

Turntable Druggist : Buffalo harps on

by Andrew Gillis

The turntable druggist this week finds more aural gratification in the Collection of Musical Perfection, and he asks interested readers to drop suggestions in at the **Gazette** office. And what about all you disinterested readers? No one ever hears from you. Let's have some input from the disinterested people — if you "do not care about records," let's have a little response; it's not much to ask.

Norton Buffalo / Lovin' In The Valley Of The Moon / Capitol ST-11625 / Lovin' In The Valley Of The

Moon; One Kiss To Say Goodbye; Ghetto Hotel; Nobody Wants Me; Puerto De Azul; Hangin' Tree; Another Day; Rosalie; The Jig Is Up; Eighteen Wheels; Sea Of Key.

Norton Buffalo has a strange name and a collection of fine chromatic harmonicas. With these harmonicas, Buffalo can do anything a guitarist or fiddler or saxophonist can do. Buffalo, as **Rolling Stone** said last spring, is wild on harp.

Buffalo is unlike Butterfield or Little Walter, because he prefers tasty country harp to the really

raunchy stuff. On this debut album, released with the blessing of Steve Miller (with whom Buffalo has performed until now), there isn't as much harmonica as anyone was expecting to hear. That's disappointing, because Buffalo's songwriting is not memorable.

His arranging for the Norton Buffalo Stampede, however, is slick. The band consists of pedal steel, fiddle, guitar, bass and drums. When Buffalo puts harp and fiddle together on a riff, or harp and pedal steel, the effect is Southern swing. At this album's best, there is a catchy Charlie Daniels sound to

it, nice and down-home. The title cut has a reggae beat chorus, and "Ghetto Hotel" is lowdown sounding. Here Buffalo wails on Hohner Chromonica with Shure Green Bullet mike and Fender Super amplifier.

His vocals also have a lot of charm (is there no better word for this? - Ed.). Like Boz Scaggs, Buffalo sings like somebody you're sure you've heard before, near where you live. The pitch and the power are both just barely there. Still, they never actually do let you down. After a side or two, the guy's voice sounds as if he's somebody you actually do know. Buffalo's next album will be better than this one — but like Benson on the Kirshner Rock Music Awards, he had best beware of selling out on his native instrument and going for naked stardom.

Ishan People / GRT 9230-1071 / Come To The Music; Hold On; Inflation; Sweet Chariot; Let The Rhythm Roll; Mighty Warrior; Rainbow; Trenchtown.

