

Wrack n Roll

by Alex Varty

Well, as we all know by now, a band called Horslips will be playing here on Sunday, as part of the Fall Festival activities. Since campus rumour has characterized the band as everything from the "next Irish Rovers" to "better than Jethro Tull", your interpid columnist took it upon himself to solve the mystery before the concert took place! I borrowed their two albums and, arming myself to the teeth, sat down for a night of intensive listening.

After adjusting glass, glasses, carpet slippers and pipe, setting the stereo to full everything, and establishing a comfortable slouch, my first discovery was that I REALLY LIKE THIS BAND. For your further elucidation, I should mention that these guys are definitely Irish, and I normally detest "Irish" music with ferocity. However, at their best, Horslips uses traditional Eyre folk tunes to produce very modern music; in much the same way that Tull has roots in traditional English song.

The band's first L.P. is more traditional and therefore, for me, more difficult to appreciate. However it would be very interesting to lovers of Irish folk music and I found it quite intriguing from an ethno-musicological standpoint.

Their second record, THE TAIN, is a conceptual work of some depth. It shows a sensibility common only to Steeleye Span and Horslips in the blend of electricity and traditionalism. For example, the mix of electric guitar and Uilleann pipes on "Charolais" is unique. I understand that the band plays all 50 minutes of THE TAIN as half of their concert, and that alone is enough to convince me that the show will be worth \$2.50.

I was told that my reaction to the Fall Festival committee's choice of Horslips was a prolonged and owlish WHOOO?!! After hearing these records, though, I must offer my congratulations to the organization; the band may not be a financial success, but they should be aesthetically worthwhile. Perth County Conspiracy and Horslips in one two-week period? Now if only someone would bring in Bruce Cockburn we could still save 1974 from being a write-off.

Cockburn, incidentally, has a new album out, SALT, SUN AND TIME. Once again, it is a virtually flawless album. As it's all-acoustic, it's a little less compelling than NIGHT VISION, but it compensates by being a more cerebral listening experience. Cockburn's becoming more and more jazzy in his playing and composing: I can hear snatches of MY GOALS BEYOND and Django Reinhardt in this music. The main theme is water, and it runs through the lyrics of five of the nine songs and serves as the inspiration for the excellent artwork. I must tape this for use on the Wayfarer on windless days. In jokes aside, the feeling is that you're sitting on a dock or by a woodland stream, just listening to Bruce sing and play. For those moments when one wishes to be transported to a more tranquil plane of existence, this record is ideal.

Carlos Santana's collaboration with Alice Coltrane, ILLUMINATIONS, is also a very serene record. Used sparingly as mood music, this sort of LP can produce occasional fits of ecstasy, but too much of it can be soporific. Santana's guitar work is more like John McLaughlin's than ever, but his characteristic sustained notes are still there, augmented by the Gibson L-6's fantastic clarity and staying power. An all-star cast of jazz personalities helps keep up the interest: fine performances are turned in by bassist Dave Holland, sax and flute man Jules Broussard, keyboardist Tom Coster and drummer Jack De Jonette. The spirit of John Coltrane pervades Santana and Coster's "Angel of Sunflight"; very Trane-like solos are taken by Broussard on soprano and by Alice on organ.

All in all, this is a nice album; it breaks no new ground musically but is most definitely appropriate music at some times.

Heen Baba reviewed

By S. GORDON EMMERSON

Six thirty in the evening: time to get up. Christ, it's a good thing I don't have to work tonight. I gotta go to the Heen Baba concert and do a review for Sheryl. If I had to go to work at midnight I'd be dead. I'm fagged out as it is.

Review? How can I do a review on - what'd they call it - Kandian dance? Kandyan dance? I suppose I'd cover it the same way I'd cover Biafran tap dancing. From the point of view of ignorance. All I can do is give my own impression.

