

record mirror

MIKE SMITH talks about his boss DAVE CLARK ROCK group challenge DC5!
JONI MITCHELL on peace and protest IAN ANDERSON-behind his image
Names to remember -- more pop people who changed the sixties

Week ending January 10th, 1970.

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STEVE: 'I think that the recognised teeny bopper groups have had their day. The next big attraction groupwise will have to be good musicians as well as just good looking'



ANDY -- 'I couldn't work in the teeny bopper scene any more. I used to go home and work on my music knowing that no-one would ever hear it'

Then there was one...

DEAN: 'We are now trying to pull right away from our teenybopper image. We only really got involved in it to try and achieve recognition. If you get to the top you can only slip down'



**'We were
unsexual,
unattractive
and musically
unexciting'**



Viv Stanshall

LET US incline our heads for the passing of the World's most un-super group — the Bonzo Dogs who last week announced their intention to retire after having carried their satirical bats these past five years. The Bonzos were mostly endeared to us not because of their illegitimate hit single, 'Urban Spaceman' but because they made us laugh at ourselves. They were the pop conscience of a record world where pretention can always run hand in hand with progress unless occasionally tripped!

The loose lipped master mind behind many of their most effective numbers was vocalist Viv Stanshall was found at his Finchley home last week, baring his nude head to the world (he claims the shaven skull is a 'penance') and allowing his two year old son Rupert the occasional sip of Rose.

"Do you know he drinks neat vodka," said Viv swinging his off-spring by both legs — much to the enjoyment of off-spring. "He's just had his duck stolen," said Viv. "Please be very careful not to say 'duck' he warned, "or he gets very upset."

The aforementioned pet — for all you pet lovers — was apparently ducknapped over Christmas and missing believed cooked. There were a number of interesting features in the room where I sat, not the least of which was an imitation grass mat adorning the wall upon which or implanted a number of imitation dog turds painted livid colours. Dr. John and the Night Tripper blew forth from the record player and under water turtles went about their aquatic business in the aquariums along another wall.

Meanwhile back at the feature: "Chicken pox!" volunteered Viv, "That's why we all broke up — a nasty out-break of the pox and we had to get a party together to dig the latrines..."

But seriously though... "We very simply wrote ourselves

VIV STANSHALL TALKS TO KEITH ALTHAM ABOUT THE BONZO BREAK-UP

out of existence," said Viv donning a pair of huge rimless glasses. "The individuals were progressing faster than the group and it was just not possible for us to find the time in which to develop those creative efforts on behalf of each individual. I had a large stock of plays and sketches which have never been used — Neil has a lot of compositions which have never been recorded and Roger has some machines and props which have never seen the light of day. There was so much energy coming out of the group but so little being used.

Zaniest

"Frankly I'm amazed that we have lasted as long as we did putting that muck on people — I don't mean that to sound derogatory to anyone but people have never been able to categorise what we do anyway. One night we would go to a club and find ourselves billed as 'Britains most Zaniest Trad Jazz Band' so just to please them we would play trad jazz all night. Other times that we bill us as surrealistic, underground and psychedelic so we would do that.

"We never really concerned ourselves with our market — we were the audience. We went on stage in the hope of entertaining each other, destroying something and building something else in its place and trying to make an event out of each performance. We were a success of course but it is difficult

to work out why when we deliberately defied every rule for being a group — we were unsexual, unattractive and rarely musically exciting."

The one compromise that the Bonzo's did appear to make during their years debunking the establishment was their hit single 'Urban Spaceman'

"I'm still not sure as to how much good that record did us or how much harm," said Viv. "Firstly of course it meant that our price went up and we could be booked into a number of places we had never played before but that ballroom circuit was not really the sort of direction we were looking for. It also meant more press and more attention of course and no one minded that.

"The hit was really something of a token success — I'm sure it was the song that was a hit and not our interpretation of it. We didn't really want to follow it up because it would have looked to our real fans as though we were stabbing them in the back — that was why the follow-up fell on its arse!"

