

LPs

Gaucho
Steely Dan
MCA Records, Inc.
MCA-6102

Like every one of their past albums, Steely Dan's latest album *Gaucho* proves to be a scintillating collection of tunes. But what sets this album apart from the others is the depth and intelligence of the music. Walter Becker and Donald Fagen have relaxed more on *Gaucho*.

Steely Dan now consists of just Becker and Fagen, who surround themselves with many fine musicians and vocalists. Contributing their talents on *Gaucho* are people like Rick Derringer, the Brecker Brothers, Tom Scott, Ralph McDonald, Mark Knopfler, Steve Gadd and many others. Every cut is an amalgam of musical "who's who" candidates.

The music on *Gaucho* flows in different ways than it has in the past. As always, Fagen's rangy, eastern-accented voice dominates the album. A lot of the

songs seem richer, more cushioned. The strong back-up vocals, synthesizers, and Scott's horns no doubt have something to do with this.

Steely Dan's hallmarked *moo-major* chordal structure still lends an inverted, dreamy quality to the music, making one want to follow the lead guitar, or that cooing horn break. The desperate songs of earlier albums like *Can't Buy A Thrill*, and *Katy Lied*, which owed their popularity to the speed and excitement of a guitar-bass-drums-gritty vocals concept, can be found on *Gaucho*, but only in the songs "Hey Nineteen" and "Time Out of Mind." Musically, the group is further developed; sophistication is now the key.

Fagen continues to parallel his vocals with his fine piano work, and the bass work, particularly on "Glamour Profession" and "My Rival," really pulses.

Steely Dan lyrics — usually cryptic and fleeting — are more



direct this time around. Women, and the fantasies they engender, comprise the bulk of Fagen's subject material, but other than being "languid and bittersweet," women seem to mystify him less these days.

Less jumpy than in the past, the music on *Gaucho* meanders nicely, and the rhythms we've always liked still remain. *Gaucho's* material is original as ever, and makes the album well worth listening to.

By John Malarkey

SAY IT WITH
 A SONG...

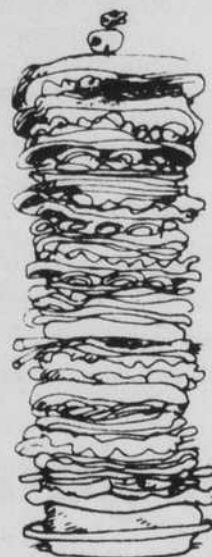
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Teri Thomas, shown here with Denny Guehler, joins Michael Lasswell in entering competitions during a drama conference Feb. 4 through 7 at Oregon College of Education in Monmouth. Thomas and Lasswell are semi-finalists in competition for Irene Ryan Scholarship awards. Both will demonstrate their acting skills in six-minute presentations that include two scenes. Thomas, Guehler and Lasswell starred together in the university production of *Candida*.

Time again, oh, time again, for ye ol' staffbox. Hard to believe everything that's gone on this week... hostages... Reagan... rain... well, okay, the rain isn't so hard to believe, but it is funny, if not interesting (hmm) how things worked out... hope there is enough glitter to sprinkle around after the inauguration dust settles. There are a few small notes I'd like to share with you, outside of the worldly events: First, thanks to good-nice-guy Kirk Knighton (catch the spelling so you don't forget it) we screwed up... not to tack the blame on anyone, but he likes it — sort of — anyway. *Side Effects*, by Woody Allen is (tuh duh) published by Random House. Okay? Cleared that up. Now, to get back the regular business of this space: Get your stuff to me by Thursdays — the week prior to publication, if you wanted it to run. My hours are 4 p.m. on Mondays, Thursday evenings and Friday afternoons. Thanks for doing too much, Gaib; you know, my dear, that's how people get mono; Sandy is always the prize winner for her patience, and Kirk actually receives two aspirin, a shoulder squeeze and a "thank you" for all his help copy-editing. Hope I haven't bored you this election week. Here's to the future. Thanks for tuning in, Erzsi.

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