



Silver Apples and Catharsis

by Patrick Kutney and Jeff Plewman

Silver Apples is the first group to play rock n roll without guitars.

The group merely consists of Dan Taylor on drums and Simeon who controls the Simeon and sings. The Simeon is thirteen oscillators (audio frequency generators), tone filters, and close to one-hundred manual controls. Simeon (the person) plays lead with his left hand, rhythm with his right hand, and bass by means of foot pedals. The Simeon produces sounds which are akin to the different guitars but not the same. Needless to say, with all this electronic equipment and Taylor's enormous drum set, they perform a legitimate type of music which is unlike any other form of music.

It is really quite difficult to describe Silver Apples music. Let it suffice to say that the majority of the masses (including the supposedly cultured university students) would not consider it music. I found them to be enjoyable and totally original. Dan Taylor is very good on the drums, in fact he has his drums tuned in a scale. Jimi Hendrix wanted him to be his drummer in The Experience when he was leaving for England. The Apples' lyrics are, for the most part, changed rather than sung. They were composed by Stanley Warren, the speech writer for Mayor Lindsay of New York City (!!).

Silver Apples was originally a five-piece group consisting of Simeon, singer, Taylor, drummer and lead, rhythm and bass guitarists. As the guitarists left one by one Simeon built oscillators to accommodate for the loss of sound. Said Taylor, "We found that we sounded better without the bass player."

Silver Apples has been a two-piece since Jan. 1. Simeon is "just able to change chords accurately" now. On the Simeon one can only play three or four chords in a certain key. Hence, in some songs they play in two or three different keys. For instance, on their first album, *Oscillations* is played in two keys and *Misty Mountains* in three keys.

Simeon feels that he has realized only part of the potential of his instrument. Their second album (to be released in the US on Nov. 1) should be more interesting and varied than their present album, yet to be released in Canada.

Perhaps the lack of exposure for Silver Apples accounts for the dimly small turn-out at the Rock Pile. But the two-hundred odd people who showed up Saturday night were treated to an excellent evening of entertainment, or, rather, involvement.

Once again *Transfusion*, the house band, turned in a superlative effort. The organist is now on a par with the other instrumentalists in the group and proves to be quite a capable musician.

Rock Pile owners John Brower and Rick Taylor have improved the place greatly since its inception Sept. 20. It is now probably the best rock emporium on the continent. Silver Apples sincerely confided that it has the best facilities of any place that they have ever played in, and they have played all the west coast and New York.

There is now an excellent and extensive new sound system and

the new light show is a collage of psychedelic splendour. It is ably put on by Catharsis, a quartet of Willowdale teenagers. I have seen many light shows and can say, without reservation, that the light show put on by Catharsis is the best there is. Indeed it even puts the famed light show of Detroit's Grande Ballroom to shame. The light images which project onto the Rock Pile's entire stage exhibit a high degree of originality and complexity. And Catharsis claims they haven't really started yet!



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Country Joe and the Fish

by Uldis Kundrats

Country Joe and his entourage descended upon the scene a hasty twenty minutes before their scheduled afternoon appearance at John Brower's rock emporium. And it showed. So much so that many of the onlookers preferred listening to the Rock Pile's house band, *Transfusion*, a group with much potential.

Joe McDonald and the Fish put on a respectable performance, considering the situation. Country Joe has a deep, mellow voice, capable of communicating numerous moods and inflections.

Lead guitarist Barry Melton was exciting and articulate, and especially effective when using foot pedals or blues harp.

I was impressed by the intricate rhythms used by the Fish, especially drummer Chicken Hirsch. Shifting from careening rock to waltz time with apparent ease, the group was never dull even

when they slowed down or stopped in seeming confusion.

Probably due to the hurried arrival, the Fish playing was somewhat disjointed (they barely had time to tune) and many onlookers went away disappointed.

Fortunately, though the group returned to a patiently sweating evening audience and brought down the house with numbers like "Section 43," "Flying High," and "Fixin' to Die". At the conclusion the audience began stomping, clapping and screaming until the Fish returned with "I Like Marijuana (show me the way to get stoned)."

Looking happily high, Country Joe and the boys proved that live concerts are not obsolete — electric music can sound as good live as in records. The concert is still a viable and potentially exciting art form, in spite of all the electronic tripe that is messing many a person's ear now (go see The Byrds sometime and you won't ask how).