It did seem that their break-up had come at a rather inopportune moment having just had a press reception to launch their new album and I asked Viv what had precipitated the decision, and had their lack of success on a recent American tour had anything to do with the split?

"All these things were contributory," said Viv, "But there just comes a time when you look at

each other and call it a day. We reached that stage that's all — we began acting out some of our individual frustrations on stage and that is unfair on the audience. I felt I was standing in the way of others and so it was a mutual thing."

The Bonzo Dogs have ceased to be, but their personnel goes marching on of course and Viv has been busy doing his bit as a solo vocalist and writing an album of children's songs.

Freaks

"I'd like to get a few freaks together and record them," said Viv, "Do some colourful things. I've never really been able to work out whether I'm a vocalist, a comedian or an entertainer. Maybe I'm a plumber!"

"What ever I do it's bound to be rubbish — silly poems set to music with squawks underneath — I hope Neil will help me out with the music. I know what I am," declared Viv in a moment of inspiration, "I'm a self opiated sod."

The Bonzo's have been a hard working band over the past few years but Viv puts their financial reward at 'just about breaking even' and looks back on the year '69 at largely a waste of his time and their own. It is to be hoped that Viv will find greater rewards this year or at least sufficient to keep him involved in a business that badly need the kind of bizarre ombudsman service which he provided with the Bonzos. — R.I.P.



Protest peace... and Joni Mitchell

JONI MITCHELL is ever such a nice person.

"Yes Bwana," replied Grimes, the Eye's crawling valet as they trudged through endless miles of dense Reportus Inebriaii, hacking a path toward the last radioed position of Canadian songwriter-singer Joni Mitchell.

We must hurry Grimes, for time is running out, said the Eye effortlessly thrashing another obstacle and pushing on. "Bwana not kidding. Bar close any minute. Poor Missy Mitchell crash landing in dreaded valley of Abominable Pressmen. Not stand pig's chance, right sahib?"

But they were both wrong. So wrong, for when the two champions of justice and journalism burst into the remote clearing somewhere near the 94th parallel, they found Joni cheerful, confident and holding her own against the threatening advances of the horrible Pressmen. "I'm not really quitting", she was declaring, not without shyness, "it's just a kind of indefinite postponement of all appearances, tours, and all the roadwork. I was getting to the point where I couldn't take the pressures any more. I was signed to Reprise for two LPs a year and even had that brought down to one and a half. I need time to rest up. As a woman, I need time to get to know my kitchen and home again.

"I also want time to sit down and write some songs and I've got to be prepared to entertain friends if they come over, so I need some time simply to settle down. I can't do anything if I'm distracted by a heavy schedule. I'll do some more concerts, but I'm not sure when."

"Dis last gig, huh bwana?" Yes Grimes, that's the way it looks. But you can believe one thing Grimes, she WILL BE BACK. "Honest Injun bwana?" How would you like five knuckles Grimes?

"I can't wait to start some writing," said Joni, "because I'm learning to play some other instruments, like the concertina and the piano. I'm even writing from the piano now. Before this, I used to replace an orchestra with the guitar by using it in the same manner. Making the backing flow as an orchestra line does. The next LP may be different. However, I wouldn't want anyone tampering with tracks after I'd finished with them. This has happened to some other artists and I think it's about the worst thing that could occur. It's like taking someone's painting and changing the blue to green."

"What I'm doing now is much apart from the last two albums. I think it comes from the new instruments. The more different ones you hear and learn to play, the more different music lines you begin to create for each one. It broadens your scope and you begin to see things in many more ways."

"I have a lot of material written that hasn't been released yet. I've been influenced by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young a lot and I think they've been influenced by me. I've written some songs for them and

one, 'Woodstock' will be released in February. Tom Rush has asked for a tape of some songs."

What about peace marches, protest songs, hate week and general demonstrating? "Everybody got to have dey own soap box, right Bwana?" How would you like me to mangle your molars, Grimes?

