Elsewhere, George Harrison's latest release, George Harrison, has well-written and produced music, but lacks drive and excitement.

Mean Streets is a vivid safari through the jungle of New York

By J.W. BELTRAME

The initiation of three young Italian Americans into the world of their Mafiosi elders is the subject of the film Mean Streets.

Charlie, the subject of the film, must keep in the good graces of his uncle, from whom he wants to purchase a restaurant.

But Charlie can't reconcile his fear of eternal damnation to his life style, so as penance he vows to take under his protective wing Johnny Boy, a hot-head who owes money to all the wrong people. As insurance, Charlie constantly puts his fingers into fire to prepare himself for the flames of hell.

"But the fire of hell is infinitely larger," he tells himself. "And you don't fuck around with the infinite."

To add to his problems, Charlie is in love with Johnny Boy's cousin Teresa who is an epileptic, and whom his uncle calls "sick in the head".

His love for Teresa, however, does not stop him from fantasizing about a black stripper working at his friend's bar. "She's really good looking, but she's black. You got to see that. It's plain, right? Well there's not much difference, is there?"

But Charlie knows there is; both his friends and his uncle are colour conscious.

All these tensions revealed at the beginning of the film develop into a first rate production. The film is a journey

through the mean streets of New York, and the intermingling of the lives of Charlie, Johnny Boy, Michael Johnny's creditor, and Teresa result in an often funny, sometimes sad, but always vividly real exploration of people and their life styles.

Writer-director Martin Scorsese has found the perfect formula for making reality entertaining, and has avoided the temptation to moralize.

We are told in the opening scene that of the two punishments in hell, the spiritual is worse. From then on Scorsese lets the characters play out their fates.

The eerie finale comes as a surprise only because we become too involved with the characters to realize what has to happen.

Harvey Keitel hands in a flawless performance as the troubled Charlie and Robert De Niro is the perfect hot-headed, half-crazy jerk who can't understand what will happen to him if he double-crosses his friends. Ken Wakefield's hand-held camera makes us feel like an observer in the action, rather than someone who has gone to watch a movie on Saturday night.

The sound track gives us such oldies as Be My Baby, the more contemporary Jumping Jack Flash, and some beautifully melodic Italian ballads.

Mean Streets is the best Mafia picture in recent years, and rates in the top five of this or any other year. It's playing at the Uptown Backstage I.



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