

# SOUNDSOUNDSOUNDSOUND

by f. cameron

It's insane to write a column like this. It's insane to think that one person's truly subjective opinion about music should influence you enough to turn you on to any new sound. But it happens. Like before Fred had even seen or heard "Cheap Thrills" the word was out - "Janis Joplin is the greatest white female singer around" (RATmag); and sure enough, when it came, it was big. Janis was what every sound in the country said she was. She was white, she was great, even very female, but she had something. She had enough to make amends for the shit Big Brother calls music, to turn "Cheap Thrills" into a number one album. When you listen to her bleat out "Turtle Blues", backed by only an acoustic guitar and a piano, you know she's into a blues bag all her own. But she lacks what a few more years in the business will bring. She needs polish and she needs sophistication. She needs what Gracie Slick has put into Jeff Air (of course Slick is backed by solid sound in the form of Marty Baldin and the other Air). Since "After Bathing at Baxter's", one of the most aesthetic rock sounds ever waxed, the Jeff Air have done nothing but improve, and the proof lies in "Crown of Creation", an album that has been black-balled by ninety percent of the rock mags in the country, for the average reason, the critics didn't get into it enough before they started bitching. It is in fact their best effort to date. Slick has toned down a lot since "Two Heads" and "Rejoice" on "After Bathing at Baxter's" and adds beautiful femininity and tenderness in "Lather", a tale lamenting the

loss of innocence, and "Trial", a song about a tri-love relationship, a song "EYE" mags say is "a whit, wrapped up in Freudian gauzeries" (but by now we should be aware of the shit that mag delves out to an eager public). The really fine voice of Slick reveals its supremacy in both these numbers; she's come a long way since the Great Society days. She's clean and pure in her delivery and, unlike Joplin doesn't rely on coarse strength to get the point across. But Slick is rock and Joplin is blues, and the only thing they have in common is being female and being hailed as top in their field, even if the field is their own back yard. Female-White-Blues is a limited commodity. But there'll always be an England, and they'll never cease to amaze, like turning up with somebody like Julie Driscoll. On "OPEN", she sings with Brian Auger & Trinity. One side is completely Auger, groovy. On the flip side Auger backs Driscoll, who combines the tender sophistication of Slick with the solid strength of Joplin, to turn out a total sound in blues. She has absolutely no difficulty adapting to Auger's jazz runs. "As Mistress of the Lighting-Fast Beat", she could probably fit her blues to country and western, that's how aware she is. She's sophisticated, too. You know what sophisticated blues sounds like? It's beautiful. And Driscoll sings beautiful blues. "She is blues-oriented . . . a much softer and ballad-type thing than Joplin's rip-roarin', rockin' and rollin'. She is much subtler; she can take a word like 'why' on "Why (am I treated so bad?)" and stretch it out to 'whahhhiiiiii' without you at all noticing it sounding strained.

It's just beautifully natural and Jools" (Rolling Stone Mag). She does an amazing rendition of "Season of the Witch" with an Auger break of 'organic' acclaim. It takes some time to get into such a new sound as Driscoll's a sound as blues/jazz as you find her album "Open", but when you do you'll agree that Driscoll is better than Joplin and that she can do nothing but become the best; the best Female-White-Blues singer around. Go get "Open", find out for yourself.

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