

# Turntable DRUGS

by Andrew Gillis

## Down Two Then Left Boz Scaggs / Columbia

The panorama of **Boz Scaggs'** moods is a big one, and it is disparate. There is variety to his new album "Down Two Then Left". Every song is different (not from those on "Silk Degrees" perhaps, but from each other). An example of the unique mood Scaggs brings to his tunes is in "1993", a quick three-minute cut on side two of this album.

Scaggs, in this song, is discouraged and angry at the social order of the future. The piano track

pounds on this song, giving an upper-class Steely Dan sound to the music, and underlining Scaggs' desperation: "It's like 1993 / And it's weird as hell to me / This group reality is just like Outer Space to me . . ."

A voice like Scaggs' voice always sounds like it belongs to the guy next door; the embarrassing feminine pitch of it never lets you think the guy could be angry with anything. That way, angry songs like "1993" become interesting when Scaggs does them. Donald Fagen, who sings for Steely Dan, does the same type of thing to his material.

The song "1993" rocks and rolls, and reminds me that Scaggs has got what used to be called "soul". Tyrone Davis, Arthur Conley, Otis Redding—those people were what were called "soul" singers. What happened to them?

Look around now, and all you'll find is Lou Rawls on T.V. for Budweiser. Look a little further, and you'll find Boz Scaggs, original, always danceable, the only artist on the shelves who may release a greatest hits album in this decade which will fill the place Wilson Pickett's Greatest Hits did in the last decade. The Collection of Musical Perfection cries out for Boz Scaggs. There is rumour that he will be playing the Metro Centre sometime this spring. I started that rumour myself at Pepe's last Saturday afternoon. The reason I thought of it is that Lou Rawls is booked for the Metro Centre. The soul following in this area is enormous, and it's ironic that Rawls—"sold" out to the beer companies—will be first to arrive.

Anyway, Scaggs and maybe Ronnie Isley are the only soul singers left in the U.S. Scaggs, like B.B. King, can finish off a vocal on a funky blues ("Hard Times", the second cut on this album), and then somehow go his voice one better: he breaks off for one chorus, walks to his guitar, straps it on, spins its volume control up . . . and next chorus, in he comes, with a solo of classic B.B. King riffs. Producer Joe Wissert immediately begins the fade, making you beg for more. You can find a fade like that on any great record—things just start to cook, and at that moment you notice the fade is on.

I have heard all Scaggs' albums now and "Down Two Then Left" is equal to any of them. Its variety is so great that, like last time out, Scaggs did not bother to find some confining title for the album. Instead, the obscure "Down Two Then Left", like the mysterious "Silk Degrees"; names you can apply to the moods, not the substance.

## Canada's quintuplets

by Catherine Graham

In his book, **The Dionne Years: A Thirties Melodrama**, Pierre Berton attempts to set the phenomenon of the Dionne quintuplets into the context of the depression-ridden thirties. Being an integral part of Canadian history the time in which they were born, as much as the fact that they were quintuplets, affected their reception.

The world was astonished to hear of the birth of five identical girls on May 28, 1934 to an illiterate French-Canadian woman in the backwoods of Northern Ontario. Without incubators, running water, or electricity and with only one doctor and two midwives, it was a miracle that the premature infants survived. It was a miracle that was to preoccupy the attention of the media and capture the imagination of the public. It was also a miracle that was to slowly turn into a tragedy.

The five Dionne girls were separated from their family and made wards of the crown. Housed in a miniature hospital, tended by nurses, viewed by the public, and raised on the theories of child psychologist William Blatz, and the advice of the formidable Dr. Alan Brown, the girls were the envy of many families. Regarded from the outside, their upbringing appeared ideal. Soon the Dionne quintuplets became synonymous with Canada and rivaled Niagara Falls as Canada's major tourist attraction. Everyone from King George VI and Shirley Temple to the corner grocer wanted to meet the "quints". Millions spent their vacations at "Quintland". Exploited by the media, their pictures appeared everywhere: movies, papers, magazines and billboards, and one could even hear their lisping voices on the radio. Adorable, innocent and loving, the girls were everyone's babies and a move could not be made to change their situation without an extensive public outcry.

Factual yet vividly written, **The Dionne Years** captures the lighter side of depression Canada. Accurate and thorough, Berton details the events surrounding the quintuplets. With the clarity of hindsight he examines the decisions that went into the "making" of the quints.

