

Zeppelin's Graffiti-flashes of the past.

If you remember the spontaneity, raw power, and throaty sex of the early Zeppelin material; if you were pleasantly surprised when the group turned to experimental rhythms, steel guitars, and incredibly beautiful ballads in Zep III and IV; if you sort of liked their *Houses of the Holy*, but weren't really that thrilled with it; and if you approach their newest with a sort of apprehension, as if to say "maybe they've had it" - well, you can rest at ease. Physical Graffiti will take you back.

The double album format is always a big risk - few groups are capable of holding your interest through four sides of music, but Zeppelin is certainly one of them.

Jimmy Page gets better at production every time out, and though his guitar often takes a back seat to the melodies, rhythms, and vocals, what he does give you is just as good as it ever was.

Robert Plant flaunts sex with every word of "The Wanton Song", and the powerful rock sound that was mostly missing from their last effort is back in full bloom on

"Houses of the Holy" (not the album) and especially "Trampled Under Foot."

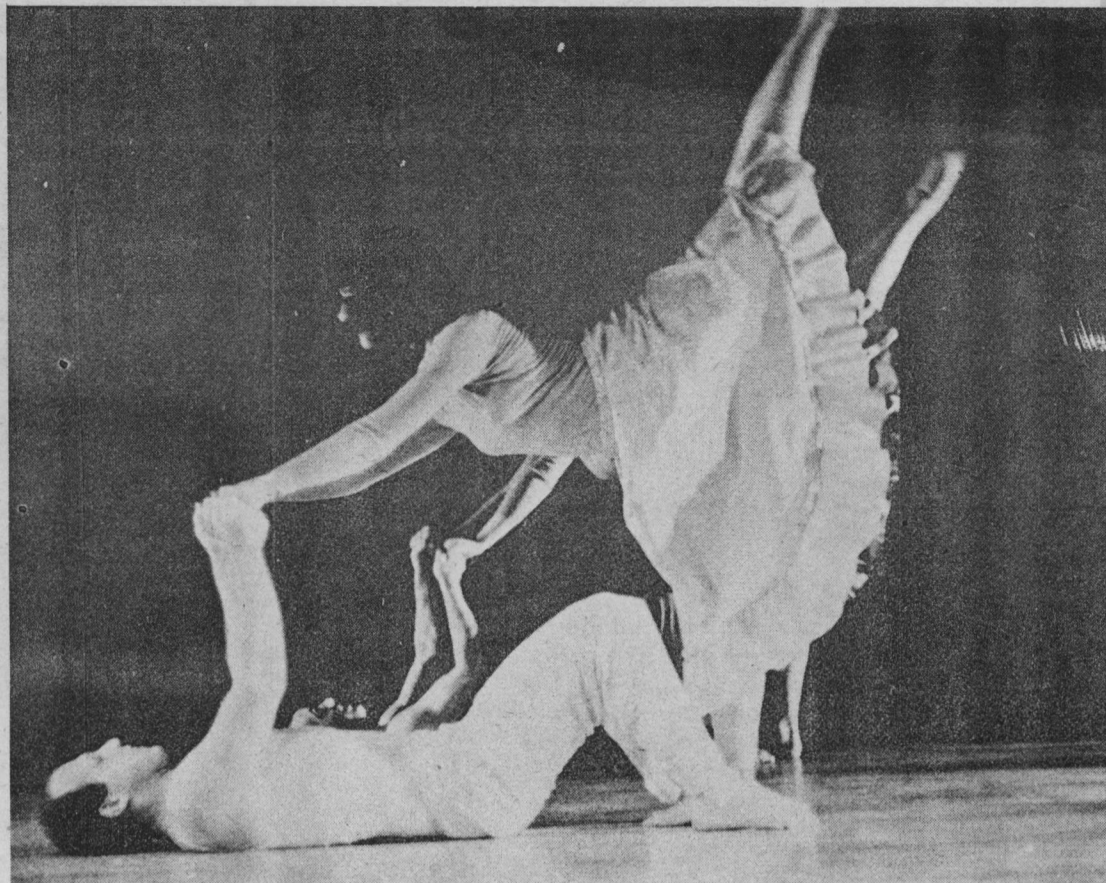
New twists on this album include a more extensive use of John Paul Jones' keyboard talents (distinctively Led Zeppelin), and a couple of cuts with a country flavor, which the group pulls off very well, indeed.

