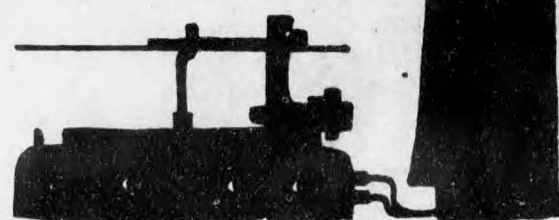


Reviews

18 - BRUNSWICKAN FEBRUARY 25, 1972

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by Stan Twist



Five Ottawa Boys Reach Puberty

Remember the Staccatos? I doubt it. The Staccatos were born around the same time as Beatlemania in our nation's Capitol, Ottawa. (Our nation's capitol is not Washington, as some of you seem to think.) In its early form, the Staccatos were just another pop group playing Beatle-like songs. A number of 45's were released on both the Allied and Capitol labels, but none were major hits. "Small Town Girl" was moderately successful by Canadian standards, but I strongly doubt it was heard outside of our borders. The Staccatos did manage to record an album, a major accomplishment for any Canadian band back then. It was called "Initially", but it's no longer in Capitol's catalogue. You might run across it some day in a department store discount bar, if it really means that much to you.

The group went on developing and continued to release singles, two of which made quite a bit of noise on this side of the border, "Half Past Midnight" and "Didn't know the Time".

At this time the group consisted of Les Emmerson (Lead guitar), Vern Craig (Rhythm guitar) Brian Rading (Bass) and Mike Bell (drums).

It was around this same time that Coca-Cola wanted to make an album of rock music for promotion purposes. One side of the record was done by the Guess Who and the other was performed by The Staccatos. It was called "a Wild Pair", but alas, it too is no longer available. During this time Rick Bell's brother Mike joined the band as second drummer and a few months later, Ted Gerow joined the band on keyboards.

I recall that it was in this form that The Staccatos came to Fredericton to do a concert in early '68. Here they were one of the most talented rock groups in Canada and 16 people turned out to see them. The rest of the "gang" were at a dance at the YMCA. Who says Canadian bands are never supported in their own country? I mean...who?

Soon after their "successful" Maritime tour, Vern Craig left the band and they changed their name to "Five Man Electrical Band". They recorded an album for Capitol and released more singles, all of which failed to click. They released a second album in the fall of 1970 entitled "Good-byes & Butterflies" and more singles were released. A Los Angeles DJ took one of these 45's, "Hello Melinda", flipped it over and started to play the B-side, "Signs". It quickly caught on and after years of paying dues, the FMEB finally got what they deserved. A million selling 45.

They've just released another LP, "Coming of Age" (Polydor 2424 047) and, my, what a hit single can do for a band. This LP obviously had more money poured into it than the others and the band can now fully utilize all the advantages of the recording studio.

The record opens with a moog synthesiser playing a sort of classical thing, then a piano enters backed with scattered orchestral phrases from the moog. The piano is joined by bass and

drums as they build together and "bang", the rest of the band jumps into the song. Les Emmerson plays Who-like distorted guitar chords under his lead vocal, then 5-part harmonies and electric piano slows the song down for the chorus.

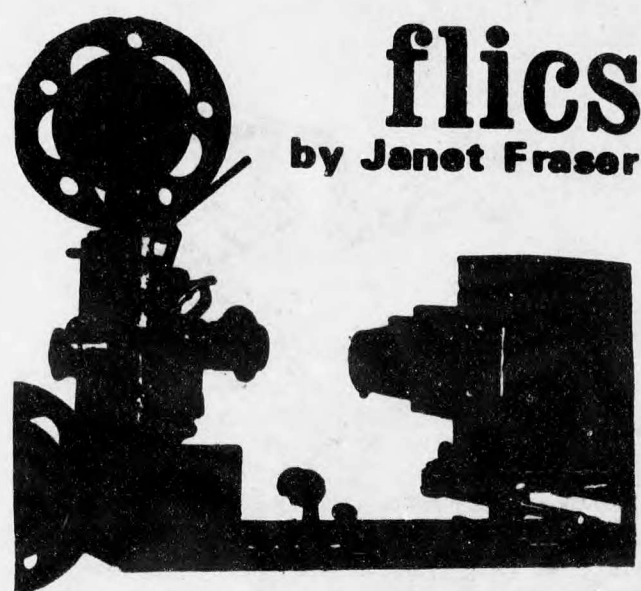
The song is very much a studio production piece with a lot of overdubbing and knob turning involved. It's very powerful sounding in the same way that a lot of the Beatles studio masterpieces like "I am the Walrus" and "Day in the Life" were. The boys seem to be spending all that money they made very wisely.