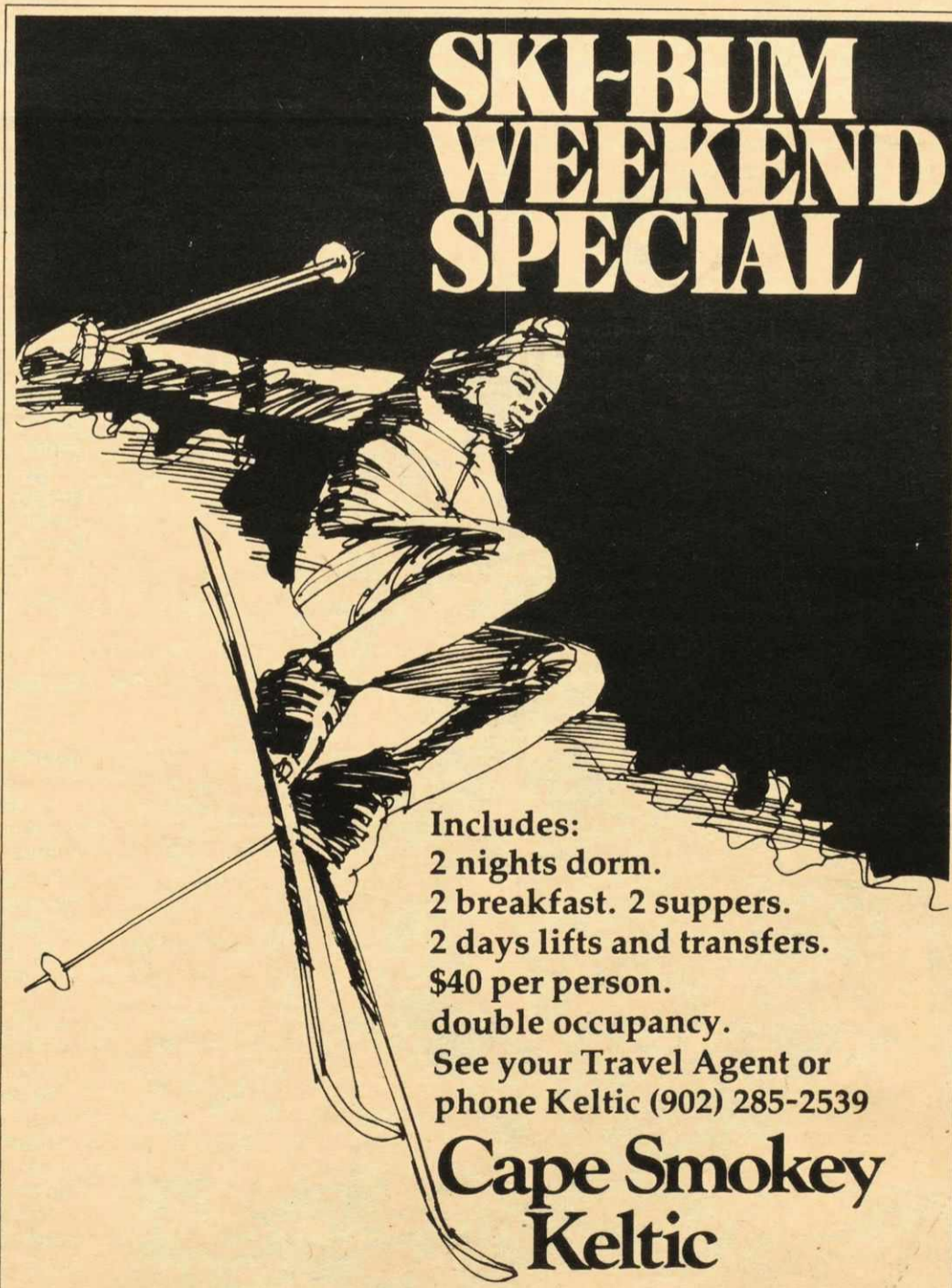
Buffeted between their family, the public, the government, and the medical world, all of whom thought they were making the best decisions regarding the children's lives, they often forgot that they were

dealing with human beings. The quints attracted money: charming and photogenic they had mass appeal, the kind of appeal that advertising companies were quick to sense and the government quick to use. Fortunes were made for and from the girls, little of which the

three surviving quintuplets have left. Living in relative obscurity the three are monuments to their past, a result of the twisted upbringing that Pierre Berton chronicles.

Although Berton's writing style is largely reminiscent of his talking, the book is diverting reading for anyone with a basic interest in Canada and the Dionne quintuplets. Not a personal account of their lives, in the sense that it is told

from their viewpoint, **The Dionne Years** lays out the facts. Giving probable motives for those responsible for the welfare of the children, Berton blames the time, not the system, for what happened to the quintuplets as they grew up. Complete with photographs the book is interesting reading for those who can remember the thirties and the Dionne quintuplets and even for those who cannot.



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