

# Chris de Burgh travels the road between reality and myth

by Gisele Marie Baxter

On the whole, I tend to view "greatest hits" records somewhat skeptically, especially if they're released in December. Too often, they seem only an attempt by the record company to cash in on Top 40 radio's current darlings. Yet from time to time, an album will appear which is both a valid introduction to the artist and a worthwhile package for the fan. Chris de Burgh's **Best Moves** is such a record.

melodically simple or starkly powerful, existing somewhere between traditional folk and electric pop. Chris de Burgh has one of those straightforward English folksinger voices - clear and sweet and strong, but never saccharine. (The background vocals could use restraint; they tend to be lushly overbearing.)

Most of the material here is well chosen - the second side is especially well arranged - and ranges from 1974 to last year's mysterious "The Traveller" and

number of the set, a Noel Coward-meets-Paul McCartney cabaret ballad a la Dire Straits' "Les Boys," though less decadent.

Of the new songs, "Waiting for the Hurricane" is more interesting than the pop song "Every Drop of Rain," and gives a captivating picture of restless frustration in the face of impending doom, with the search for hope being futile perhaps because it knows it's futile. The best songs on **Best Moves** have this search at core - from the lovely live version of "Broken Wings" to "Crusader" to "Spanish Train."

Hope is present in the delicate "A Spaceman Came Travelling," which could work very well as a contemporary Christmas song, yet one of the centrepieces of this collection, the classic "Spanish Train," has an almost violently cynical tone. "Spanish Train" travels a stark Ingmar Bergman-like landscape, with moments of lightning-bright power in its sparse yet mystical tale of a poker game between Good and Evil.

The orchestral, brilliantly arranged "Crusader" (another classic) gives Chris de Burgh's central concern - the loss of the vision that gives hope - in the simple yet perceptive words of a Fool:

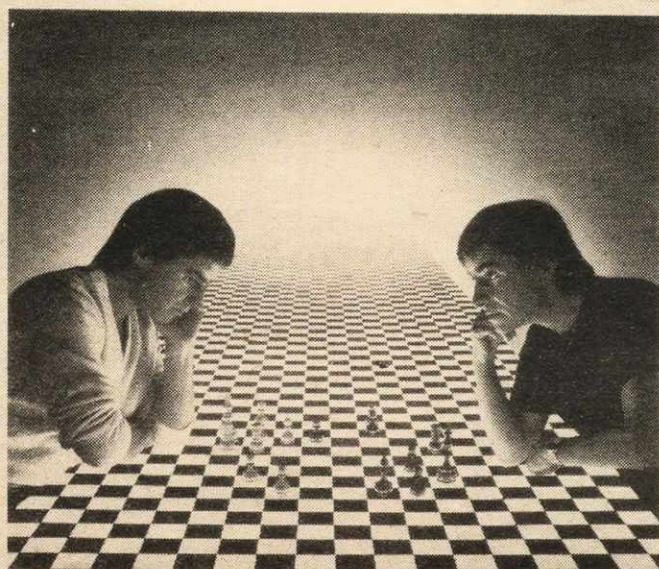
Then the Fool said, "Oh you wise men, you really make me laugh,  
With your talk of vast persuasion and searching through the past;

There is only greed and evil in the men who fight today.

The song of the crusader has long since gone away."

Perhaps. Yet something about this retrospective collection says that the search for that song is still alive.

## CHRIS de BURGH



de Burgh is best travelling the road between reality and legend or myth. As a storyteller, he turns his talents most effectively to allegory, creating visions and confrontations too many, it seems, have forgotten to seek. At its best, his music can be

two new songs. The melodic, haunting "Satin Green Shutters" reminds me, in style and arrangement, of some music on the late Sandy Denny's **Rendezvous** album, and that lady would have done a lovely version of it. "Patricia the Stripper" is the odd

# God, Man and the Stunt Man

by Ken Burke

**The Stunt Man**, at the Cohn this Sunday, is a film not only packed with energy and fun, but also a sly examination of the whole idea of film and even a look at the relationship between God and Man.

In a film that's fun, you say? Well **The Stunt Man** is no ordinary chunk of entertainment. The idea of a director of a movie "playing God" is nothing new, but when the fictional director of the movie-within-a-movie here is played by Peter O'Toole at full intensity, the whole concept looks totally fresh. That's the key word here - fresh. The script by Lawrence B. Marcus packs surprises into every available crack and crevice for director Richard Rush to throw onto the screen. But it lets you think while being entertained as well and that's one of the best things about it.

The movie starts quickly with an escaped convict (Steven Railsback) almost being run over by a car which proceeds to go off the side of a bridge and disappear. After this, he stumbles onto the set of Eli Cross's

World War I epic. As one of their stunt men had just mysteriously died, budget-pressed Cross takes the escapee in as a replacement, sheltering him from the law in order to perform wildly dangerous stunts. Thus the movie sets itself up with O'Toole giving glorious life to the (possibly?) mad genius of a director. We never know whether Cross likes "Lucky" (as he names the escapee), is trying to kill him, or is going to turn him over to the police when the film's finished.

With the introduction of Nina, the movie's star (played by Barbara Hershey), the deception gets even thicker. Is she in love with Lucky, manipulating him for Cross, or just sexually using him? Again, we can't be sure - the questions keep coming at you as fast as the action, and the action never stops. It swirls on the screen, especially during the stunt shots, which are incredible for pure adrenaline. Real stunts aren't actually shot like that, but who cares? This isn't trying for accuracy, it's trying for entertainment, and it does just fine at that.

But the centrepiece of the film is the relationship between Eli Cross and "Lucky." Cross gives the stunt man a name, job, and a fuzzy kind of freedom in return for service, perhaps even to his death in an impossible stunt. But Lucky rebels, and it's up for the audience to decide whether the final action in the movie of Cross's was due to Lucky, Cross, or a combination of the two. This allegory of the relationship between God and man is handled so **painlessly** as to not impede on the sheer entertainment of the film. And O'Toole certainly seems omnipresent as Eli Cross, creating magical stunts (at the movie's beginning, he brings the dead to life), calling the crew "my children," and whisking Lucky high above the set in his crane seat to show him his "toys." O'Toole obviously loves the role, for which he was nominated for an Oscar, and you can see this in the way he savours every syllable of his lines before dropping them firmly onto our lap.

Railsback is also good as Lucky, for he suggests the continued on p. 20

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