

The Who rock at Leeds

by Ian Holloway

Recently, with the release of the movie "The Kids Are All Right", there has been much talk of the Who's lackluster performance in it and of the fact that perhaps they weren't that good after all. Without a doubt, this album will put all such suspicions to rest. "Live At Leeds" displays the Who at their best, in their natural element, Rock and Roll. It is by no means an album for those looking for a lush production (indeed, it is a very stark album), nor is it one for those looking for humour and/or banter.

What this album does contain is unadulterated, gut-wrenching Rock and Roll. The Who literally belt out their songs, leaving the listener with no second thoughts as to their meaning. The Who are the original punks, not "boring old farts", as Johnny Rotten called them. It is also fitting that this no-nonsense rock album was recorded in Leeds, in the heart of tough, working class northern England.

The album opens with "Young Man Blues", written by American Jazz pianist Mose Allison. In its original form it is somewhat laid back, but Roger Daltrey's clenched-fisted voice turns it into a song of rebellion and defiance. The second song "Substitute", was one of their first singles. It is not carried along so much by its profound lyrics as by Peter Dinklage's power-house guitar.

This power-pop guitar style had a great deal to do with the Who's success in its early years. The Who used to play

loud because, "I liked the pain", as Townshend stated. The Who regarded themselves as an outlet for violence and the excesses of the Mod movement as much as a source of music. Because of their lack of confidence in their musical abilities, the early Who relied on Pop Art and other such visual devices to carry them through their act. It was out of this that their infamy for smashing instruments arose.

The first time that Townshend smashed his guitar on stage, it was an accident. The public loved it however, and they were soon forced into repeating the scene at every concert. This culminated in their "Smothers Brothers Show" appearance at which they blew up their set and Townshend blew out his eardrum.

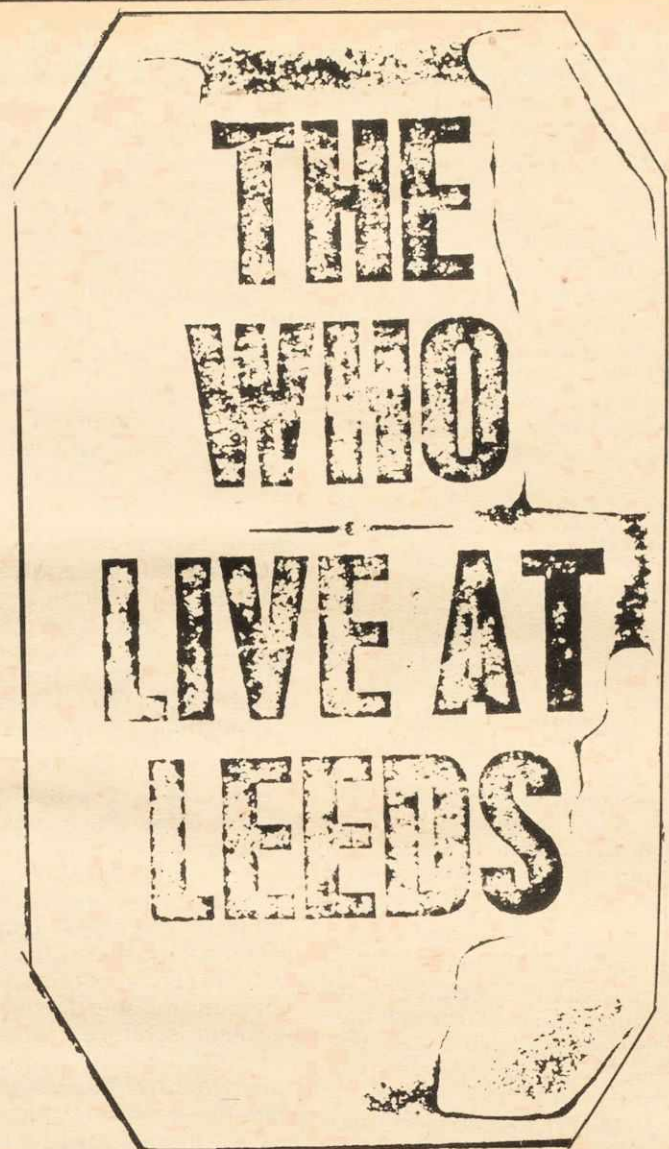
It is the third cut in which the full effect of Townshend's power playing comes to the forefront. "Summertime Blues" was originally released in 1958 by Eddie Cochran (who was another rebellious image who tragically died in a car accident in England in 1960). Cochran performed the song in a fine rockabilly style with an acoustic backing. The Who totally electrified it so that Cochran's version pales in comparison. Incidentally, it was with this song that the Who stunned the audience at Woodstock in 1969.

