

Records in Review

THE WALL-PINK FLOYD

By W.L. MEYER

The last few months of 1979 seems to have provided us with some of the years best music and surprising to many people, it comes from the older established bands and performers such as the Eagles, Led Zeppelin, The Kinks Neil Young and Bob Dylan to mention a few. Somehow these performers have rejuvenated themselves causing their new lps to far surpass the quality of the current musical trends such as disco, new wave and mod-"silly"-songs. With Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, we once more get a superlative effort by one of the bands of what seems to be

"my generation" already. Infact, after my first listen to *The Wall* last Christmas I was sure this two record set was Pink Floyd's finest, surpassing even the genius of lps like *"Meddle"* and *The Dark Side of the Moon*. With the passing of a month of listening, I'm even more firmly convinced of *The Wall's* brilliance. As much as I still enjoy the old Sid Barrett days of Pink Floyd and as much as I like the rest of their lps, *The Wall* shows us the potential that the band has been strongly hinting at for years. Although I hate to make such rash judgments as the ones above about an lp after only one months listening, I've got the same feeling about *The Wall* as I had when I was beginning to listen to the

Who's *Quadrophenia* several years ago. That is, the lp is going to be played my turntable for a lot of times for my own enjoyment. It seems that Pink Floyd although not generally great musicians or lyricists, always know how to mix lyrics and music so that the sum is greater than the parts. The slow quiet intro for *In the Flesh* is broken with crashing guitar chords that are very reminiscent of *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* Water's lyrics warns us that if our perceptions of life has not already been shattered by reality, then it soon will be. It serves as an introductory note for the rest of the lp and lyrically it gives us a clue as to what is instore for us on the next songs. *The Thin Ice*

(introduced by a dive bomber and baby's cry) along with the rest of the songs on the first side show us the influence of home and school upon a child's life. The first half of *The Thin Ice* is very gently textured and the vocals some of the bands best since *Grandchester Meadows*. But this moment of calm lasts only for a moment as the last half of the song is performed similar to vocals on the *Animal* lp. This sets the stage for some grandiose guitar work by Dave Gilmore just before he and Waters switch pace to do *Dire Straits*. Ry Cooder guitar number that begins the first part of *Another Brick in the Wall*. I should note here that *The Wall* shows how incredibly well Pink Floyd uses background

voices and a myriad of sound effects to a song's best advantage. Dive bombers, helicopters, children's voices an amazed Toni Tennille etc. fill any empty space the lp would have normally had. The whole lp with its many moments like these has the listener concentrating on just the sound effects alone in some cases. The surprising thing is, these little voices and noises don't detract from the songs but really act as props for them. The production and mixing on the lp is as good as or better than *Dark Side of the Moon* and keeping this in mind, I strongly recommend using a set of headphones every now and then to get everything you can out of the music.

Getting back to the first side *The Happiest Days of our Lives* and *Another Brick in the Wall part 2* takes the listener back to their schooldays. Waters adds another fact to the Kinks *Schoolboys in Disgrace* theme with the fact that bullying teachers get "theirs" when they go home at night since they are thrashed 'within inches of their lives' by their 'fat and psychopathic wives'. The second part of *Another Brick in the Wall* rebels against thought control and provides a neat little musical theme that recurs several times throughout the rest of the lp. "Mother" provides an acoustical summery to the first side and could have easily felt at home in "Meddle" but for the inclusion of more of Gilmore's smoothly screeching electric guitar breaks and lyrics that are none to gentle in parts.

The second side offers us even more "noises" and digressions than the first side but also a bit thicker blend of music. *Goodbye Blue Sky* is a well done mixture of acoustic guitar, synthesizer and vocal harmonies. Its lyrics are some of *The Walls* most poetic and I'll leave them at last. Something akin to *Welcome to the Machines* pushes along into the second song with its initially haunting vocals. *What Shall We Do Now* eventually gives rise to some of the bands best rock music for some time. Lyrically this song, along with the rest of the side seems to deal with young lust or ost love in some form or another. *One of My Turns* even salutes one of the more well known present day romantics Leonard Cohen, as Waters vocals and lyrics owe their form to him in this song. One more thing about the second side; if you're using headphones, you'll really enjoy the TV set bangup at the end of *Empty Spaces*.

The third and fourth sides keeps up the brilliance established on the first two sides but the lyrics become more obscure. If you've weathered the above misive this far, you may have gathered that after only one month's listening, I consider *The Wall* Pink Floyd's best lp to date. *The Wall* has honed in on what were the better points of the previous Pink Floyd records and reassembled all these lists to make a fascinating whole that is every bit as original in its final form as was *Dark Side of the Moon*. *The Wall* is an lp that I have to play as if it's a multifaceted single and in this respect its very much like *Quadrophenia*. *The Wall* is not a pretentious lp and its lyrics are as "honest and sincere" as any punk band over the past few years. It's too bad a lot of new wavers and others will pass over *The Wall* without a second thought about listening to it. It will be their loss.

