

& Ampersand

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BILL OAKEY (On Disc) is a freelance writer based in Austin, just returned from a lengthy stay in Nashville. He collects country music literature, writes regularly for *Country Song Roundup*, and manages singer Tena Lester.

KEVIN PHINNEY (On Tour) is a freelance Disco Journalist who aspires to be a Lebanese terrorist. His hobbies include a variety of drugs, and shooting pop-rocks soaked in bourbon into an orange by syringe.

DON SNOWDEN (On Tour) is one of *Ampersand's* biggest writers — 6'5" — and he says he'll beat the hell out of anybody who disagrees with his finely-honed critical acumen.

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IN ONE EAR...

To Hell With Ian Whitcomb

All I had to do was read "To Hell with the Beatles" and a few small paragraphs and it was enough to make a monkey laugh sideways. The Beatles aren't God and everyone knows that and they didn't change the world into chemical fruit for human consumption. People ate LSD because they wanted to and not because of the Beatles' artwork! There is absolutely no reason why I should be complaining about such a worthless article that should have never been printed in the first place, but I figure the title and seriousness of the article were enough to spark a few nasty letters. I also figure you love to see nasty letters and that's probably the basic reason behind printing such an article.

MEL RAYMOND
EUGENE, OREGON

I was five when the Beatles came to America. Most think I was too small to remember but they are wrong. I remember the Ed Sullivan broadcast and the excitement of the crowds. I didn't know what pot was, let alone LSD. If the Beatles took drugs, I couldn't care less. For in the next winter I got the new single which had "I Am the Walrus" on it. That was my favorite song. I would sing that chorus and play that record all the time. I did not care if it was psychedelic or not. That was a great song.

The point I'm trying to make is that the Beatles and the Rolling Stones were part of my childhood, and I wouldn't want it any other way. They didn't rule my life. I was just a kid. I played baseball and army like every other kid. But I also listened to music which was exciting back then and even more exciting today. I wish I was old enough to appreciate them like I do now.

Another thing which Mr. Whitcomb says is the Beatles and the Stones sent many kids to their doom. He makes it sound like they put leashes around kids necks and dragged them into the world of drugs. I think it's the other way around. The kids put leashes around the necks of the Beatles and Stones. I think it's poor to blame the Beatles and the Stones for teenage drug problems.

Finally, his claim that "one real Beatle does survive: Paul McCartney," is not a fair claim. What does he think John Lennon is doing at the present time? The last I heard he was "semi-retired" so that he could be with his wife and son. I just wish someone would give him a little credit.

JIM DIXON
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA

Ask & Ye Shall Be Answered

In a recent issue of *Ampersand* I saw an item (I think it was in *& Out the Other*) that said the Disney studio was looking for young animators to hire. Where can I get more information about this?

JOHN MARSH
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

A Disney Studio spokesman tells us that animator Ward Kimball (not Ollie Johnson and Frank Thomas, as originally planned) will tour several college campuses in November to screen Pinocchio, answer any questions, and seek new animators. They have tentatively scheduled appearances at uni-

versities and colleges in the following cities: New York; Philadelphia; Boston; Atlanta; Washington, D.C.; Chicago; St. Louis; Houston; Dallas; Seattle and San Francisco. Anyone interested in a career as a Disney animator who is unable to attend these events, should send a portfolio and letter of inquiry to Don Duckwall (honest, that's his name), Walt Disney Studios, 500 S. Buena Vista, Burbank, CA 91521.

I've never been able to find the answer to the mystery concerning the sudden personnel change that took place with Renaissance several years ago; the entire band seems to have reorganized between their first and second albums. Could you give a brief history of the band?

NATHAN NEMOTO
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Well, Nathan, there doesn't seem to be any such thing as a "brief" history of Renaissance. Here with is the quickest we (with the help of ace trivialist Jim Bickhart) could devise. Maybe the folks at Sire Records, their current label, should take notes; they didn't know any of this.

Renaissance was formed by singer Keith Relf and drummer Jim McCarty of the Yardbirds following the demise of that band. The new group's emphasis was to be on classically-oriented, acoustic music. Other founding members included Relf's sister, Jane, session bassist Louis Cennamo, and keyboardist John Hawken, ex-Nashville Teens. Their first album was released in this country on Elektra, circa 1969. The members began to drift apart almost immediately (there was a U.S. tour) and their second album, *Illusion*, featured varying personnel on different cuts. Jane Relf was the first to leave, followed by Hawken. Pianist John Tout played on *Illusion*, though not on all selections.

Keith Relf and Louis Cennamo left to form a "heavy" band, *Armageddon*, whose album was released stateside on A&M. Hawken joined the Strawbs, and McCarty formed the group Shoot, whose album was released here on Capitol.

The name "Renaissance" was thus left empty, and Tout decided to appropriate it, apparently with no resistance from any of the founding members. The "new" Renaissance included Tout, Annie Haslam (who had sort of replaced Jane Relf, though the band had operated with no female vocalist for a while), bassist Jon Camp, drummer Terence Sullivan, and a guitarist, none of whom had been doing anything of particular interest previously. Also important was non-performing Betty Thatcher, who had written with McCarty for the first group, and who also collaborated on some Shoot songs.

That group appeared on the new band's first album, released on Capitol in 1972. The guitarist died in an accident, and was replaced by Michael Dunford. That line-up, with Thatcher, has remained constant from 1973 through the band's new release, *A Song for All Seasons*.

Ironically, at the time of his death by electrocution in summer, 1976, Keith Relf was re-forming the original band. That group — Cennamo, McCarty, Jane Relf and Hawken, plus a keyboard player and drummer (McCarty having switched to guitar) recorded an album, released last year on Island, under the group name *Illusion*. And that's the last time we'll answer that question.

Miscellaneous Missives

In your May '78 issue Colman Andrews contends that the new music called "fusion"

is "... the sort of music that results when good jazz players (accomplished or promising) decide they want a house in the hills just like Herbie Hancock's." This absurd and overworked notion makes me sick. I've read countless critics who say the same thing, in different words, as Andrews. It's the popular cliché of the day to say that fusion is nothing more than a commercial sellout, and that it is of no aesthetic value. I wish people would stop and listen to some of this excellent music, instead of pre-judging it as commercial trash.

A prime example of genius in fusion is Chick Corea and Return to Forever. The same holds true for Passport, Weather Report, Jean Luc Ponty, and the other masters of fusion.

BOB MARSH
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Ampersand's section titled, "& Out the Other," I believe should be retitled. This section is wasted space in an interesting newspaper. Retitle it please, "Oldies but Nasties Return."

ANDY BEAN
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

"Oldies but nasties" — are you talking about us?

I thoroughly enjoy your publication. I'd rather read it than do my English Composition paper because it makes me laugh but then again, so do my English papers. Keep up the good work.

NANCY W. CAVANAUGH
UNIVERSITY OF OHIO

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