

THE COAST

By BEN EDMONDS



■ **PATTI SMITH: HEARTS ON LEATHER:** The armies of poetry and rock & roll have never really been able to find mutually satisfactory ground on which to consolidate their forces. Up until now, the most significant mediamixes have come to us by way of **Bob Dylan** and **Jim Morrison**. Dylan's amphetamine spew of the "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Blonde On Blonde" period elevated him from topical songwriter to poet; his words were judged as poetry because they showed a truly creative

intelligence being applied to rock & roll in a way that people hadn't heard before. They were also considered to be poetry because people had no idea what in the hell he was singing about most of that time, and whenever people don't understand words they invariably call it poetry. When Bobby reverted to simple rhymes and sentiments (in the wake of his motorcycle accident) that people thought they could understand, they stopped considering him as a poet and he was back on the street as a topical songwriter. Jim Morrison considered himself to be a poet. Most of the kids who came to see the **Doors**, however, didn't; they politely tolerated the "Celebration Of The Lizard" to get to "Light My Fire" and the other hits. He died before any meaningful redefinition of character could be explored. At the time of his death, Morrison was involved in plans to put together a poetry-oriented album that would've speeded that process; the vocal tracks, sans music, are aging quietly in Elektra's vaults. The poetry of Dylan and Morrison wasn't really poetry at all, just superior lyrics. They were hailed as poets by people who'd never for one second consider buying a volume of poetry when the same money could get them a rock & roll album; the trad poetry element chose not to hail them at all. It was "alternative poetry" at best. To **Patti Smith**, sitting at home in Jersey and Philadelphia, Dylan and Morrison's kind of alternative poetry made sense. When Dylan said that **Smokey Robinson** was America's greatest living poet, she understood that, too. From the earliest solo poetry readings that got the buzz about her going in New York, it was obvious that Patti Smith was more than just a poet. For starters, she was the only poet in town whose work screamed for a band to back it up. She published collections of poetry, but wrote for rock magazines as well. When she finally got her band, it didn't comprise her poetry, it consummated her very special relationship with the form. When she was signed to Arista and people began to talk about her as if she was a prize painting hanging in somebody's gallery, it didn't mean that Patti had changed; it just meant that she was allowing people to think they'd discovered her. What Patti Smith does now is what she's always done. A little better, perhaps, with her continuing stage experience and the ever-evolving capabilities of her band, but certainly no difference from what she set out to do. The phrase "set out to do" might be misleading, because Patti doesn't try to be anything; she is. And what she is, for those who need black & white definition, is the first genuine fusion of poetry and rock & roll. She's a tough chick, as tough as rock & roll. But it's not the desperate, unfulfilled sort that was **Janis Joplin**, nor is it the kind of cheap magazine dykishness that's usually attached by implication to any woman performer who doesn't come on like cheerleader material. She's tough because rock is tough, and anybody who loves rock is tough (or at least wants to be). All of her rock & roll fire and strut is filtered through her primary person as a poet. Poetry is letters written to yourself late at night when you're naked and there's nobody around to talk to. It's vulnerability, and it's this quality in conspiracy with her rock attitude that makes her unlike anything else presently available. Her poetry comes out of a sensibility that read **Rimbaud** and listened to the **Rolling Stones** at the same time. Her first album, out this week, is that and nothing more. Her label (Arista) and her producer (**John Cale**) judiciously stepped aside and let Patti be, and the result is sometimes crude, often rough and, most of all, real. Her band, expanded and much improved since their engagement here at the Whisky last year, still has plenty of room for further improvement, but their limitations serve to reinforce her passionate reality. Patti Smith may not be for everybody, but there's no denying that the genuine talent at work here offers exciting and boundless possibilities. Those who were vaguely disappointed in **Bruce Springsteen** because they expected him to be something completely new and unique will undoubtedly find what they were looking for in Patti Smith. LA area residents will have the opportunity to find that something when she takes over the Roxy on November 28 and 29. Discovery is still the best part of the rock and roll experience.

Davis, Grierson Named to New Capitol Posts

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Dan Davis, Capitol Records' director of creative services/press & publicity, has been assigned additional corporate responsibilities and reporting to him, effective immediately, will be the merchandising and advertising departments, announced Don Zimmermann, CRI's senior vice president, marketing.

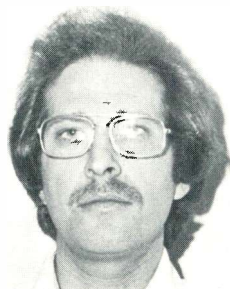
Don Grierson, formerly Capitol's manager, international a&r/

promotion, has been named national merchandising manager and will report directly to Davis.

Valery Smith, creative director, merchandising and Mickey Diage, national advertising manager will report to Grierson.

Davis' Responsibilities

In addition to his new duties, Davis will continue to be responsible for the art, press, pre-recorded tape, and copy departments.



Dan Davis



Don Grierson

New Joni Mitchell LP

■ **LOS ANGELES** — Elektra/Asylum Records has set "The Hissing Of Summer Lawns," the new Asylum album from Joni Mitchell, for national release this week. Major sales, merchandising, advertising and promotion programs are underway in support of the set, the artist's first studio album in nearly two years.

"The Hissing Of Summer Lawns" is the first collection of new Mitchell songs since "Court And Spark" was released early in 1974; that album reached the number one position on **Record World's** chart and earned both gold and platinum record awards. Recorded in Los Angeles, the new album features musical support from members of the L.A. Express and the Crusaders, James Taylor, David Crosby, Graham Nash and veteran jazz musicians Bud Shank and Victor Feldman. Mitchell plays guitar, piano and synthesizers, and designed the cover art.

Columbia Signs Return to Forever, Al DiMieola

■ **NEW YORK**—Irwin Segelstein, president, CBS Records, has announced the signing of Return to Forever, and of the group's guitarist, Al DiMieola, who will record separately as a solo artist for the label. The other three members of Return to Forever are Chick Corea, keyboards; Stanley Clarke, bass; and Lenny White, drums, all of whom also record individually.

Return to Forever, a group concept started by Corea in 1972 with different personnel (except for Clarke), developed into a permanent quartet.

Fania Announces Price Increase

■ **NEW YORK** — Fania Records has announced that due to increased costs of production, upgraded vinyl quality, and a higher grade of artwork, the Fania family of labels will be raising the cost of some albums to \$6.98 in 1976.

The first four albums released at the new price will be Ismael Miranda's "Este Es Ismael Miranada," Larry Harlow's "El Judio Maravilloso," Mon Rivera and Willie Colon's "There Goes The Neighborhood," and Johnny Pacheco's "El Maestro."

Marshall Tucker Gold

■ **LOS ANGELES**—The Marshall Tucker Band's Capricorn album "Where We All Belong" has been certified gold by the RIAA.

Pompadur Honored



I. Martin Pompadur, vice president and assistant to the president, American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., receives a citation honoring him as the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies-Music Industry Division "Man of the Year" from Morris Levy, dinner chairman and president of Roulette Records. The dinner honoring Pompadur, held November 1 at the New York Hilton, drew more than 1,000 people.