

# Albums of the Decade: a Gateway series



## BENO JOHN (1961 - 1979)

Former Gateway staffer Beno John was found dead yesterday morning. His limp body was discovered in the Humanities Building. An autopsy has revealed that John was the victim of an overdose of Byron and Shelley.

This is the last in a series examining the top contemporary albums of the Seventies. Getaway rock critics and local experts are contributing their assessments, and readers are invited to discuss our top ten lists among themselves.

This issue: former Gateway editor Loreen Lennon, who we found staggering around outside of Pembina Hall.

1. **Grand Funk** *E Pluribus Funk* 1972 Perhaps more than any other group, Grand Funk reflected the mood and the feelings of the time they were active in. Though *All the Girls of the World Beware!* was also an excellent album for the power trio, only *E Pluribus Funk* captured the passion of Mark Farner's guitar and married it to Don Brewer's double-time percussion. And of course, the affair was consummated through the driving and melodic bass work of Don Schacht.

2. **Conway Twitty** *The High Priest of Country Music* 1974 Much-maligned by many people, country and western music is the only contemporary musical genre that speaks for the working class. Though in his decadent, *nouveau riche* lifestyle Twitty might not appear working-class, there is little doubt that the songs other people write for him reveal and discuss his humble roots. Twitty's best album, and therefore a modern classic.

3. **Atomic Rooster** *Death Walks Behind You* 1973 Former Arthur Brown sideman Vincent Crane formed

this trio and combined important lyricism with zest and original compositions. Though this band only recorded two albums before being split up by artistic differences, they proved that Dan Hill doesn't have a monopoly on profundity.

4. **London Symphony Orchestra** *Tommy* 1970 The LSO has often been criticized for remaining aloof from mainstream contemporary music, but their stirring interpretation of The Who's *Tommy* was successful merger between rock and classical motifs. Those who haven't heard the album can well imagine how beautifully stirring "Pinball Wizard" is when it is performed with an entire string section.

5. **Carole King** *Tapestry* 1970 A beautiful, sad, lovely, hopeful album. A touching and very feminine look at some decidedly masculine topics like rifles, earthquakes and travelling. A must for any modern woman's collection. Oh! just thinking about it makes me want to run home and play it! Carole has unfortunately never topped this dizzy height of musical accomplishment, though she has tried with each successive album, for they all sound **exactly alike**.

6. **Billy Joel** *The Stranger* 1978 I understand a lot of English students are studying the lyrics to this album both in class and at their study carrels. That's no surprise, because Joel is certainly the most important of the decade's singer-songwriters. Though this fact was known even as far back as "Piano Man", it is *The Stranger* that firmly asserts the artist's musical vision. I understand the English Department is considering creating a half-year course devoted to the intense study of Joel's complete works. All I can say is it's about time!

7. **Neil Diamond** *Taproot Manuscript* 1971 Neil Diamond can never be accused of being a mere hack, cashing in on every current trend, because *Taproot Manuscript* is a timeless work, capturing the true spirit of the black African and bringing it to the USA, where he displayed it in its true crudity. Though some have said this album is **grossly overproduced**, it cannot be forgotten that Diamond was exploring musical roots, and taking a step towards bringing a cultural heritage to modern music.

8. **Heart** *Dreamboat Annie* 1977 Canadians can be proud that it was in our country that this band established itself. Even though they treat their breeding ground of Vancouver like the plague, and have equated Canada with Uganda in terms of desirable places to be, this must not be attributed to their stunning commercial success. Annie and Nancy are not mere competent modern musicians; they know how to squeeze a dollar until Liz II is positively grinning.

9. **Three Dog Night** *It Ain't Easy* 1970 It's hard to believe that this album was recorded in the 70s, isn't it? (Some find it difficult to believe it was recorded at all.) Ignoring the fact that this group **stole** all of their songs, **stole** the title to this album, **stole** their arrangements and harmonies, and **stole** their stage style, they still rank as the most original of the early 70s singles bands.

10. **Privilege** *Cantata Canada* 1972 The best band Edmonton has ever produced. I'll never forget Mel Degan as he sang **every part** in the group's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, or how *Cantata Canada* made me proud to be an Edmontonian. A stunning examination of a nation's roots, and a startling revelation of a rock group's love for that nation.

## Audience will die laughing

By Keith Asskiss

The genius of Peter Coe has produced another smash hit musical which is certain to skyrocket straight to Broadway.

Coe's flawless direction, combined with flawless performances by veterans Ron Moody and Glynis Johns has produced the most exhilarating and uplifting musical comedy ever to grace the Citadel stage.

Certain local critics scoffed five weeks ago when it was announced that Coe would be directing *Saigon Shuffle*, a musical version of *The Deerhunter*. But the ten minute standing ovation by yesterday's opening night Citadel audience testifies that the maestro has not lost his touch.

By downplaying the intensity and social commentary which Edmonton movie fans and *Journal* critic John Dodd found disturbing, Coe has once again succeeded in making top flight theatre accessible to Edmonton audiences and *Journal* reviewers.

