

Naked came Polonsky

Dear Miss Canada



MY DEAR MISS CANADA

Caroline Comisso
Miss Canada 1970
Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Joe Polonsky
EXCALIBUR
York University
Downsview, Ontario.

Dearest Caroline,

The Miss Canada Pageant, I must confess, is not the kind of event I look forward to with startling regularity each year. As a matter of fact, the only reason I knew of the contest's taking place was because of a notice I read on a bulletin board in one of the residences here, explaining that a floor meeting had been cancelled in order that some of the guys could go to the pageant. Naturally, I, as a third year university student, hence as an unquestionably aware human being, dismissed these comrades as male pigs, ironically, heading down to a cattle show.

Well, you can imagine the quandry I found myself in, when I woke up the next morning to find that the new Miss Canada was from no other place than — Thunder Bay, my home town. As you may find out, once you leave the new metropolis, that no matter how far one travels from this last outpost of civilization, before Atikoken, one cannot break the emotional bond with "home". So, there I was with all these people coming up to me and saying, "Thunder Bay finally made it big, eh man?", and I wondering whether I should be pleased or disgusted. And adding to all this was the realization that you were not just any girl from Thunder Bay, but rather the daughter of a guy who used to be the most popular cop in the city.

I can imagine the scenario. A special assembly at Westgate High School where you gracefully glide onto the stage to a rousing ovation from your peer group. And if I remember correctly, my being an alumnus of Fort William Collegiate, we at our school tended to

look down at those teeny boppers at Westgate who certainly never came close to being our intellectual equals. The scenario then changes to city hall, where Mayor Laskin proudly presents to you the keys to the city. Meanwhile, his son, who I happen to share an apartment with, sits here shaking his head at the degradation of their ever being such an event as The Miss Canada Contest.

But then I thought back once again, to my days as a high school student growing up in Northwestern Ontario. I used to think that Woman's Lib was the name of a basketball team, just one of which your father probably referred to. And then I thought how is this poor girl ever going to answer reporters' questions on a subject she probably never even thought of. "What do you think of woman's Lib, Caroline?" "Well sir, I don't."

John's I want you to know, you have at least one sympathetic human being thinking of your well being. And if I might be so bold, I would like to recommend a short reading list for you, on where it is happening in the wonderful world of women. The first book you should consider is a small pocketbook by "J" entitled The Sensuous Woman. You see "J" put down in words that which most people take for granted. Woman, being inferior to the male, what with the sexual position being what it is, might as well accept her second class status and teach herself how to be as good in bed as possible. In this way, she will at least be able to have as many lovers as possible, from Pierre Trudeau to Bobby Orr to Tommy Hunter.

The second number in the bibliography is written by the guruess of woman's lib, Kate Millett. The book is called Sexual Politics. It is not quite as light reading as The Sensuous Woman, but considering the nature of your crown, reading the book is almost mandatory. I imagine that with your newly won Gremlin and everything you can afford the 10 dollars it costs to purchase the book. It may make you realize that if they ever held a Mr. Canada Contest, the winner would not merely win a lousy Gremlin, but a Jaguar at least.

Well, my dear, I must leave you now to better things. I hope you have a worthwhile year and you certainly will have plenty of opportunities to learn what it is like to be queen of your sex. If you like, maybe we could be penpals. Maybe we could have one of those fairytale romances between a member of royalty and a commoner. Maybe during the Christmas holidays we could even go tubing at Riverview.

So until then, remember, no matter what happens my dear Caroline, you will always be my princess.

All my love
Joe

P.S. Write often. My private correspondence usually does not get printed in Excalibur, and can be mailed to me at Apt. 1005, 1 Fountainhead Road, Downsview.



Syrinx: a Moog group

By PATRICK KUTNEY

In each of the years from '68 to '70, Toronto has produced one incredible rock band that bore appreciable assimilations to free-form jazz. The first two: Leather and Sunnyside Symphonium (later called Sunnyside), broke up mainly through lack of exposure and the inability of audiences to appreciate them. Syrinx, formed five months ago, is a lot farther ahead than either of the other two bands were at any time.

Syrinx consists of John Mills-Cockell on Moog Synthesizer, Doug Pringle on saxophones, and Alan Wells, conga drum. This instrumentation alone is novel in pop music. But Syrinx is more than a novelty. They have the potential to be one of the most productive and innovative units anywhere. Of all Canadian bands, only Edward Bear rivals them in that category.

Naturally enough, the spotlight falls on Mills-Cockell because of the marvellous instrument he plays, the Moog. The Moog synthesizer if comprised of four black boxes with all kinds of electrical gadgetry like audio oscillators and lights that blink in sequence and a spaghetti of patchcords and lots more. There's a Moog Keyboard that goes with it and Mills-Cockell feeds an electric piano and an organ through the whole thing.

Yet the music of Syrinx is not as far out as one might expect. It rarely lacks some kind of form and structure. With the Moog, Mills-Cockell is able to programme bass and percussion parts. Wells then adds intricate rhythm patterns on the conga drum. On top of this, Mills-Cockell can add a couple of melodic lines from the light and whimsical to the bizarre and macabre or any kind of combination with the almost limitless array of sounds the Moog itself can produce.

Sax-keyboard combo

And then there's Pringle on alto and soprano saxophones who complements the work of the other two musicians with contrapuntal lines. The saxophone-keyboard combination might seem impractical to those who have never heard it, but it has worked amazingly well in the recent music of British bands Traffic and The Soft Machine.