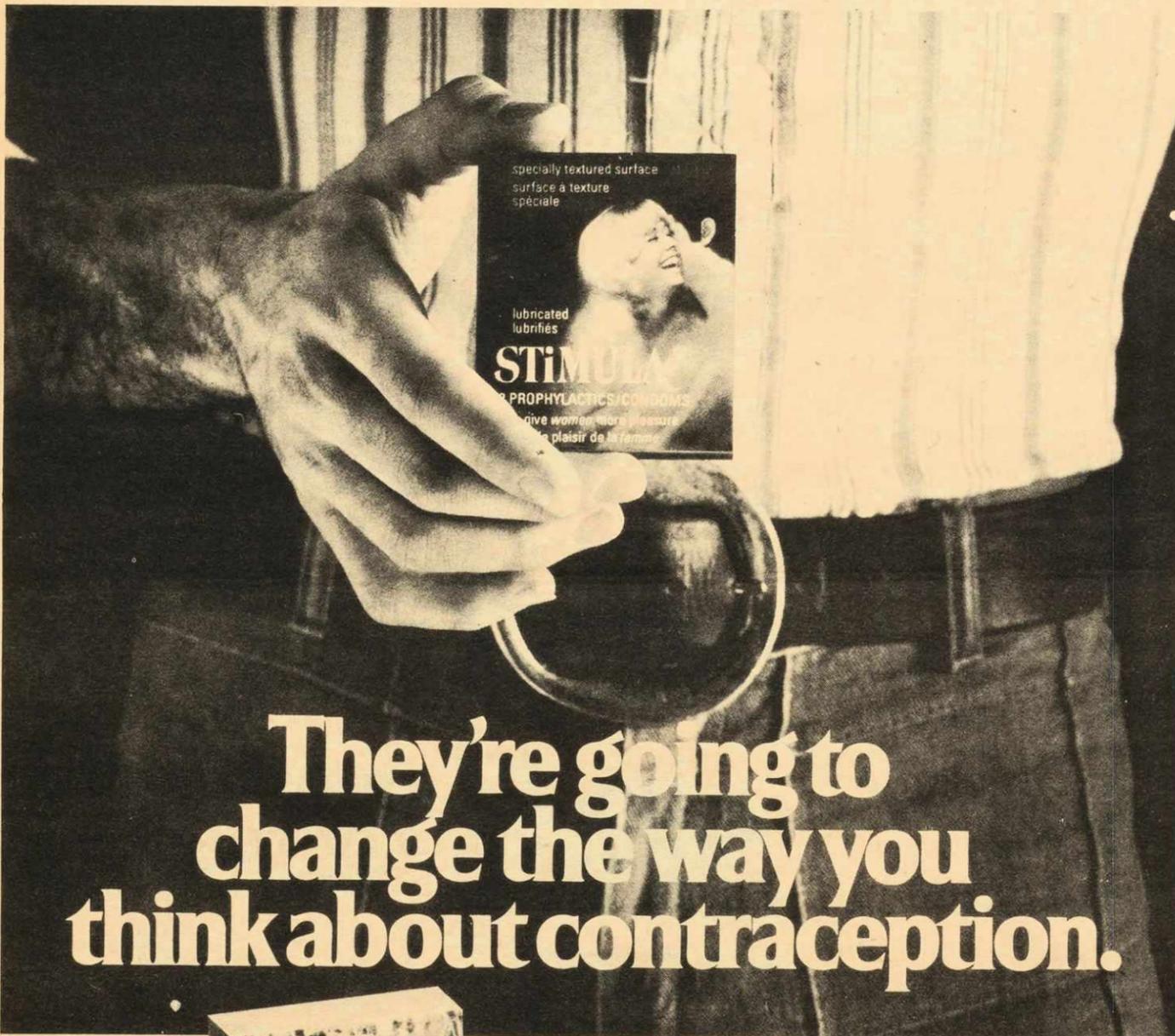
Reggae is the greatest of turntable drugs next to the "I Got The Feelin'" album by James Brown (1968) which should have included "Lickin' Stick," the most-lewd single of that year. Reggae is even more repetitive than vintage J.B.; but when there is a message to the reggae lyric, the repetition becomes power and the listening becomes hypnotic.

Ishan brethren are seven Jamaican-Canadians who are rastafarians. (Ras Tafari — pronounced "ta-fa-reye" — is the tribal name of the late Haile Selassie, whom many Jamaicans worship as a messiah). Their first two albums, "Roots" and now this one, were recorded and produced in Toronto, the new Ishan hometown. David Clayton-Thomas did the production, and on this album attempted some liner notes in rasta dialect, which turned out weak. The first album, "Roots," got no glossy sheath with phony drivell on the back and was in all a superior l.p. to this one.

"Roots" was a nasty, angry and unkempt reggae album. This new album, on the other hand, is pretty Marleyish and sold-out. There are cute guitar riffs everywhere, and the social comment in most of the songs is there only because it has to be, the way Marley dredges up some issue or other all the time, the way Dylan figured he had to do something about Rubin Carter or else lose his crusade position.

"Trenchtown" is the most bold cut on this album because it is kept cooking and the vocalists are upset. Ishan's live appearance must be festive, too, and I think it features the song "Tough, Tight And Dread" from their first album.

Ted Jordan / The statistics describing the cataloguing and content of Ted Jordan's album on Dartmouth's Solar records are not relevant. They made it over in Dartmouth, and added some live cuts recorded at Ginger's, and the session players include the lightning-quick Kevin Roach on dobro (he lives up above Ginger's) and Minglewood's Enver Sampson (a graduate of New Waterford University) on harp. You can buy the album at Ginger's or wherever Ted Jordan plays. The material, of course, is classic acoustic country blues sung by a happily transplanted Texan.



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