

**Psyche**  
**Mystery Hotel**  
**Amok**

by Rodney Gitzel

Listening to the first cuts on this album, one might expect that Monsieurs (yes, they're Canadians — former Edmontonians, in fact) Red and Panic, having finished the album preceding this one, found that they couldn't stop. So, they cranked up the digital reverb, and started on THIS album

But don't worry — that's only for the first couple tunes. This isn't *Unveiling the Secret* all over again, although the chord structure of "Dreamstreet" is more than vaguely reminiscent of one of the songs from that album. This is still Psyche with *Mystery Hotel* they've taken their particular version of . . . let's call it nasty synth-pop, for the sake of a reference point, and added a few new twists.

Anthony Red is still expanding his array of ANALOG synthesizer timbres, which, I think, is GREAT! He hasn't succumbed to the latest in samplers, or even to the DX7!! Or, if he HAS . . . I haven't noticed it. What he has done, however, is moved away from the short, almost abrupt sounds of *Unveiling the Secret*, and has embraced more lush tones; sounds with lots of decay, reverberation on and, fortunately, bite. There's not much space around the notes on this album, which is a definite change from the last record.

As for Mr. Even Panic (don't you just love their names?), whatever (or WHO-ever) was eating away at him when *Unveiling the Secret* was written has relented somewhat. The anger and spite that had so visibly threaded itself into many of the songs on that album ("Caught in the Act" pounces vividly into mind) seem to have gone away. Nevertheless, *Mystery Hotel* is not a "happy" album (it wouldn't be by Psyche if it was!). The line "When I'm in a

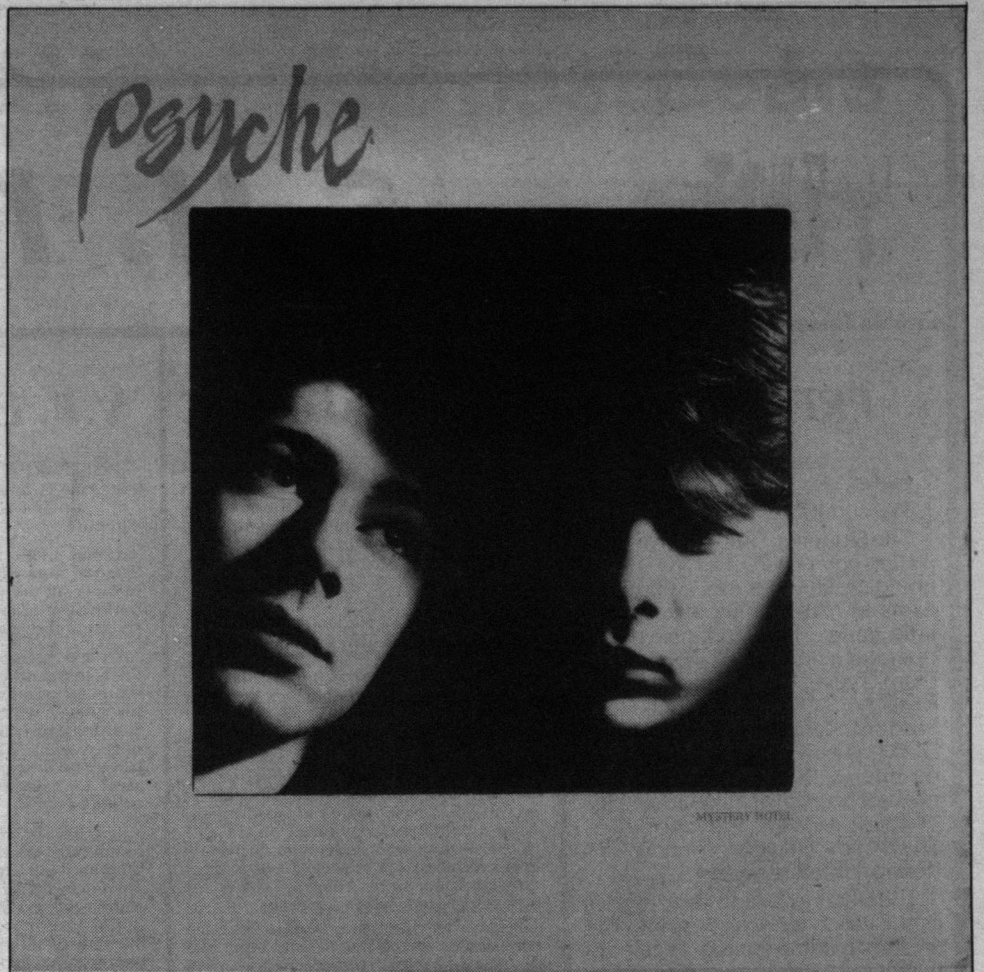
familiar room, I am the outsider" sticks out in my mind, and seems to be somewhat indicative of what is generally going on here (well, that, and "The insomniacs are out tonite, tearing up the floors . . .").

Although most of the cuts are quite good, "Ride On" is an exception both musically and lyrically, which makes it an anomaly as far as Psyche is concerned. You might like to check it out, though, just to hear some horrific screaming from Evan Panic, sounding as if it was recorded through a wall.

The rest of the songs are much better than "Ride On", however. "Wake the Flood Unconscious" is especially interesting (and not just for the title). Think of slow, driving, 70's metal — "Smoke on the Water" is close enough — and then think of said metal being done on synthesizers, complete with a guitar solo! That seems to be a fairly accurate description of what they tried to do with this song, and it sounds fantastic.

"You're the Only One" is a bit of a shocker. Before buying this album, I jokingly imagined Psyche doing a love song . . . and now they've done one.

A final word — of warning, perhaps — about the last song on the album. It's called "Eternal", and it's probably the most . . . funky? danceable? groovy? (!) . . . tune on the record. Yet it's scary, almost, for at times the music sounds happy and it even modulates to a major key for handfuls of beats at a time! (They went almost two whole records without resorting to that.) Anyway, considering that this album seems to continue on from the last one, this song may bode strangely for the tone of the NEXT album . . . but I suppose we can all find out this Thursday night, when Psyche plays at Flashback. *Mystery Hotel*, I've heard, was released a year ago in Europe so there should be some new material in their sets. So everybody cross their appendages, and I'll see you all there. In the meantime, go buy this album!



**Peter Tosh**  
**The Toughest**  
**EMI/Manhattan**

by Mike Spindloe

Peter Tosh was to reggae music what, ahem, Wayne Gretzky was to hockey in Canada, so his (Tosh's) untimely demise last year was a shock to the reggae community, which had lost its other leading light, Bob Marley, to cancer not long before, on a scale approximating that caused by the trade of you-know-who.

Tosh left behind him a large body of work dating back to the original Wailers

(of whom he was a member along with Marley and Bunny Wailer), although he is probably best known for his 1974 pro-cannabis (a sacrament of the Rasta religion) anthem, "Legalize It".

*The Toughest*, which amounts to the inevitable posthumous greatest hits album, takes its title from one of the nicknames bestowed upon Tosh during his career. Not surprisingly, the album contains no surprises — just a critic's choice list of the best of Tosh. For that reason, it will be redundant for most of the people who care already, but if you're merely curious or just want one Peter Tosh album in your collection, this is the one for you.

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