But Page's flair for the unusual really hits its stride on two of the longer cuts, "In the Light" and "Kashmir." Both are well in excess of five minutes in length, but neither drags on, simply because of Page's innovation as a producer (and a vintage Zeppelin guitar lick on "In the Light").

And if "Kashmir" doesn't make you feel like you're riding doubles with Lawrence of Arabia on a camel, then you probably missed the movie.

If they could have put out a three-side album, it would have been just about perfect, for there are a few songs that even the staunchest Zeppelin fan couldn't justify. But all in all, it's their best in a couple of years, at least.

Jack Faraday



On Friday April 4th, Saturday April 5th, and Sunday April 6th, beginning each evening at 8:30 pm, the Alberta Contemporary Dance Theatre will present its annual SPRING CONCERT at the SUB on the University of Alberta Campus. The above photo, shot at rehearsal reflects Charlene Tarver's *Alberta Suite*.

Turtle bids year's farewell

Steeleye Span
Commoners' Crown

Steeleye Span, (inevitably to be confused with Steely Dan, but there is no similarity), is undoubtedly the most successful off-shoot group from Fairport Convention. Formed by Ashley Hutchings, a founding member of Fairport, Steeleye Span has recorded seven albums. *Commoners' Crown* the most recent. Hutchings has subsequently left the group, but the moving force of Steeleye Span, the long-time duo of Tim Hart and Madeline Prior, fortunately remain.

It takes great restraint on my part to avoid raving on endlessly about how great Steeleye Span is, and the quality of *Commoners' Crown* makes this dilemma none the easier to solve. Well-known for their unique ability to blend traditional folk music with contemporary rock, the Spanners have achieved a reputation in their field that can be matched only by their parent group, Fairport Convention.

The new album, however, has its faults, the most unfortunate being the decline of prominence of Maddy Prior. Miss Prior is simply an astounding vocalist, whose crystal-shattering voice has become a trademark of Steeleye Span. On *Commoners' Crown*, though, Maddy's voice seems to have been thrust behind the instruments, and this sloppy production job on the part of Robin Black and the Spanners themselves, lessens the impact of the lyrics.

Maddy Prior does shine occasionally, though, especially in the songs *Lord Lankin* and *Demon Lover*. She remains, without a doubt, the most underrated vocalist in the world.

Steeleye Span has started to write its own music, rather than continuing to adapt traditional tunes. This is understandable, for any inspired musician eventually begins to write his own music, in his own style. The Spanners have managed to retain the unique touch of folkly conventionalism, (bit of a pun there), which sets them apart from others, while

expanding their focus at the same time. Die-hard Steeleye fans might have trouble accepting this shift in emphasis, but the fact remains that the group has managed to avoid the common problem of falling into a rut of mediocrity and lack of dynamism.

Poor production has always haunted Steeleye Span, and *Commoners' Crown* is no exception. Loyal fans will perhaps be able to accept this problem, and even if they can't, die-hards and newcomers alike will be able to appreciate the whimsical and original music of Steeleye Span.

ODDS AND ENDS:

Seeing that this is my final review of the year, for which my editor is unexplainably thankful, I feel a few wrap-up comments are in order. I feel an urgent

desire to let it be known to my faithful reader(s) that *Crime of the Century*, an album by Supertramp, should be purchased. Probably the best-produced album of the last ten years, *Crime of the Century* brings all the good things about rock music together. I never thought I would say it, but this album is better than anything that Peter Gabriel and Genesis have done, and those familiar with Genesis will realize what a compliment this statement is. ... Watch for the new Fairport album over the summer... rumour has it that the Moody Blahs have regrouped to resume what some have erroneously termed a musical career. Looks like a good thing never lasts forever... I'll be back next year with my informative, intelligent, infallible, and infuriating reviews.

Gordon Turtle

Frampton happy without Pie

Although Peter Frampton's new album is primarily electric, he originally went solo in order to pursue a more acoustic direction.

In an exclusive Earth Starship interview, Peter explained, "I left Humble Pie four years ago because it was musically frustrating. I wanted to get into a more acoustic thing. Humble Pie was too electric - too much guitar. After not doing much for nine months after leaving Humble Pie I was dying to go on the road, but I had virtually no confidence moving from a band to being a front man."