"Find the One" has a phased acoustic guitar track, which is much the same as the acoustic that Phil Spector produced on The Beatles "Across the Universe". The Harmonies in this song are as overpowering as some of the Beatles and Beach Boys best moments.

"Country Girl" is the longest song (actually it's three songs joined together) on the LP at ten and a half minutes. All three songs are gospel-rock sort of songs with choir-like choruses and Leon Russell style piano tingling. The way one song leads into the other is very clever (like the piano part of the first song being isolated as the rest of the band fades out, then slowing down and becoming the piano line of the next song). The last section of "Country Girl" ("She used to be my Woman") is a very pretty ballad, the kind that can make you cry if you've just struck out with the opposite sex.

I like every song on the record, even the Top 40 tunes like "Absolutely Right" and "Juliana", both of which sound excellent when out of their AM context.

The album as a whole is very commercial oriented and hopefully it will sell well. A lot of time, sweat and money went into the record and believe me, there isn't a wasted groove on the entire affair. Shit, these guys could be the Canadian equivalent of the Beatles, if they're given half a chance.



flics

by Janet Fraser

The Sunflower

The well-known team of Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni are back again after relative success in such features as "Divorce Italian Style" and "The Priest's Wife". In my opinion, their previous achievements have been due not only to the scripts but also to the actors' innate capabilities as comediennes. However "The Sunflower" is a tear-jerker, a love story of epic proportions, in which the duo's talents are wasted. Miss Loren emerges as a headstrong, slightly ridiculous Italian woman and Mastroianni as her weak, sheepish husband. The tragedy of the movie lies not so much in the story itself as its failure to gain the viewer's sympathy and intellectual acceptance.

Giovanna and Antonio live together in the idyllic setting of a rural community in pre-World War II Italy. But the honeymoon does not last forever and when Giovanna is drafted his beautiful wife remains faithful - until that fateful day when she discovers that he has betrayed her. She believed that he had been

lost on the Russian Front in mid-winter. During his ex-army buddy recollections of the grim reality of men literally freezing to death while thousands stagger by, she gazes on horror-stricken. The scene could have evoked an understanding or at least an awareness of the futility of warfare. Instead we see only the grief of a woman who has lost the only worth-while part of the existence. If anything, the movie shows us the futility of life, but at the same time it plays with the viewers' emotions to such an extent that we are left cold by the end of the story.

The endless scenes in which Giovanna roams the countryside of the Soviet Union looking for her beloved seem melodramatic, and also trite. You can't help thinking that you've seen it all before the eternal devotion, the stock characters, and the final meeting after many years which ends in disillusionment and bitter hatred on the part of Giovanna. It seems highly improbable that a lone woman, armed with a faded photograph, should ever even find this man, a stranger with his won family and career outside of her own existence.

The photography of the film is exciting because there is such a striking contrast in settings. On one hand, the golden wheatfields of Russia or the gardens and narrow cobblestone alleys of an Italian village are presented. But the viewer may also recognize the mud flats, railroad and subway stations, factories, co-operative housing, and masses of workers participating in the post-war industrial boom.

The only salvation of the film may be in the final scene. Antonio has returned to his first and only love and makes a desperate attempt to resume the relationship they had known many years before. Although Giovanna understands his feelings as she knows them herself, she has the strength to send him back to his home. She, with her new family, is also bound by the conventions of Society. There is one very poignant moment when a full realization

of the lie that they exist in and the more subtly tragic effects of the war dawn on both Giovanna and Antonio. However, even this scene seems a little hollow by the end of this sometimes tedious and rather unsatisfying film.

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drop them at the bruns.