



It takes a special record to pull me out of my hole in the wall and motivate me to write a couple of paragraphs. Strangely enough, two such recordings have come to my attention recently and they are both by the artist. His name is Cat Stevens; he records on the A&M label; and the albums are called "Tea for The Tillerman" and "Mona Bone Jakon".

His music fits into the contemporary genre of the single performer, usually playing guitar, backed by a full complement of instruments, notably bass and piano - similar to James Taylor, Elton John, Stephen Stills, and George Harrison. It's just that Cat Stevens may be more pleasant to listen to than any of these people because he's very funky and he grows on you faster than the proverbial beanstalk that sprouted overnight.

Steven's voice takes some getting used to. He sounds like his vocal chords have been scraped with sand-paper; but with some "studioizing", it comes off as very smooth, mellow and soul-full. His music rolls and josties its way through your head in a friendly way, a change of pace here, a switch of tempo there. It almost demands the eliciting of a string of "far-outs", "outtasites" and other such expletives - You can even listen to the words if you want (a nice touch for those "behind closed doors prima-donnas" among us). His diction is very precise.

Although his lyrics are sometimes very painful (as in "Maybe You're Right" and "Father and Son"), he says nothing too moralistic or outrageous or complex to keep you up nights. Just things that Cat (if I may be so personal) has been think-

ing about lately, and thought he'd write some of it down ("Pop Star" is a perfect example). His songs though, cover almost all moods; happy, sad, pensive and questioning. He has

religious theme; it is called "Longer Boats" and is full of that beautiful chorale and hypnotizing repetition that you find in parts of "All Things Must Pass" and throughout "Jesus Christ Superstar".

But it takes more than tricky "coinages" to convince a discerning music-lover of a new artist's greatness; and that's where Cat Stevens' fantastic sense of rhythm and beat comes in and steals your heart away. Where the orchestration on Elton John's first album and on the Beatles' "Long and Winding Road" at times sounds like an afterthought, on "Tea for The Tillerman" and "Mona Bone Jakon", it is always alive and appropriate and never tacked-on.

Nice Stuff. Good talking with you, Cat, and if it's always this nice, I'll listen any time.

## CAT STEVENS

by Alan Black



CAT STEVENS

The basis of his lyrics range from the ecological crisis; to the venerable man-woman-love trilogy; to nonsensical tunes (as the title song of "Tea for The Tillerman" and "Into White"). My personal favourite of his themes, though, is one that appears continually amongst his songs and concerns most of us here - the big questions that we all ask and have asked for eons, the ones that were answered so easily in black-and-white when we were sixteen and seventeen, but that don't seem so clear anymore (he asks them in songs like "Trouble", "But

even included one along the now very acceptable quasi-



## Hamburg Orchestra Presents Concert

The Hamburg Chamber Orchestra, called the "musical family of Hamburg" will be at the Playhouse at 8:30 on March 10.

The Creative Arts Committee of UNB has sponsored the presentation in Fredericton and it is offered free to students.

The orchestra has been to-

gether for ten years and has toured extensively throughout Europe and South America. The Hamburg Chamber Orchestra are making their first North America tour this March and April and will cross both Canada and the United States.

An evening of rich music from these fine string musicians can be anticipated.

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### ABRAXAS\*SANTANA

After Woodstock I thought that was the end of Santana - then surprise - at my local record shop I find Abraxas - looks interesting - nice cover - maybe I can put it on my wall, I think. What the hell, I'm feeling rich - I bought it.

Better than their first one and it had to be better than Woodstock. Nothing could have gotten any worse than that.

From 'Singing Winds, Crying Beasts' to 'El Nicoya' (they had to put it in 'to fill up the record I'm sure) I was pleased, sometimes, exuberant occasionally, and pissed off once (El Nicoya).

The drumming has improved, not just a jumble of thrashing sounds anymore. Guitarwork is superb and you can't find too many faults. They have

improved - they really have. A beautiful peace record - good for any occasion.

### ERIC CLAPTON

Eric Clapton continues to improve like a fine old wine. More mellow as time goes on.

Put him in with artists, and I mean artists, like Leon Russell, Bonnie and Delaney and Carl Rodle and you've got to try awfully hard not to make a good album.

Clapton has lost none of his finesse. More of those beautiful licks still permeate the album and you are taken back to the days of the Cream.

For nostalgia 'Blues Power' brings it all back.

'Bad Boy' and 'Let it Rain' really show the true genius of Clapton - If you get the chance, give it a listen - You can't go wrong.