Syrinx's music is unclassifiable. Evidence of a multitude of influences are evident, as they are in all good bands. One can perceive African rhythms, the most modernist of jazz innovationists like Ornette Coleman, or impressionists like the classical

composer Debussy. If anything, Syrinx leans most heavily towards impressionism. One of Syrinx's pieces springs to mind in which Mills-Cockell plays a figure in the top octave of one of the keyboards that sounds like a tormented man wailing. Immediately following a pattern is played a few octaves lower that conjures up images of a man groaning in the depths. Do not be duped into thinking that Syrinx is one of these pub bands "with their own stylings of jazz-rock-soul-folk-blues". Their music is their own and comparisons seem like only vague references.

Syrinx is the type of band one could listen to all night and is probably one of the few bands that could come up with the improvisations to do it. Their music can induce a very free type of dancing. At present the number of tempo changes within individual songs is minimal. The possibilities of that new instrument-machine, The Moog synthesizer, are almost limitless and the problem arises of keeping the proper amount of control over it.

Cautious Experimenting

Syrinx is experimenting (with the necessary amount of caution) into new areas of music and with new instruments and devices. Doug Pringle is starting to play his flute again and is using a wah-wah pedal with his saxophones while Wells is in the process of acquiring new percussion instruments like chimes and a set of gongs. There is discussion of adding another multi-instrumentalist.

Syrinx are by no means limiting themselves to concerts, they have commissioned to write works to be played by The Toronto Repertory Orchestra and themselves. The music for "The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" presently playing at The St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts was created by Syrinx. In addition they are doing sound tracks for a handful of films and shorts including "Icon" made by Film Canada. Their score in the arts is completed through their work with The Toronto Dance Theatre and visual art forms such as light shows. Syrinx also have recorded an album on True North called Syrinx. The band got together about a year ago to record it, but it's now somewhat dated because of their progression since then. In any case, it ranks as a milestone in recorded music, if only for the branch of music they have started.

By STEVE GELLER

Although Tom Rush is only in his mid-twenties, he has been a major talent on the music scene for nearly ten years. The reason is that Rush has changed with the music of his times. He presently is able to mix the basic, traditional folk sound with some electric accompaniment, adding country accents. The result is a style that has become his alone.

His latest album "Tom Rush" (Columbia CS9972) is Rush's own interpretations of other popular artists who are also attuned to the times. The album features a variety of contemporary songs of the mental traveller, the troubled youth and the lover.

Even though the material was not written by Rush himself, each song has the unique, often gentle, always personal interpretation which Tom Rush is known for.

This Friday night, Tom Rush is appearing in concert with Livingston Taylor (brother of James) at Massey Hall.

Thunderclap brings fresh air

Record Review

"Hollywood Dream" — Thunderclap Newman — Polydor 2408-009

Can a thirty year old mailman find stardom playing honky-tonk piano in a British rock and roll trio? Strange as it may seem, the answer is yes.

Thunderclap Newman is the most original band to emerge from Britain since the beginnings of Jethro Tull three years ago. More or less discovered by the Who's whirling dervish Peter Dinklage, they are an unexpected joy.

Thunderclap is a strange band indeed. Andy Newman pounds the eighty-eights, Jimmy McCullough plays guitar, and Speedy Keen is on drums. (Pete Townshend plays bass, as well as produces, under the alias 'Bijou Drains'). Speedy's songs are deceptively simple and easily dismissed as fluff, but that's too easy. They're a strange mixture of innocence and sophistication.

"I'd like to see the moviestars smiling
As they drive down Sunset Strip
They're a plastic made sensation
So big it makes me sick.

I'd like to see the swimming-pools
Where the filmstars take a dip.
I'd like to build a monument
To the stars who died on script."

—"Hollywood #1", Speedy Keen.

I think that Keen is one of the

best lyricists in rock today, comparable to Ray Davies, John Lennon, Frank Zappa, and the inimitable Keith Reid.

Andy Newman has a very bizarre style of "playing" piano. Suddenly, he will break lose into an insane burlesque-silent film bridge, particularly in their British hit "something In The Air".

Thunderclap is also a very enigmatic group, clouded in the following rumours and myths, none of which are true.

1. Speedy Keen is really Pete Townshend.
2. Jimmy McCullough is twelve years old.
3. Andy Newman is seventy years old.
4. God wears argyle socks.
5. Paul McCartney has/will/might join them.
6. Thunderclap are really the Who.
7. Al Kooper is their roadman.
8. Loretta Young???

The mind boggles!

The most surprising element of this remarkable recording, is its complete sincerity and unpretention. As a whole, it far surpasses both the Who's Live At Leeds

Thank-you Andy, Jimmy, and Speedy for a long overdue breath of fresh air.

Exc. Pop Poll

I would like to suggest an 'Excalibur Pop Poll', which would not only be a swell little bit of promotion but also an insight into York's collective musical taste.

Categories would include:

1. Male Vocalist
2. Female Vocalist
3. Best Canadian Group
4. Best American Group
5. Best British Group
6. Canadian L.P. of the Year
7. International L.P. of the Year
8. Single of the Year
9. Best Guitarist
10. Best Drummer
11. Best Bassist
12. Best Keyboards
13. Best Miscellaneous Instrument
14. Best Newcomer of 1970

...and all that.
It would be loads of fun and I would be willing to set it up, count votes, etc.

Just let me know, gang, cause I mean, you know, what else has a teen to do except bop? (Revolt? — ed.)

