

# New album releases

by Andrew M. Duke

Once available only as 12" imports, North Americans can now pick up the first full-length LP from Tackhead, the band consisting of drummer Keith LeBlanc, guitarist Skip McDonald, bassist Doug Wimbish, and Adrian Sherwood, producer extraordinaire. Gary Clail's *Tackhead Sound System* (Nettwerk/Capitol) features vocalist Gary Clail, who, during live performances, screams his views/comments through a megaphone, throws in politically-pointed snatches of radio/television clips, and remixes the whole mess at the same time. This spontaneity leads to entirely new versions of songs each time they are performed.

Gary Clail's three 12" singles, "Half Cut for Confidence", "Hard Left" (which samples a Margaret Thatcher speech), and "Reality (In My Life and In My Dreams)" are included on the LP, all drastically remixed due to the Tackhead/Clail process. The continual assault of rhythms, though sometimes monotonous, is perfect for dance clubs. "What's My Mission Now? (Fight the Devil)" is the most informative/daring of the tracks, using actual military dialogue that the speakers would certainly not want disclosed. Think of it as everything Paul Hardcastle was too scared to use.

Tackhead will play North American dates in February and April.

The pride of Ellensburg, Washington is a band known as the Screaming Trees. Not the band from Britain known as the Screaming Trees, or the synth-pop band using the name, Mark Lanegan (vocals), Van Conner (bass), Gary Lee Conner (guitar), and Mark Pickerel (drums) are the real band, and they pay homage to their psychedelic roots in a frothing mix that has been compared to Led Zeppelin, the Doors, Love, Amboy Dukes, and more.

*Clairvoyance* was their debut on Velvetone Records in the fall of 1986. They then went on to release *If and Especially When* on the Lawndale, California-based SST label. This second album sounded like a drug trip, and drugs or no drugs, tracks such as "Transfigurations", "Don't Look down" and "Back Together" were damn good. Word has it the Trees, who aren't afraid to laugh, cough, and chat through their records, are excellent live, too. SST dug into their past and has come up with the *Other Worlds* EP. These six tracks were recorded in 1985 but did not get released on vinyl. "The Turning" alone makes the EP a gem.

Britain's The Housemartins released *London O'Hull 4* in 1986 and vocalist P.D. Heaton was

immediately criticized as Morrissey imitator. Many complained the LP was too joyful and sugary to listen to more than once. Still, the simple, upbeat tunes had many college crowds dancing, and the whole album got played, not just a few tracks. What people didn't realize is that behind songs that said to "Get Up Off Our Knees" and "Think for a Minute" were meaningful lyrics that criticized much. Then came the "Caravan of Love" 12" single with their covers of spiritual songs, and they were passed off as religious fanatics.

*The People who Grinned Themselves to Death* (Chrysalis/MCA) is the new LP. It has more depth and variety, and will likely get much play on air and at dances. Once again, lyrics dealing with British government (the title track), labour ("Me and the Farmer", "Build") and general attitudes ("Johannesburg", "Bow Down") are hiding behind the guise of "mere pop song bunk". How much more subversive can you get? And as for the supposed rip-off of the Smiths' sound? The Housemartins never whine; think of them as the Smiths of happiness.



by Scott Neily

Vancouver's dynamic duo of Drew Arnott and Darryl Kromm, better known as Strange Advance, have just released their enigmatically titled third album, *The Distance Between* (Capitol). The duo, often categorized as a nouveau Pink Floyd, are responsible for the gold albums *Worlds Away* and *Two*, which produced such memorable singles as "She Controls Me", "We Run", and "Worlds Away".

The new album is both a progression and a regression. The writing on *The Distance Between* is their strongest to date, showing a definite maturity in styles and attitudes. The themes, however, seem to return to the days of their first album, with intelligently eclectic songs like "Ultimate Angels", "Alien Time", and the beautifully thoughtful "Who Lives Next Door", co-written with Paul Hyde and mixed by Bob Rock, of Rock and Hyde fame.

The electro-funk sound that was prominent on *Two* shows up on a couple of tracks, most notably the first single, "Love Becomes Electric". The big difference, though, is that fewer sequencers and more musicians

are used, resulting in a less electronic sound. Strange Advance's new album covers that magical piece of musical ground that few dare to tread — the distance between the heart and mind.

## Maritime Independent Music Festival

DTK Records and CHSR FM (Fredericton, N.B.) will present the first Maritime Independent Music Festival, Dressed To Kill '88, at Fredericton's Memorial Hill on February 26th and 27th. Bands from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Montreal will perform.

Friday night will be headlined by Fredericton's Vogons. Also performing are, from Halifax, the Stratejackets; from Moncton, No Explanation; from Saint John, Lizard and Brotherhood of Evil Mutants; and from Fredericton, Scream Theatre.