Well, here we are. Hitchhiking in the rain ain't much fun but it sure beats walking. I see all the right people are here. The artsy people. The music establishment. All dressy-dressy. And kids in their best Le Chateau or else their precisely correct faded jeans.

And they've got a bar. For twenty cents I purchase a cup and billow myself on foam from a coke dispenser. The bar, they tell me, is competitive with the River Room across the street: ie. the drinks are over-priced. But I'm sleeping on my feet as it is: I nurse my coke.

But now the show. An announcement - no appearance but a female P.A. voice in an English accent - that Thuranga Vannama (Horse) will be deleted from the program and that Samanala Vannama (Butterfly) will be extended. Then the friendly familiar face of Dean Condon fails to appear as one vaguely hears his voice announce over the P.A. something about a reception somewhere after the show.

The show begins with a ceremonial blow on the conch shell (do I smell incense?) and then the

two drummers, Premasiri and Sirisena, perform on the Geta Bere.

Let me say something about the drum. As I said, it is called the Geta Bere, made of a long cylinder carved out of a single block of wood, it is worn horizontally at waist level. Skins are stretched over both ends of the cylinder and played (usually) with the corresponding hand. The drummers get real cute when they get up close and play each other's Geta (Can I tickle your bare - uh - bere?). But I am very impressed with these musicians. Consider a whole program of dance being accompanied on drums without monotony - Premasiri and Sirisena, you're beautiful.

But the dance. The hands impress me most. Surasena, Heen Baba's brother astounds me with his grace in Gajaga Vannama (Elephant), probably the best number in the program.

Uddekki dance. Interesting Heen Baby comes on with his squeazy-squeazy-yank-on-the-drumstring-sy Uddekki drum changing the pitch from low F to middle G. Or thereabouts. It's an odd effect. The drumming complements the dancing nicely (the dancers accompany themselves).

The show drifts by. Being in need of about ten hours of sleep doesn't help. I need some tea. No tea. But here's another drum duet. A drum contest. I notice the drummer appears to be using symmetrically opposite movements. One hits his left skin while the other hits his right. And they dance. They are billed as the drummers, but Premasiri and Sirisena are no mean dancers. One has a sexy way

of tossing his tassel on his turban. I didn't notice.

I was a bit disappointed by the tambourine dance. I became an avid tambourine fan ever since I heard Beethoven's Ninth arranged for solo tambourine, and I was expecting to see some fancy work.

More drums. This time the Davula and Thammattama, together known as the Hevisi drums. The Davula is played on one side with the bare hand, the other with a stick. The Thammattama is played on top with two sticks with loops on the ends. Different. Quite enjoyable. And it keeps the sleepy-creepies away.

Eh? Show over already? I gotta get a ride home. I can't conceive of climbing to Skyline Acres in this groggy state. A guy shouldn't feel this way unless he's drunk or stoned.

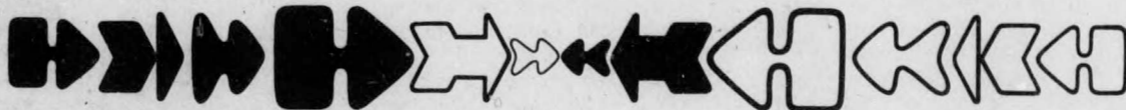
Stumble into one of the side lobbies. Ah! the reception. Coffee and donuts. No coffee for me, please. When I get home I'm gonna crash. But I'll have a donut or two. Or three.

There's Heen Baba in full armour showing his scrap book. Peking, Moscow, American town (Fredericton is their only stop in Canada), Australia. Hey, Baba, baby, can I have an autograph. Before I fall asleep in a mess of pastry, sugar, and Foama-Cola. Nighty-night.

It's stopped raining. Christ! is that a Bricklin parked in front of the LBH? No Gord. Home. You got a big climb ahead.

Yeah. G'night Sheryl. Here's your article.

G'night Gord. Sleep tight.



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