



The Jeff Beck Group — Feelin' Groovy.

photos by Jeff Plewman

Beck begins again

Jeff Beck — Go baby, Go! And the music went.



by Patrick Kutney

Jeff Beck and his group at the Rock Pile on Sunday were both terrible and excellent. The first set was bad! The band wasn't together and their sound was anything but tight.

Beck wrenched an extraordinary number of sounds from his guitar and proved even more imaginative on stage than Hendrix. Although Beck demonstrated all that he could do, many of his solos did not even remotely fit the material. Much of the work was downright sloppy. It was a shame that a man of Jeff Beck's stature could completely annihilate the tight sound of his album and go off on his own ego trip.

In the second set, Beck's performance was a different story. It was an unbelievable change. The band was tight and together, and this time Beck's extraneous material fitted in well with the context of the music.

Perhaps the cause of the group's shortcomings in the first set was the failure of Beck's amplifiers to function properly.

I retract all that I have said about Transfusion's singer, Simon Caine. On Sunday Caine showed that his singing was dynamic. It was the first time his singing really came across. Unfortunately I failed to acknowledge his potential in recent reviews.

Organist Tom Sheret has finally got over his nervousness and was really flying on Sunday.

PS. Eric Clapton is not God; Larry Solway is.

The Music Scene

by David McCaughna

Donovan, at the Varsity Arena last Thursday, sang his beautiful, simple songs for over two hours to a vast, highly appreciative audience of devotees. Many had thought that the barn-like arena would be totally inadequate sound-wise for Donovan, but there was a good sound system installed for the concert which meant that almost the entire audience could hear quite well. Donovan sang without accompaniment aside from his own guitar and harmonium, but that made little difference. He sang his top hits like Mellow Yellow, Sunshine Superman and others, plus a number of his little tales. Donovan in person came across with the same power and quiet beauty he conveys on his recordings.

Having just seen a photograph of the projected cover for The Rolling Stones new album, A Beggar's Banquet, I find it difficult to understand how London Records, in all their prudishness, can refuse to release the album with the cover Mick Jagger is so adamant about. It shows the top half of a grubby toilet with lots of graffiti on the wall above it. Under a scrawled, "The Rolling Stones", there are peace symbols, little drawings and slogans like "God Rolls His Own", "Bob Dylan's Dream", etc.

Surely the Stones one of the most original and important groups around, should be allowed

some degree of artistic licence. I can't really see how London Records can object to the cover. It shouldn't really matter so much, anyway, what is on the cover of an album but rather what is on the album itself, and from hearing cuts from "A Beggar's Banquet" on CHUM-FM I know that it will be another great Stones album.

Most record companies seem to be placing very few restrictions on what their groups do; The Mothers of Invention and The Fugs, for instance, are allowed to do just about anything on their albums — and even The Supremes' new single deals quite explicitly with the problems of being born a bastard.

A quite interesting new album out on the Capitol label called "Songs of Innocence", is a suite in seven parts inspired by some of the poems by the great William Blake. Composer, arranger and producer David Axelrod attempts to capture the feeling of Blake through a sort of jazz-cum-rock treatment. Whether he has succeeded is doubtful but the record is adventuresome and makes for fine listening.

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"Truth" - exciting and perceptive

by Uldis Kundrats

At a time when the blues idiom is being over-used to the point of excess, it is refreshing to hear blues-based music which transcends the simplistic limitations of traditional blues form. *truth* by the Jeff Beck group is an exciting, yet perceptively conceived recording, much more interesting musically than what most blues performers are capable of creating in a lifetime.

Even so, the album seems less of an anomaly when the inherent talents of the group's members are taken into consideration.

Bassist Ron Wood plays solidly and drummer Micky Waller adds a rhythmic dimension missing in most pop groups today.

When he played lead guitar with the Yardbirds, Jeff Beck was already an accomplished and inventive musician, giving definition to such Yardbird compositions as Over, Under, Sideways, Down (Beck's guitar almost sounds like a violin on this recording), Shapes of Things, and Happenings Ten Year's Time Ago, recorded just before he left the group. (After Beck's departure, the Yardbirds seemed to lose their sense of direction — so much so, that the remainder of the group recently disbanded.)

Rod Stewart, the Beck group's vocalist, has a coarse yet sensitive voice, capable of communicating a wide range of moods, a quali-

ty few blues singers possess these days (Eric Burdon conveyed it in his better days with the original Animals).

On *truth*, Beck and his new group perform a lyrically deleted, instrumentally expanded version of Shapes of Things. Beck's arrangements of Ol' Man River and Bonnie Dobson's Morning Dew are superb and finely attuned to Stewart's voice. The album also includes some good instrumentals, especially Greensleeves and Beck's Bolero (written by Jimmy Page).

Jeff Beck seems to have the rare faculty of re-working the monotonous banality of the blues and alchemizing it into music as refined as it is moving. The result is an extraordinary blues record — destined perhaps to be a modern classic.

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