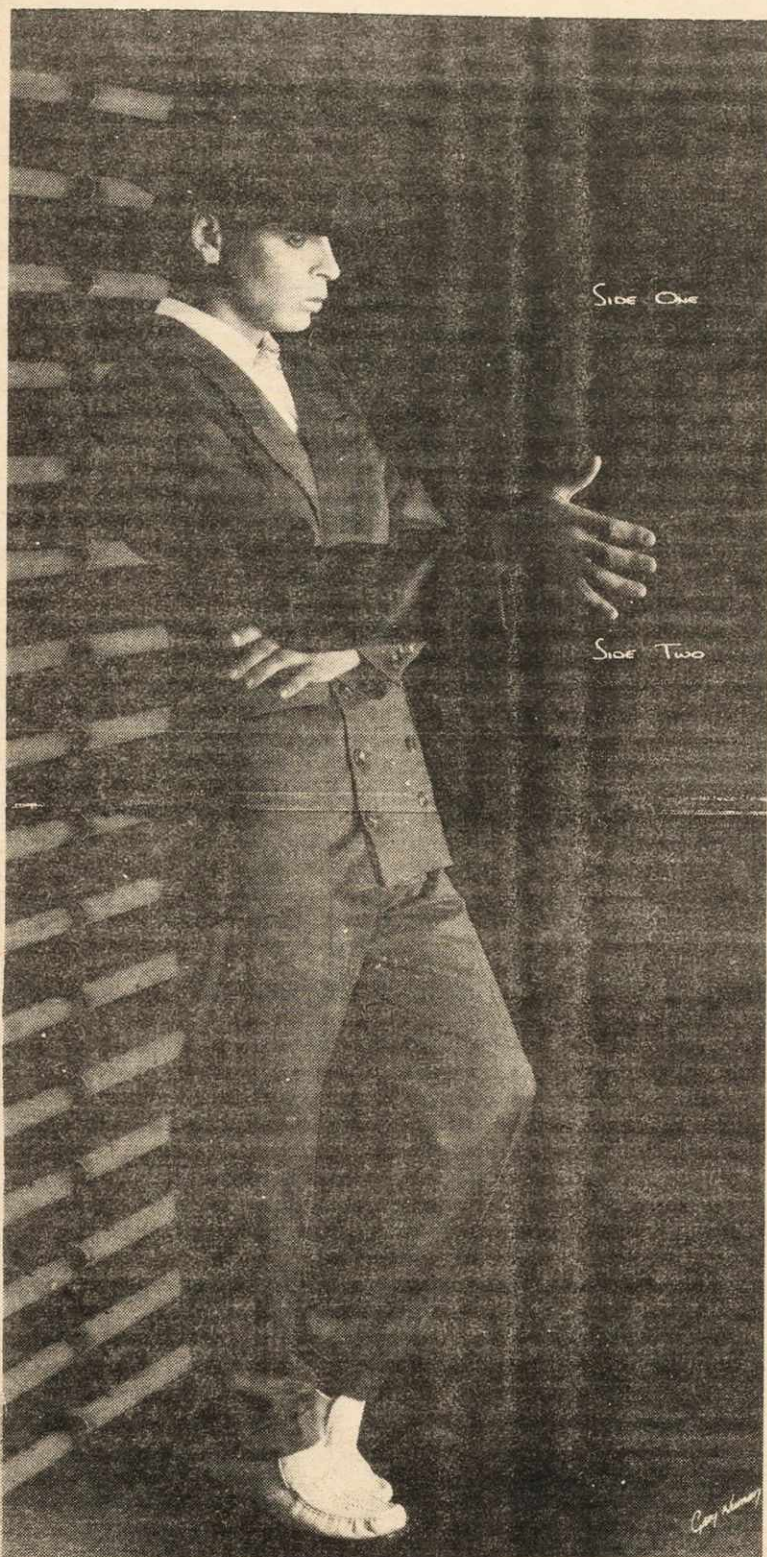


# Numan's dance - new music for romantics



"physical" than earlier works; there is more emphasis on rhythms which have a natural feeling, even when programmed. Numan handles virtually all of the keyboard work and vocals, and also plays guitar and bass, but he's backed up by an impressive array of musicians, including members of Queen and Japan and Jess Lidyard, who drummed for the Tubeway Army. Nash the Slash provides some eerie, Eastern-influenced violin lines, while Mick Karn's saxophone insinuates a tough, jazzy edge into a few tracks. Everyone seems to work well together -- this doesn't have the overly polished slickness of too much time spent in the studio -- and so, **Dance** remains instrumentally interesting even when the songs flag, or become too cryptic.

