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Where: Rosewood Room, Eugene Hotel

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Oregon Daily Emerald

records

Little Feat
Dixie Chicken
Warner Bros.
BS 2686
Copyright

Is are Little Feat the best group in America today?

Little Feat broke with Warner Brothers in late 1971 releasing an incredible first album entitled — you guessed it — Little Feat. As I sit here scribbling I can still feel the energy plugged into the first side of that initial effort. The slide going crazy, "Snakes on Everything," the opening cut, truck-driving funk with "Willin'," "Strawberry Flats" just twisting-tearing your head right off. Jesus! What an album! Lyrics that actually complemented the tunes and music to break your speakers by.

The personnel responsible for Little Feat — being Lowell George and Roy Estrada, both ex-Mothers, Richard Hayward, former drummer with Fraternity of Man, and Bill Payne, Texas piano wizard — then gave us Sailin' Shoes and a let-down. Not that Sailin' Shoes was a bad album; it just lacked the juice that jolted you the first time around. Son of "Hamburger Midnight" through both sides, and wasn't "Willin'" included here once again?

Ah ha! But we now come to Dixie Chicken — hanging on the wall of our friendly close-to-campus record shop. Should I? With thoughts of chronic financial destitution gnawing at my guilty conscience the \$4.00 changes hands. "Your change, sir." 0.01. What if it's another let-down? Can't be — just one sweet taste. Puh-leeze be good. Rip off the plastic, center the record over the spindle, switch on the power, and YES! The percussion comes pouring out of the speakers, followed by Payne's excellent honk tonk piano, and George's strong sandpaper vocals. And what's this — female background vocalists coming through pure and easy. Relax, sit back, it's okay — the music's there and the spark is back.

Personnel time again. With Dixie Chicken Little Feat has lost one, Roy Estrada, going to Capt. Beefheart, and gained three: Paul Barrere on guitar, Sam Clayton on congas, and Kenny Gradney on bass. Hayward is still here laying down the back beat, Payne's keyboard work fills holes brilliantly, occasionally carrying George's melodies, and then there's George himself — vocals, guitars, writing, and producing.

There are so many fine songs on Dixie Chicken it might be easier to enumerate the tunes that don't cut it. But then there would be nothing to relate at all. Suffice it to say there are some excellent songs here interspersed between some good ones. You can find them all for \$4.00 give or take a few cents up there on somebody's wall.

Delano Sanders

"Sold For the Prevention
of Disease Only"
Wilderness Road
Warner Bros. MS2125
Copyright 1972

The title of this album gives the first hint that what is immortalized on vinyl within is not for family audiences. The titles of the tunes reinforce the first impression. The pictures spread all over the jacket don't presage any paean of praise for anyone's idea of what is good, pure, or nice. In short, if you enjoyed pulling the wings off flies during puberty, and grew to watch Billy James Hargis and the All American Kids for laughs, this is a record for you.

This malicious attack on Western Civilization as we know it is set to some tasty rock and roll. I may be old fashioned, but I do find it interesting to listen to a band that can play more than three chords, avoids drum solos, and says more lyrically than "Booga Booga I love you, Booga Booga I need you, Booga Booga let's ball" without pretensions to ART.

Starting with the most blatant and tasteless examples of the really nasty stuff Wilderness Road does, both placed last on either side of the disc, we see "The authentic British Blues" which gently gives the shaft to such luminaries as Eric Clapton, Jimmie Page, And (gasp) John Mayall, and "The Gospel" appropriately divided into four

parts. "The Gospel" chides all those evangelical shucks broadcast from Tijuana to avoid problems with the FCC. The kind of show run by a religious type who justifies his \$350,000 house with this quote, "In my Father's house, there are many mansions." The cut ends with a song I feel should become a minor classic, "Heavily into Jesus", a truck driving tune that deserves a place with "Eight Days on the Road."

So much for the blatant stuff, the rest of the songs sound like they're more normal than not. At least that's what I thought until I listened to them a little more carefully. Sure enough, under the facade of legitimate rock and roll the assault on your cultural values continues unabated. The gall, the unmitigated gall, titling a song "Bored" and then writing about it. Is ennui the proper study of serious artists? Is it nice to make fun of Joni Mitchell and Crosby, Stills and Nash, to say nothing of THE WOODSTOCK NATION? IS nothing sacred?

Don't be fooled by the music. The barbarians are at the gates. Caveat Emptor.

Rolf Hage

West, Bruce & Laing
Why Don'tcha?

On the whole I am impressed with the debut album of this British rock trio. The triumvirate consists of Leslie West, gargantuan guitarist from Mountain; Jack Bruce, "basso profundo" and occasional piano — ex of Cream and two fine, underrated solo albums; and Corky Laing, drummer from Mountain.

It is an album strictly for rockers, featuring loud, tight numbers on both sides. Each performer is completely competent on his instrument, sometimes to the point of duplicity of sound in various cuts. Nevertheless, it is an album that grows on you, and the more one hears it, the easier it is to pick out the subtle, rather clever musical shades of nuance. In the group's sound I can hear a blend of Mountain and Cream styles which is really a cool compound.

The title cut opens the first side, and it is a steady blaster, not sophisticated, but then not boring either. Things improve for me with the second cut, a spacy choral-backed thing called "Out Into the Fields." I admit to favoritism for Jack Bruce vocals over the polished roughness of Leslie West. "Fields" is a Bruce vocal, the weird words courtesy of his longtime association with perverse poet Pete Brown.

"Fields can be described as a slow, melodic spacey-choir cut. It is followed in contrast by "The Doctor," a harsh rocker featuring West's guitar and vocal. It is solid, if not great, fitting those of us "who don't need no doctor" or a "Humble" song either.

"Turn Me Over," a Corky Laing vocal, follows. It is funky, but a bit tiresome. The tune that finishes the first side admirably is "Third Degree," an old Eddie Boyd blues number. It is the only piece not written by W, B & L. Bruce's vocal and closing bass section make it a rendition reminiscent of the worthier bluesy stuff which Cream used to transform into a rock feeling.

The second side is probably better as a whole. The first two numbers, "Shake Ma Thing (Rollin Jack)" and "While You Sleep" are fair, though not memorable. The third cut, "Pleasure," is a rollicking, funny pet with Bruce on piano and singing. Pete Brown's lyrics are suggestive and wary both:

"Keep off of that mother, marriage—
Even in the middle where the
Chances are the pleasure still
Awaits!"

The final tune, "Pollution Woman," is the crowning conclusion of the group's first effort. The guitars, both electric and acoustic, build powerfully to an extended instrumental finale where the group's tightness is most evident, replete with a haunting back-up chorus.

There have been better debut albums by so-called "supergroups" which merge individual stars. But all in all, the distinct sound of W, B & L is a dynamic one, so if you're an avid acid-rocker, "Why Don'tcha" pick up this rather insane blue album, whose cover features the trio superimposed knee-deep in a cosmic ocean, apparently "making waves."

Tom Mascott