REELSPICE

By GERRY LA SKEY

Apocalypse Now is, quite simply, a great film. The movie's creator, Francis Coppola has said, "the most important thing I wanted to do in the making of *Apocalypse Now* was to create a film experience that would give its audience a sense of horror, the madness, the sensuousness and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam War...And yet I wanted it to go further, to the moral issues that are behind all wars." Coppola and his magnificent cast and crew have done just that. They have created a masterpiece.

The plot of the movie concerns a secret mission headed by Capt. Willard (Martin Sheen) up a river into Cambodia to "terminate with extreme prejudice" the command of Colonel Kurtz (Marlon Brando). Kurtz has gone "insane" going into the jungle to command native tribesmen and renegades from the war in orgiastic killing. He has taken control of his own war. He is charged with murder which Willard says is "like handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500." he journey up the river takes us into the depths of the Vietnam struggle, the experience of war and death, and into the souls of Willard and Kurtz. Willard discovers more and more about Kurtz on the trip. Through his dossier and his experiences he comes to understand his nemesis. He also comes to see Kurtz in himself.

The theme, as well as the main characters and some of the plot and dialogue are closely modelled on Joseph Conrad's novella, *Heart of Darkness*. As such, it is a study of the dark side of human nature taking control of the person. It portrays the abandonment of the soul of man to those destructive, primitive urges that Freud called the "death instinct." Kurtz is lost to his own dark self. The film is saying that war, too, is insane. It unleashes the destructive instincts and is propelled by them. If Kurtz has lost all the restraint of civilied conventions, so has war, and especially this war. As one of Kurtz's followers (Dennis Hopper) says, "In his mind he's clear, his soul is mad." The skillful examination of this theme makes *Apocalypse Now* one of the greatest anti-war statements of the century.

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Related to this theme is the idea of falsehood and hypocrisy of a "civilized" notion of war. Kurtz (and Willard in his turn) hate the lies of the war. Kurtz gives in totally to the reality of war, hate and fear. This is the real reason he must be eliminated, because he shows the true nature of the war. Those who want him dead cling to their slices of the American way of life in Vietnam and to the icons of their ideology.

An interesting contrast in the movie is the contrast between the space-age technological might of the American Empire building battling the "primatives" of Indochina. A small Viet Cong controlled village, whose only threat to the U.S. is a small defence system of ancient weapons and the red flag flying over it, is wiped out by a squad of Huey's (helicopters) and turned into a crematorium by napalm-laden jets for a finishing touch. Kurtz's tribesmen kill one of Willard's crew in an attack with arrows and spears. Kurtz, the war-god king is bred of the universal evil in man. His existence does not allow for distinctions between the two sides. He IS them.

The acting is superb. Brando makes the symbol, Kurtz totally believable. His death gasp (like that of Conrad's Kurtz) of "The horror, the horror" is destined for cinema immortality. Sheen's haunting looks transmit the confession of Kurtz and Willard powerfully to the audience. Our souls too, are purged.

The supporting actors too, are outstanding, particularly crew members "Chef" (Frederic Forrest) and "Lance" (Sam Bottoms), but Sheen and Brando, portraying universal symbols as well as real men, are remarkable.

Technically the film is excellent. The sets and location in the Philippines are beautiful. The cinematography is also beautiful and invites one to sit in the front row. The music is a masterful blend of period rock (featuring "The End" by The Doors) Vietnamese traditional music and a powerful score written by Coppola with his father, Carmine Coppola. The flow of the film is well executed. Of particular note is the co-ordination of the climax scene as Kurtz is killed during the sacrifice of the caribou (an authentic ritual performed by the Ifugao Philippino aborigines who play the Montagnard tribesmen) done in slow motion. This will surely be one of the greatest scenes of film history. The technique of narration of the protagonist's (Willard's) thoughts on his journey up the river and into himself is interesting and well-done.

Apocalypse Now is a true work of art. It is Coppola's life-work, a labor of love. As an epic it strives to be a definitive statement. It is impeccably done and does not fall down in any place. As Coppola desired, it is a film-experience which draws you into itself. Even as it is the confession of Kurtz via Willard, it is a catharsis for the audience. We have seen more deeply into ourselves than is ordinarily possible in a movie. Thank you Francis Coppola.

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D. Kissick (Mrs.)
Overseas Student Advisor

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