For this album isn't entirely successful; Numan tends to ignore his real strengths as a musician and producer as he

tries to make **Dance** sufficiently different from his previous four records. I think sometimes he should lock himself into a room with a record player and a copy of **Replicas**, because there's still a lot he could learn from that music. However, **Dance** has its moments of brilliance. Nash the Slash's violins shimmer through the opening percussion motif of "Cry the Clock Said," which has a lovely, harpsichord-like keyboard line. The three elements mesh beautifully, creating an atmosphere of loneliness and poignancy; of a loss which cuts to the core, no matter how bravely or indifferently it's faced. "She's Got Claws" kicks off with a sharp, gutsy, irresistible saxophone line, and features Cedric Sharpley on drums: he and Mick Karn and Chris Payne on viola have a marvellous three-way jam session. This number, which Karn takes out on a fine bass line, benefits from the interplay of a full band struc-

ture. And there are other moments, such as "Stories," a wistful, bittersweet ballad with a spare, unsentimental yet effective lyric:

I hear voices that cry  
And one of them's mine  
All the things I could say  
Are the reasons I can't

The whole record suggests a tension between loss and cynicism: you either regret, or you sneer, or you feel so bloody confused because you can't do either perfectly. The whole business of dancing becomes a symbol for the games these people play with their dangerous relationship. Gary Numan plays the part of a half-embittered, bruised romantic very well, and makes a strong departure from futurism, at times in ways I didn't really expect. So, I won't make any predictions concerning album six, but I've got new reasons to look forward to it.

## No Exit in Dalhousie student production

by Stan Beeler

Although Existentialism may not be held in the highest esteem in philosophical circles in North America it is nevertheless not uncommon to see plays on our stages that were written by its perhaps most famous proponent, Jean-Paul Sartre. Saturday the sixteenth of January Dalhousie Theater students presented one of Sartre's most lasting creations **Huis Clos** or as it is called in English **No Exit**, under the direction of Michael Howell.

The play deals with the initial reactions of three characters (Garcin, Inez and Estelle) who have been assigned to the same room in Hell. The traditional conception of Hell with burning pitch and hideous leering demons is left out, much to the surprise of all three of the new inhabitants. This section of Hades is a simple room decorated in Second Empire style. I assume that this sort of furniture meant something special to Sartre but I must confess that it signifies nothing to me. The three are brought in one at a time by a deadpan valet, convincingly played by John Davie. His distanced, slightly ironic and emotionless style serves as an interesting counterpoint to the histrionics of the other three characters.

Garcin, the only man in this cell notices relatively soon that the valet does not blink. This is the means of torture, wide-eyed unwavering inspection of one's existence that allows no illusions. Glen White's presentation of Garcin was competent and one easily excused the few moments of difficulty that he had with the script. Garcin tries to convince his fellow prisoners that he has been damned for the wrong that he had done his wife, but we soon find out that his true fault was cowardice. Instead of standing up for his pacifist principles he is apprehended while running away from conscription. He had been damned for lying to himself.

Inez, a lesbian postal clerk is magnificently played by Lisa Housdon. A woman who burns like a coal into the souls of those around her, she acts as grand inquisitor to her companions in suffering. The other two would have been content to maintain the illusions of their earthly existence but Inez forces them to reveal the truth behind their damnation.

The third part of this unholy triumvirate, Estelle, was portrayed by Kelly Spurr. Estelle is a rather bubble-headed woman who had risen up the social ladder through marriage. Her sin is the absolutely selfish use

of others to insure her self image. At one point she uses Inez as a make-up mirror.

As you may have guessed this play, despite its setting, is not intended as a theological comment. It is a statement upon the problems of human existence, and the difficulties that are created by what Sartre calls Bad-Faith, that is, the inability of human beings to present themselves as they really are. Inez serves as an instrument to peel back the falsehood and enable them to get on with the business of living.

**No Exit** is actually a very good play to present the talents of actors and of course to show up their weaknesses. Because there is in fact no action worth speaking of the cast must maintain the interest of the audience virtually unassisted. There is no spectacle in this dull room in hell to draw the eye. I must admit that at times my attention wandered, but then this was Sartre's second play to be produced and it has more of the philosophical dialogue than is wise for general consumption. However, for the main part, Michael Howell's direction of the cast was able to overcome the inherent limitations of the piece and deliver a surprisingly professional performance.

by Gisele Marie Baxter

Sometime last fall, I told you I'd review this one, so here it is: Gary Numan's **Dance**, which just might be his best album since **Replicas**. It's also his least accessible, perhaps because he never intended to tour with it, deciding instead to pilot his airplane round the world. Nevertheless, it's an intriguing collection of songs, often defying both expectation and definition, and despite any disclaimers you may have read, it is dance music.

**Dance** is supposedly the basis of a screenplay Numan wants to write and direct. From an interview he gave to **Melody Maker** last spring, I got the idea that the story dealt with a Depression-like era on some other world. From its enigmatic, ambiguous, intensely personal lyrics, **Dance** seems to be about a young gigolo involved in a complicated, unhappy relationship with a fascinating yet jaded older woman. Maybe it's something of both.

Musically, this record is more



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