Saturday afternoon's show will feature a more esoteric and eclectic sound. Pseudo-psycho musical Dadaists The Absolute Choke will perform with the death classical duo Obituary and bebop fusion jazzists Three People.

Montreal's newly reformed S.C.U.M. will headline the Saturday night performance. Halifax's 100 Flowers, System Overload, and Moral Support, along with Fredericton's Neighbourhood Watch and The Druids will also be featured.

All proceeds from Dressed To Kill '88 will go towards the production and release of a Maritime compilation album.

In Halifax, tickets are available at Backstreet Amusements.

## Supertramp

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fair number of people to play the songs live. So this tour will see the addition of four musicians to the band. Marty Walsh, who played on the album, will be handling guitars; Brad Cole will be playing keyboards and sax; Steve Reid, who also played on the album, is taking care of the percussion chores; and tour veteran Mark Hart will be playing guitars and keyboards, as well as taking the place vocally of Roger Hodgson. Although Mark is not officially part of the group, he did share songwriting credits with Rick on the tune "Where I Stand" off the *Free as a Bird* LP. Mark has a voice that sounds remarkably similar to Roger Hodgson's, and after the standing ovation he received for his excellent vocal performance at the concert of "The Logical Song", a tune Roger wrote and performed, one begins to wonder if there would be any

## Wailers not whiners

# New Sounds

by Dave Amirault

The other week when the Wailers were in town, I had the pleasure of talking to Marvin Junior, who has been with the group for eleven years as rhythm guitarist and, since the death of Bob Marley, on lead vocals. Already singing backup for the band before Marley's death, Junior says, "It was very easy for me to continue singing Bob's songs, because after you play them for five or six years you develop a natural feel for it."

Marvin went on to describe how he became a Wailer. "When I left school, the Wailers were my favourite reggae band, and I never dreamed I would meet them. I was doing some work on Steve Winwood's first solo album and his manager, Chris Blackwell, heard my playing and though I would fit in well with the Wailers. He came and asked me and I said, 'Hey, don't make jokes'."

Junior fit in well and replaced Donald Kingsley, who left the band after a shooting attempt on Marley and returned to the United States. Junior is now the front-man of the group, while Family-man is the leader. Junior said people are now coming out to see the group as the group, and "I try to do the songs as best as he tried to do".

However, the Wailers continue to push and evolve their music. The show proved to be a

bit different from the traditional Marley sound on the albums. The guitars were more prominent, as was the synthesizer, which was used percussively, as opposed to the organ sound of the keyboards recorded on the albums. The group's new sound is a little more electronically modern, and the band played a few of their new tunes.

Junior said of Marley's songs, "He wrote very good songs. It wasn't really an easy task to do songs of that calibre." The group would have been ready to release an album before the tour, but will wait until the end. The album will be a collection of personal and collective efforts from the band. Junior said, "A lot of songs (Marley) would start by himself and we would help him arrange. It was always a collective effort when it came right down to the final thing."

The new songs at the concert seemed more American "funk" oriented than earlier works of the group. The lyrics of the new songs didn't seem to have the poetry and depth Marley's had, but the band seems to be having so much fun, maybe they want to avoid any more trouble. Traditional Marley fans will be happy to hear that some of Marley's work is still unreleased and will come out as soon as his family and record company feel the time is right. "We feel his presence when we do his songs, and I think the audience feels it as well," says Junior.

chance of him joining the group on a regular basis. "Well, we just kinda play it by ear," teased Bob. "Mark has really shown the potential as a songwriter and a musician to be absorbed into the group. It's just a matter of seeing eye-to-eye with what he thinks songs are and what he wants them to be. It's a kind of artistic look at things at that point — can he live artistically with his songs inside our structure? Can Rick get along with another writer? Will it become a strangled situation or will he try to impose his will too much on Mark, to make him come around to his point of view? It's those subtle things that determine whether or not somebody can fit into a group."

Supertramp has long been known for an impressive stage show, and the Halifax show was no exception. While they did concentrate on their newer material, a healthy dose of their older tunes was played, which

generated an energetic response from the crowd. Although some Hodgson-penned tunes were performed, with Mark on vocals, the band steered away from songs like "Dreamer", "Take the Long Way Home", and "Fool's Overture" simply because they were too identifiable with Roger. However, hits like "Asylum", "Rudy" and "Crime of the Century" were met with a fantastic response, especially the latter, which wrapped up the show.

For those who missed the performance, my sympathies. It may not have been the show of a lifetime, but it was certainly well worth seeing. Supertramp may have changed over the years, but musically, they are like fine wine — as they grow older, they simply get better and better.

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