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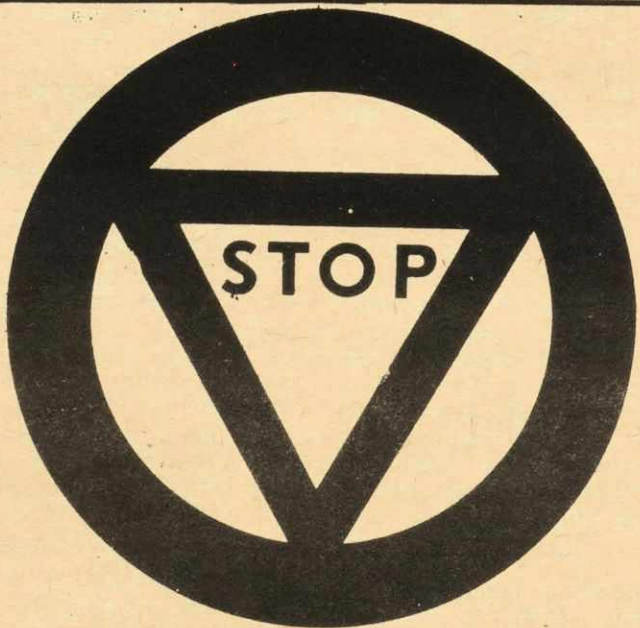


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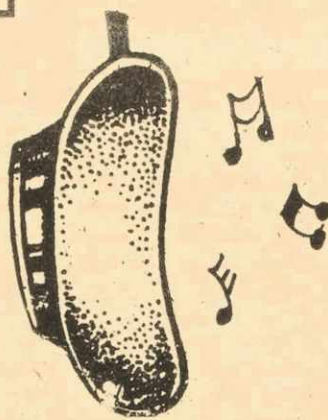
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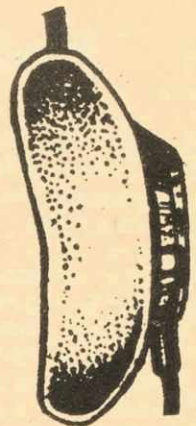
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**SOUND
TRACKS**



by Mark Teehan

"AVERAGE WHITE BAND." (Atlantic). Would you believe it possible that 6 white dudes from Scotland could knock out high quality R&B without batting an eyelash? Admittedly, it's not the sort of thing you run into very often and Scotland's probably the last place that you'd expect an outfit of this type to come from. But the Average White Band is for real and on this their 2nd LP they've come up with a solid collection of funky numbers played with skintightness and full of good-natured spirit - easily one of the best R&B albums of last year. Unfortunately, fate has not been kind to the band: last September their ace drummer Robbie McIntosh died after sniffing some heroin at a Hollywood party. Aside from being a personal tragedy in its own right, McIntosh's death puts a hard-to-fill hole in the rhythm section which was vital to the group's musical success. Listening to "AWB," it become apparent that his aggressive drumming provided the central dynamism for the band's rhythmic attack. The group are also in the habit of working out new material from the rhythm up and without McIntosh to supply that well-timed drive they've already found it difficult in developing new tunes. The chemistry's not the same.

It seems as if most of the group grew up listening to a lot of black music (Motown) which would explain their current musical direction. What is particularly unusual is the degree to which they've assimilated these soul influences, to the extent that they sound natural and ingrained. There's nothing forced about the AWB - they've got genuine credibility.

All the songs except for one are group-penned and they demonstrate both versatility and a keen sense of dynamics. The sole non-original, the Isley's "Work To Do" gets the full treatment: after a powerful intro, dominated by the horn work of Roger Ball and Malcolm Duncan as well as Alan Gorrie's pumping bass, the group shifts down to some grinding funk effectively threaded by some upper

breaks. The band's harmonizing also shows up to good affect here. I'm sure the Isleys would approve of this cover.

Side 1 comes across as the livelier side; aside from the material being in a more disco mold, Arif Mardin's production has a more "live" direct one than on the flip, which in comparison is more arranged and subdued. "You Got It" is medium-intensity funk, set off with a well-harmonized rolling melody; McIntosh hits a steady pace while Gorrie lays down some soulful lead licks (while Hamish Stuart completes the switch and takes care of bass). "Got The Love" uses a glowing melodic intro to set up the well-oiled mainstream funk, and showcases lead guitarist Stuart's persuasive falsetto. The real climax comes on the following track released as a single, "Pick Up The Pieces," a delectable disco goodie which has really burned up the soul charts. This is funkadelic bump at its best, in the tradition of groups like the Ohio Players, Kool and the Gang, etc. After an intro filled with tension, the band cuts down to an airtight rhythmic workout spearheaded by some crisp sax playing; Onnie McIntyre's rhythm guitar slides right into Stuart's punchy riffs and non-member Ralph McDonald supplies some extra percussion on tambourine.

Except for "Just Can't Give You Up" (basic funk) and the jazzy funk of "There's Always Someone Waiting," the flip side strikes a more restrained level with soulful ballads like "Just Wanna Love You Tonight" (in Spinners fashion) and the meandering "Keepin' It To Myself." "Nothing You Can Do" gives Roger Ball a chance to stretch out on keyboards while as always, McIntosh's drums generate that crucial spark that makes the difference.

Latest word is that the AWB are headed into a new LP which oughta be out in a few months if all goes well. The band appear eager to achieve a "liver" sound on the new one which would be all for the better. Hopefully new drummer John Sasswell (ex-Donny Hathaway) will ably work out and keep the band movin'. Boogie on.

**Warning to all those who
plan to spend time
working in England**

This is a word of warning to all those students who plan to spend the summer working in England. The sight-seeing is great but the paycheque may not be so good. Not only are wages generally lower than those in Canada, they may also be reduced by 33.3% for the British Government's income tax. Furthermore, unless you reside in England for over six months of the fiscal year, you won't get the money back again. This means that if you go to England on, let's say, November 14th., and return to Canada on October 10th., you will be classed as non-resident (not living there for six months) and therefore ineligible for the basic exemption of 650 pounds. (I discovered this through personal experience, having lost about 100

pounds during my ten week work period in England.) So let the student worker beware the British Inland Revenue Service.

There is provision in the Canadian tax laws to prevent double taxation. That is, you won't be taxed twice for the money earned in another country, but if, as many students do, you earn less than the taxable amount for a year, the Canadian government is not going to give rebate on the tax deducted in England. They will give a tax credit so that any money already taxed in England will not be taxed again in Canada. A tax credit does not mean the money earned in Canada is exempt from taxes, just that the money earned and taxed in England will not be included in the calculation of your

Canadian taxes.

Manpower many not have information on this, so if you have any questions, call the British Consulate and they should be able to give you more details.

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