Coe succeeded in unearthing the latent comedy in the *Deerhunter* and turned that pretentious drama into a rousing knee slapper of a musical comedy.

Credit must also go to Ron Moody, Glynis Johns and John Juliani, whose sterling performance thrilled and entertained Citadel patrons again.

Moody is sensational in the role of Michael, the deer loving steelworker whose latent passion for dancing is uncovered in a Viet Cong POW camp.

Only an actor with Moody's experience and sensitivity could make this difficult transition believable.

Coe's decision to turn the central Russian roulette scene into a lengthy and elaborate song and dance

number was quite simply a stroke of genius. The thousands of yellow and pink balloons which were released from the ceiling at the conclusion of this number added an imaginative and original touch typical of Coe's directorial wizardry.

There was some apprehension before opening night that Miss Johns could not adequately and believably fulfill the role of Linda, the twenty-year old girl whom Michael eventually wins. However those of us who have followed Miss Johns' sterling stage and screen career never doubted her ability to bring the character of the tall blonde grocery clerk to life.

Never have Edmonton theatre goers been treated to more sophisticated and professional entertainment. If you were impressed by the lively sentimentality of Coe's *Harold and Maude* or his intelligent staging of *Richard III* then don't miss the rich entertainment of *Saigon Shuffle*.

I feel a special warmth for this delightful mixture of mirth and merriment because it is the last play I shall ever review.

Yes theatre fans from now on former columnist Frank Hutton will review stage events in our wonderful city. I have embarked on a new career as a public relations executive working for Citadel director Peter Coe, a man I have long admired and praised.

So thank you for being a wonderful and sophisticated audience who were perceptive enough to accept my judgement rather than bothering to exercise any you might possess.

Toodeloo dearies.

## Dumbocki looks at hits for the 80s

By Nick Dumbocki

Our story begins in a dusty corner of *The Getaway* offices, a place that my Arts editor calls 'home'. Recovering from a bout with a particularly vicious bottle of Cutty Sark, his breath bathed me in noxious fumes as he proceeded to shred my Donna Summer record review.

"Relevance to the masses is what you want," he said. "You have . . . gurggh, aachh, bleecch!"

"I see," I lied.

Head in garbage can, (the kind intended solely for recyclable waste), my editor pointed to a stack of albums on his desk. "Review 'em," he said, "and do a good job. Or you'll be covering student council meetings for the rest of your . . . guuuh . . . life."

I involuntarily shuddered at the thought of that despicable punishment, grabbed the albums, and headed out the door before my editor could ask me to join him in one more chorus of "Long Way to Tipperary".

It wasn't until I reached my comfortable penthouse suite in The Commercial Hotel that I realized the nature of my extraordinary find. Instead of the usual **Buddy Holly** meets the **Crickets**, **Billy**

**Vaughn** and the **Rodents** crap we've been getting — the packages contained some of the hottest pressings I have ever layed eyes on.

Friends. These albums are *so* new, why . . . St. John's Edmonton Report hasn't even seen them yet! And they weren't even *mentioned* in the copy of *Rolling Stone* that I stole from HUB news. So let's give credit where credit is due. Those boys in the Canada Post Office busted their asses to get these albums to me in time . . . to outscop a nation! So without further adieu, I will begin my critique:

**The Beatles** — *Magical Mystery Tour* — I'm going to step out on a limb and say that this band may go places. The album concept itself is hokey, but talent is evident. Rhythms and vocals are nice, though it's easy to see that the Beatles have borrowed heavily from several ELO albums. I think if they tried a little harder, they could come up with something original. Their lyrics are OK anyways, except for on "Penny Lane" and "All You Need is Love". They have a lilting quality to them that makes 'em totally unsuitable for airplay on the quality rock stations like CHED. It's a good debut album; they rate a 9.

**Jimi Hendrix Experience** — *Are You Experienced?* — A trio that features a token black vocalist/lead guitarist. They dress flamboyantly; in the latest fashions from New York City. It's their hard driving, disco beat that I really like though. When I'm out on the floor, I need a steady rhythm — no fooling around, just good music. Jimi plays good music, and you don't have to be a John Travolta to keep up either; he just plays slow and easy. Put on your three pecker and your best coke spoon when you listen to this. 10 out of 10.

**The Doors** — *Morrison Hotel* — I never heard of these boys before, but believe me, they are no Fleetwood Mac. I would say that they are an excellent bar band (that was lucky to land a recording contract), but can never amount to anything higher than a warm-up group in the Kinsmen Field House. Add a synthesizer, some female vocalists, and a full symphony orchestra — **then** we'll have a good rock album. And they'll have to change their name. The Doors; how ignorant. A 4 on the scale.

There were others, but that's good enough for this issue. Make sure you go out to the record store right away and start asking for these.

Better yet. But two. One for you, and one for your grandmother. (Let's see. How many grams of coke did Warner Brothers promise?)