

Savoy Brown Talking Parrot

...by Stan Twist

Savoy Brown have been around a long time. At first they were one of those unknown blues bands playing small clubs in Britain. Then they started to boogie, and suddenly they were big. As a touring band there were few better equipped to whip an audience to a frenzy. But then lead singer Chris Yolden, who numbers among the top vocalists in England, left the band. The group tried to continue without Yolden with rhythm guitarist Lonesome Dave taking over lead vocals. But as group leader Kim Simmonds was later to admit "... you just don't try to replace a singer like Chris Yolden." Which was true enough, for the one album Savoy Brown released after Yolden's departure was awful. Yolden seemed to be the heart and soul of Savoy Brown and without him they were just another British blooze band.

So, having fallen on hard times, Simmonds disbanded the old group and set out to build a new one. He recruited Chicken Shack's Payl Raymond for keyboards and lead vocals, and then Blodwyn Pig's rhythm section, who quickly disappeared for some unknown for some unknown reason. They were immediately replaced by bassist Andy Silvester and drummer Dave Bidwell. Then Simmonds, who by all indications is a rather picky sort, decided Raymond wasn't strong enough as a vocalist and asked Dave Walker to perform that function, which he presently does. Oh, one other thing. The new Savoy Brown just released a new album (Street Corner Talking Parrot PAS 71C47), which is what this column is about this week.

(Mary had been saving her baby sitting money for a month just so she could get a front seat at this concert and she took full advantage of her position. When they came on stage Mary's eyes immediately fell upon the lead guitarist. He looked perverted enough. About half-way through the band's second number, the lead guitarist became aware of the cute 14-year-old blond in the first row who was staring at the bluge in his pants. He smiled and winked at her, which she answered by pursing her lips and narrowing her eyes. They both knew then.)

SB's biggest plus seems to be in veteran Kim Simmonds, who has improved 100 percent in his guitar work since the last few SB albums. He no longer goes in for the multi-stringed whining that typified his earlier style, but has now matured into a competent blues guitarist. His slide-guitar on "Tell Mama" is classic. Definitely the rawest bottleneck workout I've heard in some time.

(Even before the band had finished their set, Mary had cleverly got past the security guard and was waiting by the dressing room door. About three minutes later the group came back from the stage. The lead guitarist, whose name was Peter, showed no surprise when he saw Mary leaning playfully against the wall next to the dressing room door.

"Hi! What's your name and would you like to come over to my motel room and see my teddy bear," he said, taking her hand in his.

"My name's Mary and yes I would!"

"Tell Mama" is typical of SB's new sound. Paul Raymond played 2nd

guitar on this track and the alternating rising and falling chords of the two guitars reminds us all that good guitar playing doesn't have to always consist of some skinny Englishman in tight pants standing in front of four Marshall amplifiers seeing how many different toned screams of feedback he can get.

(Mary's hot tongue drove deep onto Peter's mouth as his hand slid under the hem of her short skirt. Her thighs were silky smooth and parted easily at the advance of his hands. She reclined softly on the bed under the weight of his body. Within a minute she was completely naked.

"Oh Peter, is that the finger you use to play your lead breaks?"

Vocalist Dave Walker comes across best in the album's second number, a SB reworking of the Old Temptations hit "Can't get next to you." The lyrics are beautifully satanic, the way only a black man can write them.

"I can fly, like a bird in the sky,
I can buy anything that money can buy

I can turn the river into a ragin' fire
And I can live forever if I so desire"

I don't know what it is, but there's something about an Englishman singing the blues that I find extremely appealing. Walker's vocalising is similar to Free's Paul Rodgers in that at first it seems dry and lifeless, but after a couple of listenings it becomes apparent that Walker's style is horny enough to make those hot little girls wet their pants.

SB's present rhythm section is one of the tightest in the business, which "All I Can Do" testifies to. Paul Raymond takes a back seat to no one when it comes to filling in those holes that blues bands so often have. His organ and piano work is comparable in skill to Rod Argents. He also handles lead vocal sufficiently in "Let It Rock," SB's token contribution to Rock and Roll.

As far as writing strength goes, SB must depend on Simmonds and to a lesser extent on Raymond. Neither have come up with anything really new most numbers being just old blues tunes renovated slightly so that they can't be accused of stealing. It's in SB's interpretations of these old tunes that the appeal of this album lies. You may have heard the tune a thousand times before, but SB does something to it that makes it refreshingly new. Just remember that's what the Beatles did when they first started out, and they didn't do too badly.

(Mary lay naked staring at the ceiling of the dimly lit room. Peter was soundly asleep beside her. She quietly got up, put on her clothes, and slipped out the door of the motel room. When she was about two blocks away, she took out something from under her jacket and smiled as she gazed on it. Christ, would her girlfriends ever be impressed for there in her hands was the most important possession a groupie could ever hope to have - Peter's teddy bear.

