

# Turntable drugs

**gillis records**

The whole thing about reviewing popular music albums is remembering how easy it is to tell somebody what you think of something. There is no need to worry about being objective. You just tell the person what you think of this or that album, and let the person decide how screwed up you are; how prejudiced, how jaundiced or how conceited — like the record reviewers in Stereo Review, those guys who tell you how late they went to bed the night before, before listening to this or that album.

My name is Andrew Gillis. I think you probably do not know me, which is perfect — and I am going to tell you what I think of this or that album all year long in the *Gazette*. Please remember how completely meaningless my opinions are and that you should buy



your record albums blindfolded because few artists can be relied upon to make albums which in any way resemble their last. All that I will tell you of any value is who played, what they played and how I liked it. I will try not to tell you anything else.

George Benson and Joe Farrell / Benson & Farrell CTI 6069 / Flute Song: Beyond The Ozone; Camel Hump; Rolling Home; Old Devil Moon.

Creed Taylor Incorporated (CTI) is a company which produces jazz records and gave Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Benson, Hubert Laws, Billy Cobham and many others the break which led them to the cover story in *Newsweek* and the main fuss over jazz-rock. Creed Taylor produces CTI albums, and occasionally matches his stars together. Here Benson and his angelic electric guitar blows away Joe Farrell and his soprano sax and flutes.

Taylor's recording of these men is a bit mellow. The bass is toned down and made a bit trebly (that's a nice word - trebly), which is unfair

treatment for former Sly drummer Andy Newmark and funk bassist Will Lee. The rhythms are catchy Latin salsa, however, and Benson is absolutely at home with them. On both "Breezin'" and "In Flight," his two last solo albums, you can hear Benson warming up to each beat, and cutting loose as each song winds up. The chord changes on "Benson and Farrell" are back-and-forth Latin ones, too, and Benson loves them. Farrell and the other session men here, among them Stuff's Eric Gale and the Brecker Brothers' Steve Khan of Montreal, must have sat around the studio monitors awestruck by Benson's playing. Farrell is one of the titular heads of this album, but next to Benson, his only real contribution is the arranging and carrying of the melodies.

Geils / Monkey Island / Atlantic Ksd 19103 / Surrender; You're The Only One; I Do; Somebody; I'm Falling; Monkey Island; I'm Not Rough; So Good Wreckage.

What can be safely said about Geils is that they are the baddest band on either side of the Atlantic Ocean. The pressure of their performance, the perfection of their skills, the integrity of their arrangements and the boyish enthusiasm of Wolf, Geils, and the redoubtable Magic Dick are not paralleled by any rock band ever formed. Certainly they are not paralleled by any rock band formed ten years ago and still existing with exactly the original membership.

In the last four years the Geils repertoire of lyric and mood has expanded further than has the Rolling Stones' in the past eight. If you think any member of the Geils band, on the road almost constantly for the past seven years, ever went out onstage wasted or perhaps even just wired in the manner of "Mr. Rolling Stones" Keith Richard, you can forget it. J. Geils can handle all the Chuck Berry riffs unsubdued by heroin. Mick Jagger carries his band on his shoulders, whereas Wolf is an intelligent front man with better roots contact and an equal flair for climbing the p.a. and calling to Raputa the Beauta on bended knee. Nor does Wolf have any need to stuff the crotch of his pants. Geils always means business, and they still will play in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, to boot; and they will deliver all the goods by request with a 20-minute encore if required.

The fact that the J. Geils Band has not been honoured with bi-weekly ticker tape parades in all the major centers has been a continued cause of wonderment for me, and I am waiting for any band to release an album as exciting, as considered, as danceable and as passionate as "Monkey Island" this year. You can hear classic Louis Armstrong on this record. You can also read an almost cryptic attack on decaying Manhattan in the title lyrics, "Monkey Island." That cut begins, with a burning salsa piano bridge by Seth Justman. The harp fills, phased, echoed and octave-multiplexed by Magic Dick, are startling the way Hendrix' guitar was. Geils himself cuts in on the title cut with a Hawaiian slack-key guitar solo, a banjo sort of sound that really makes no sense in the context — except that it works when you hear it, it works like hell.

Geils has a solid and widening niche in the Collection of Musical Perfection. They set a standard of

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