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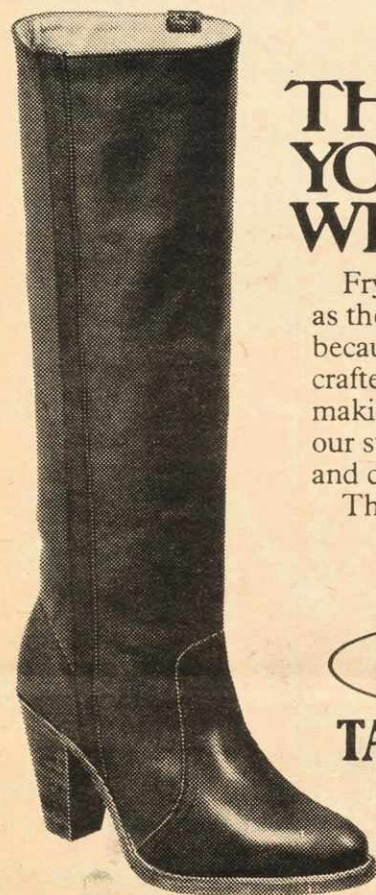
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Go-Go's, just another girl group

by Kenneth Newman

Well, **Rolling Stone** loved it. **Melody Maker** said it wilts after five listenings. I didn't listen to it and you shouldn't listen to critics. What I mean is, I can only tell you a little bit about what it's like and try to interpret the "meaning" of their image, if there is such a thing. I can't tell you whether or not you'll like it. Is it good? Well, I didn't listen to it. I'm not the first critic to write a review of a record he hasn't heard. That happens all the time at big rock magazines. I'm just the first to admit it.

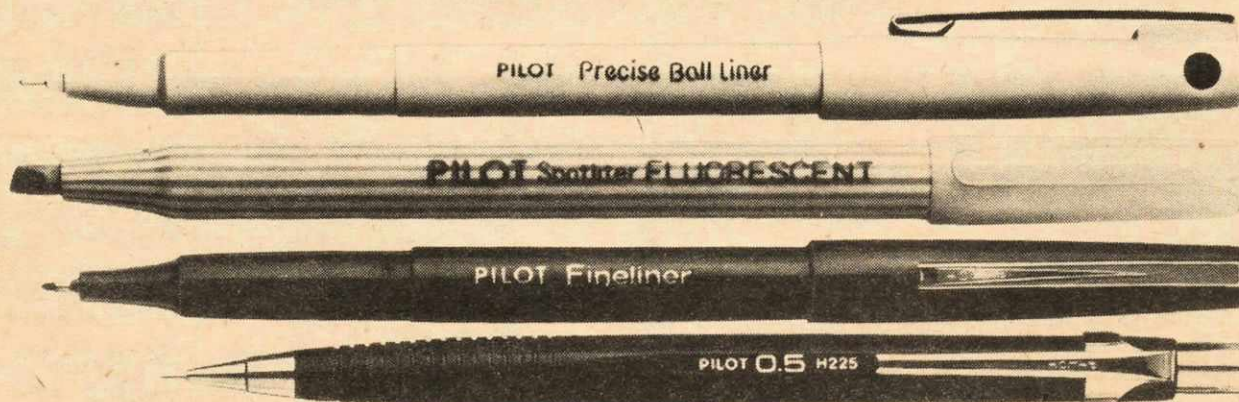
Vacation is the much awaited follow-up to the Go-Go's debut which featured their smash hit, "WE Got the Beat" (which I never heard). I can't tell you how it compares. This one's got a smash hit single, "Vacation", which I imagine you will be able to hear by simply switching on your radio, night or day. Do you like it? Well, if you only like it a little bit, get the single. If you like it a lot and want to hear more of that sort of thing, get the album. And if you really like that sort of thing, get the first three Blondie records, which I understand covered the same territory. And if you really, **really** like that sort of thing, haunt bargain bins and used record stores for the original girl-groups of the sixties like Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, the Chiffons or maybe even Nancy Sinatra. Most of the best ones were on Motown and came from places like Philadelphia and Detroit and were produced by people like Phil Spector. The Go-Go's certainly go for the girl-group image and that's the label they've been tagged with. Their covers certainly look like it and, admittedly, the guy in the record company art department certainly did a great job. But it's not clear whether the Go-Go's are a satire on, homage to, or rehash of the classic girl-groups. I've heard each proposition expounded by various fans and detractors of the group.

My guess is that they are, like a trick question, (d) none of the above. I get the impression that they, like the original girl-groups, are the product of the proverbial fat man with the cigar who moans in his office, "Jeez, what are we gonna do next?". And the proverbial ambitious young A&R man looks up from licking his boss's shoes and says, "Why not girl-groups? They worked before." And the fat man pats him on the head and says, "Good work, son. Go out and find me one. If you can't find one, make one."

I guess what bothers me most is that if this Go-Go's thing is just messing around or if it is simply crass commercialism then the band is treading on sacred territory. While the original girl-groups were no great shakes artistically, some of us who were born in the fifties look back on them somewhat wistfully as an integral part of our early sexual development. They were hot. Moreover, they were almost all black and they sang about stuff like Heat Waves and Dancing in the Streets. The B-52 girls come much closer to the image with their stacked-up wigs, treader pants, heavy lipstick and "easy" looks. I mean, you just knew if you were ever lucky enough to get one of them in the back seat for some making out she'd take that ever-present wad of gum out of her mouth and park it behind her ear until you were done "French kissing" and then pop it back in immediately. But the Go-Go's look cold, cold, cold, like Sandra Dee or Annette Funicello. The record might be better titled, "Gidget Goes into the Recording Studio". **Rolling Stone** titled their review article, "The Go-Go's Put Out", but I bet it's just like those guys you used to hear in the locker room claiming they went "all the way" when you know damn well they got a firm kiss-off at the front door. But remember, I haven't heard the record yet.

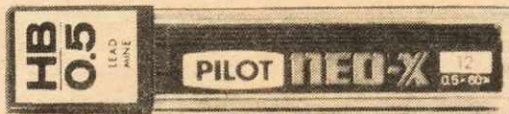
(Ed.'s note - he really hasn't.)

Basic human writes



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PILOT
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Music revival

by Kenneth Newman

Can you believe what's happening in the U.K. these days, folks? Well, forget those Synth bands and New Romantics and geriatric (or dead) punks. Following on the heels of the Mod Revival and the Psychedelic Revival is the NEXT BIG THING, and you are probably already hip. A quick glance at this year's charts shows a great single called, "All Along the Watchtower" by an American guitarist named Jimi Hendrix. Another great single is called, "Layla", and it's by one of those groups with a funny name, Derik and the Dominoes (I think it's a front for someone more famous). Another one that shows promise is a song called, "Freebird", but it's by a bunch of virtual unknowns. But what I'm really looking forward to hearing is a single that just came out called "White Room", by a weird-looking bunch of guys called Cream. I hear they've got a good guitarist and the single sounds terrific loud. Crank it up and annoy your parents. Groovy!