"We all want peace," said Joni, "but we don't all have to

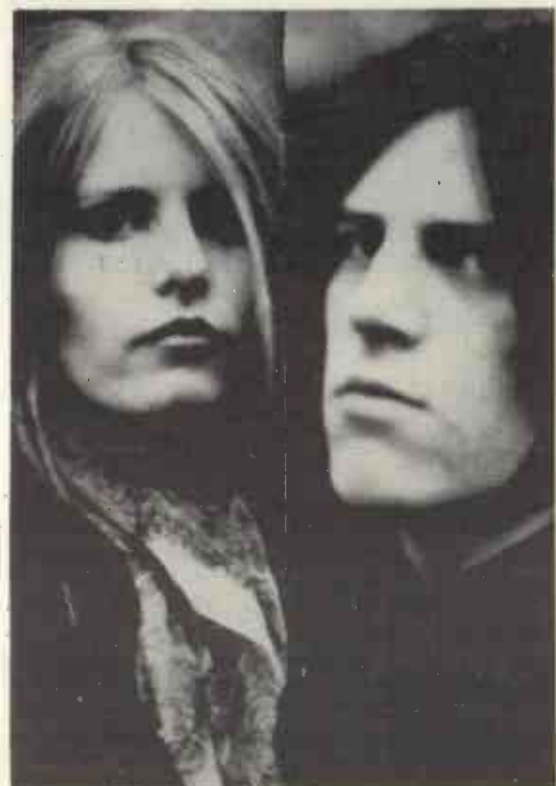


Joni Mitchell

demonstrate. You don't have to go to church to look for Christ. To me, peace demonstrations are very similar to the church. There are a lot of people in both that are more interested in making it known they are involved than anything to do with the cause itself. They want acclaim for being attached to a movement. They want notoriety. There are other ways to look for peace that are more basic; like looking for your soul and trying to be honest with yourself. Demonstrations do both good and bad, but they are sometimes overdone. Like the word 'love', which eventually was abused through misuse. Protest singing is alright and there are people who can do it effectively, but I don't do it myself. It just doesn't suit me at all."

Well, I haven't got any gripes about your style, said the Myopic Mutation.

"Now bwana? Now?" Shuddup and keep pumping, Grimes.



Trader Horne

A KIND OF FOLK SOFT-ROCK

Things can be tough for duos these days, the number achieving success being very small. The obstacles can be overcome only through sheer magnificence, which means originality and talent to the extreme. Two people, Judy Dyble and Jacky Macaulay, sang a few songs together and realized that theirs was that peculiar blend that made the grade. Trader Horne was born.

Twenty year old Judy used to sing with the Fairport Convention during their early stages, but found after a time that she had ideas which would not suit them. So she left. With her multi-instrumental capacities, she more or less sang to herself for awhile, until early this year when she met Jacky.

From Northern Ireland, Jacky had begun

singing with his brothers in Belfast and playing a host of instruments, including guitar, flute, harmonica, piano, organ and violin. At age seventeen, he joined Them, led by Van Morrison, a group which was to enjoy great success. Management and personal disagreements caused him to leave the group and he travelled about the East for some time, writing a lot of poetry and doing some songwriting. Then he met Judy.

Together, Trader Horne is a soft sound — a kind of folk soft-rock which weaves in and around through many strings and scales of harmony. They are for those who like melody and beauty. For those who enjoy prettiness instead of volume. Sheer magnificence. — L.G.

WIN AN L.P.

A major feature began last week on the centre pages of Record Mirror. It is called 21st Century Pop People. And it is OUR guide to the people who have changes, or are changing the face of the pop scene. Now YOU can join in. Choose a letter and invent an imaginary character who MIGHT have contributed to the pop scene during the 60's. Like Mr. L. S. Dee for instance. Then let your imagination run riot for about 100 words — describing him or her. Send it to Record Mirror (Comp.) 7 Carnaby Street, London, W.1. Funniest entries get an L.P. — and we'll print them!