Peter is particularly proud of his new album, "Frampton." He says the album is (quote) "the result of a lot of work and concentration. It has a similar feeling throughout. It's not quite a concept album, but it flows well."

"I was in a happy frame of mind when we were recording 'Frampton' and I knew a lot more about recording and producing. We cut fifteen tracks, and we tried to keep the standards high."

Although Peter's album is rocketing up the trade charts, he is displeased with at least one song on the album. "'Apple of Your Eye' shouldn't be on there," he says. "There's another song we cut that doesn't have a title right now that I think we should have used."

"I try to construct a song so there's a memorable line in it without overdoing it. Previously my songs didn't have a hook. 'Fanfare,' off the new album, doesn't really have a chorus, and you tend not to notice it."

Speaking of his recent date at Winterland in San Francisco, he emphasized that "it was the first time we've headlined and had people turned away. If I had to choose between playing live and working in a studio, I would prefer to work live. There's an instant rapport with the people that I enjoy."

"My next project might be a live album, but I doubt it will be a double disc. I'm usually against double albums because there's often not enough high quality material. The next album, especially if it's live, will include more acoustic material than the last three albums."

rock notes

Rod Stewart is planning to record a duet single with English rocker Maggie Bell because (quote) "Maggie needs a lift." Maggie is a highly respected, award winning singer in England, but she has yet to become a sell-out concert attraction there, and her name is not well known in the U.S. Stewart won't reveal the title of the song on which they will duet, but admits it's a Neil Young composition. In an interview with *Melody Maker*, Rod also revealed that his next solo album will be recorded with the Meters and Bobby Womack.

It's been almost a year since Paul Anka began performing the song, but he's still getting grief over his hit "You're Having My Baby."

The California Institute for Responsible Parenthood has just awarded Anka its first annual Civic Consciousness Raising Award in honor of the song. According to the *Los Angeles Free Press*, the award consists of a gift certificate - good for a vasectomy to be performed by the doctor of Paul's choice.

Meanwhile, rumors are circulating in the music press that Anka is so ticked off at all the criticisms about "You're Having My Baby" that he's considering recording a sequel tune. This one would be strongly anti-abortion and would be titled "You're Killing My Baby". Folks at United Artists Records, Paul's label, say they doubt anything will come of the idea.

Meanwhile, Anka, again backed up by Odia Coates, is climbing the charts with his new single "I Don't Like to Sleep Alone."

Sugarloaf's big hit, "Don't Call Us, We'll Call You," features a touch-tone telephone opening which is actually the number for CBS Records. CBS is one of the labels that turned down Sugarloaf. The song, of course, was inspired by some of the reactions that Jerry Corbetta and band received when looking for a recording deal. Sugarloaf's critical look at the rock business is on Claridge Records.

Carole King's "Tapestry" this week celebrated a record-shattering four years on the top album chart of *Billboard* magazine. This week it's number 190, up from 198 last week.

The Who have booked studio time in April for recording a new album, due to be released late this year.

Chrysalis Records is preparing an album of Jethro Tull's greatest hits. The album will be titled "M.U. - The Best of Jethro Tull." Just what the letters M.U. stand for in the title, no one at Chrysalis is saying. However, one Chrysalis exec notes that the L.P. should sell "Millions of Units."

Currently on their announced "farewell tour," Humble Pie may decide not to break up. *Cash Box* magazine reports that a spokesperson for the group says the current tour (quote) "could turn out to be the first of many farewell tours. My opinion is that there will be a compromise."

For the first time in several years, none of the songs nominated for an Academy Award this year as "Best Song" from a film have been hits.

The closest thing to a hit record among the "Best Song" nominees has been Maureen McGovern's "We May Never Love This Way Again" from "The Towering Inferno". That song received some airplay and reached the bottom 10 of the national top-100 charts. But it didn't even come close to being the success that her tune "The Morning After" from "The Poseidon Adventure" was last year. That song was also an Oscar nominee.

None of the other song candidates for next month's Academy Awards have hit the charts at all. They include "Blazing Saddles," "Benji's Theme," "Wherever Love Takes Me," and "Little Prince." The winner will be announced at the Oscar Presentation April 8.