

# Off the "Tracks"

by Andrew M. Duke

**B**eware! This is not a record to be judged by its cover. Lurking behind a perfectly harmless painting of two clowns and a circus dog are the Butthole Surfers.

The follow-up to the *Rembrandt Pussyhorse* LP (which included a cover of the Guess Who's "American Woman"), *Locust Abortion Technician* (Touch and Go) has the Surfers struggling along. First there was the *Brown Reason to Live* EP and the world (or at least those who appreciated good music) was introduced to these acid-indulging Texan freaks. This was followed by the *Live PCPPEP* EP (a live version of their debut), the *Psychic... Powerless... Another Man's Sac* LP, and the *Cream Corn from the Socket of Davis* EP.

On the visual side of their sixth and latest release, we find the usual lack of credits. Thankfully they bothered to include a song titles list and credit for the painting. The Surfers have assumed that we know they are: singer/guitarist Gibby Haynes,

guitarist Paul Leary, bass player Jeff, and drum demon King Koffee. Bassist Kramer and the King's sister, Teresa, who also played drums, "freaked out" and left the band.

On the audio side, *Locust Abortion Technician* is a journey through the strange land of fuzzboxes, vocoders, and perverted humour.

"Sweat Loaf", a cover of "Sweet Leaf", the Black Sabbath ode to cannabis, begins with a father-and-son conversation about regret. "It's better to regret something you've done than something you haven't done," seems to be Haynes' motto as he has been known to wear clothespins in his hair and perform naked at the Danceteria. "Graveyard" is offered in two versions: the incomprehensible speed and the proper speed. Pittsburgh to Lebanon sounds like lazy Led Zeppelin, balanced by the riot-inducing ethnic take-off and instrumental that follow.

Other tracks such as *USA* (with its helicopter roar), *O-Men* (lots of amp squeaks), and *Human Cannonball* (blast-your-socks-off rock and roll) grind,

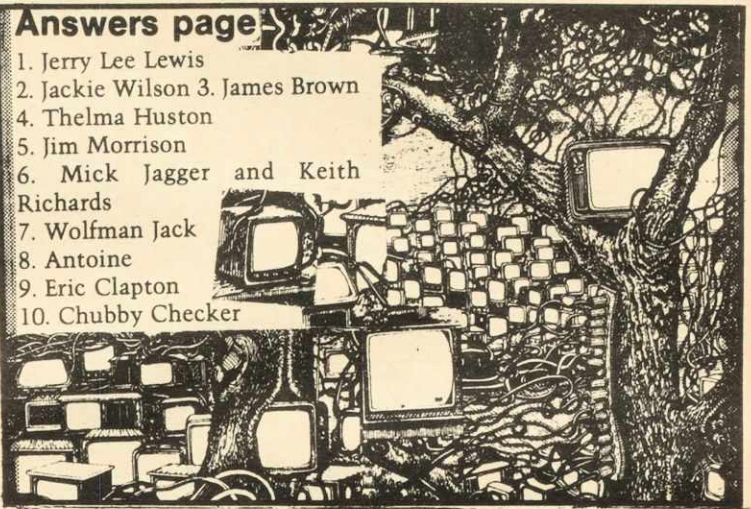
scquelch, annoy and force the question: "Where would the Surfers be without voice/guitar distortion?"

22 *Going On 23* comes the closest to being a great track. A sexual assault victim tells her story on a radio phone-in show while voices echo, guitars throb, and cows moo in the background. Where almost every track fell victim to senseless mixing, this track is a bit more musically bearable.

*Locust Abortion Technician* fails at being a great Surfers album because they have taken their best trick and tried to use it on almost every cut. The LP has spark and variety, but only the Surfers could possibly enjoy the total warping it has endured. Get away from the mixing board — NOW!

## Answers page

1. Jerry Lee Lewis
2. Jackie Wilson 3. James Brown
4. Thelma Huston
5. Jim Morrison
6. Mick Jagger and Keith Richards
7. Wolfman Jack
8. Antoine
9. Eric Clapton
10. Chubby Checker



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