Sick TV has a very simple cure

by David Schatzley

There's something rotten in the state of our society. "Let's burn down the universities" say the student powerists. Well, I have a better place to start: the television networks.

Now, don't get me wrong. I like television. But even some of my favorite programs, because of the very nature of the medium (or should it be mediocre?) are degenerating. Let me explain.

If you consider how much programming must be produced to satisfy our current video-appetite, it becomes obvious that every hour on display can't be a gem.

There are three networks in the states, two here. They broadcast at least 18 hours a day, seven days a week. If they presented only one program an hour, it would take about 630 shows to fill the available space.

The way in which television programs find their way on to the airwaves is another link in the chain of the demise of quality in television broadcasting.

A brilliant comic like Mel Brooks gets an idea. An idea which is just right for him. If he writes the show each week, and is retained as an idea man, he can make a million bucks. If he stars in it too, he gets TWO million dollars (in old Canadian quarters), plus shares of his sponsors' preferred stock, plus guest appearances (at \$10,654 a shot) at the Wilmita County Fair, Oregon, and the Melly Fingleherm Memorial Sputum Festival in Peoria.

He approaches the telexes at, let's say, CBS, and tries to sell them the idea.

"There's this spy, see. And he's pretty spastic. Like when he goes out on assignment, he tells his next-door neighbour, and the neighbour turns out to be a member of the very organization he's supposed to smash..."

If a stifled snicker arises in the smoke-filled, tranquilizer-doped room where the meeting's

being held, and if its a high-ranking executive who snickered then the sycophants laugh too, and Brooks is on his way to his first million. Or is he? The complications now arise.

First, a pilot film has to be made. This is like a free sample from the Fuller Brush man, showing you what it is you're buying. This may cost about \$30,000 to produce, and may never be seen again.

It's peddled around to potential sponsors, and they, along with Mel Brooks (if he hasn't had a nervous breakdown by now) and the network representatives, meet to discuss what's wrong with it.

Well, first of all, the sponsor's wife is the cousin of Don Adams' father-in-law, and ol' Don Adams is sick of doing long runs of hack stand-up routines at the Sands in Vegas, so he gets the part (and the guest appearances at The Freestone Peach Recital in Fruitluip, Iowa).

Then all those involved have various ideas on what's good taste, what's necessary to plug the sponsor's product, what the basic approach to the whole thing should be to capture the 'right' audience, and many other things which lead to the program being de-gutted to appeal to the lowest common denominator.

It runs a year or two, being quite popular: the star has a consistent witty delivery, and the majority of the scripts are a cut above those of the average show, but as the ratings start to slide, the producers (hint) get smart, and decide to fiddle around.

Granted the jokes were beginning to sound like W.C. Fields rejects which Milton Berle had a field day with in the WC, but the original format was basically sound.

So this season brings us a show that is gimmicky and synthetic, slick and overextended: it has gone the way of all shows! If you don't agree that most are like that, you're probably one of

NBC's ushers for Johnny Carson. However, if you're an average viewer and can call a spade a spade, you can call most of what TV offers garbage. It has no way of being anything else, because of the pressures of production and the demands of a mass audience.

IS THERE A SOLUTION?

Yes! A bold move on behalf of the three American networks and CBC and CTV here would result in a revolutionary new system which, believe it or not, would not only benefit society culturally, but would also actually stimulate the economy. (He's ver-rückt, you say, how can what's good for America be good for General Motors? ... Read on, I say!)

The solution is simple. Programs should only be seen if they are of high quality. They should not be taped until the writers have written to a standard which they think is their best. The performer should not have to perform until he is confident that he's performing at peak. (You get the idea, there may not be a mediocre I LOVE LUCY every Monday at 7.30, but there may be a brilliant I LOVE LUCY once every couple of months.)

Generally then, there would be more specials, more time for in-depth news, and more surprise in programming and more polish. And advertising would be restricted in this new approach to blocks, possibly where the commercial itself would be a highly creative mini-program of its own, with just a brief message (a ten second neutral flash) at the end.

A program of creative little shows with tiny commercial content would be closely watched and APPRECIATED more than the annoying advertising interruptions are now.

This is the second in a series of articles by David Schatzky on the electronic media.