The final cut on the first side is also an early Rock and Roll classic. "Shakin' All Over" was originally performed by Johnny Kidd and The Pirates, and is often cited as one of the three best British

songs of its period (the other two being Cliff Richard's "Move It" and Barret Strong's "Money"). Like many such early songs "Shakin'" was "covered" by many other artists including the Canadian Guess Who, who released it before Burton Cummings joined as a single.

Side two consists of two extended cuts: "My Generation" and "Magic Bus". Actually, the first is a medley of seven of their songs including the exhilarating "See Me, Feel Me". By far the best of these is the title cut. "My Generation" is one of the few songs to actually capture the spirit of the times: "People trying to put us down/ Just 'cause we get around/ Things they do seem awful cold/ I hope I die before I get old... Why don't you all just fade away/ Don't try to dig what we all say/ I'm not trying to cause a big sensation/ I'm just talking about my generation." The song is given potency by Daltrey's stuttering vocals and John Entwistle's soaring bass runs. Legend has it that Entwistle went through three bass guitars trying to capture these bass runs.

"Live At Leeds" represents the essential Who. It is all there: Roger Daltrey's searing vocals, Peter Townshend's powerful guitar chords, the laid back might of John Entwistle's bass and the unleashed fury of Keith Moon's drumming. They are very much the angry young gentlemen of their generation. For pure Rock and Roll, this album cannot be beat.



'Swan-Turner' Romantic

by Wanda Waterman

Paul Hindemith: "Der Schwanendreher" Columbia Y 35922

Paul Hindemith's concerto for viola and small orchestra, "Der Schwanendreher", or, "The Swan-Turner", is a work with a great range and intensity of emotion. This version of the concerto is recorded by Columbia Records, played by the Columbia Chamber Orchestra, with John Pritchard conducting, and with William Primrose as the violist.

The record also includes William Walton's Concerto for viola and orchestra. Based on three German folk songs dating from the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, Hindemith's concerto draws from the folk tradition of the composer's native country, while remaining in the 20th century romantic style. The title, "The Swan-Turner" is the name of the folk song used in the third movement, and is the melody sung to the man who turned the swans on a roasting spit.

The first movement opens with strains that are intensely melancholic, with a dissonance and irregularity of rhythm which makes it seem violent. The horror-movie quality gradually changes as the music dwells on a cheerful, 15th century folk song that says:

"Tween mountain and deep valley

There runs a free road,
He who has not a sweetheart
may not walk upon it."

The lyricism of the folk tune changes to a lively, dancelike phase.

The second movement,

which opens with a duet between viola and harp, has a sadder, more dreamy quality. It is based on another, much sadder, folk song:

"Shed your tears, little Linden,

I can no longer bear it.
I have lost my beloved,
have such a mournful day."

This changes into a more intense feeling, then to a mischievous, almost playful quality, though always retaining a hint of sadness.

The third movement opens with the sprightly, cheerful title song—"The Swan-Turner". It seems to triumph over the melancholy and anguish of the first two movements:

"Are you not the swan-turner,

are you not the very same man?

So turn the swan for me,
so that I can believe it.

If you do not turn the swan for me,

then you are no swan-turner;

turn the swan for me."

The movement becomes more childlike; the flute lends it a playful quality. It becomes more serious but is still royal-sounding and optimistic. The coda ends on a happy, though slightly aggressive, note.

The emotions in this concerto shift gradually, while each maintains a bit of the character of the mood preceding it, giving the piece a unity and coherence, while its contrasts don't allow it to be dull. It is often, like much of 20th century romantic music, violent and passionate, and lacks the tenderness of Debussy's impressionism, but the concerto always somehow maintains great emotional strength and depth.

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