PHONO RECORD MAGAZINE

"All The News That Hits" APRIL, 1976 MONTHLY 60 CENTS

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Suddenly America's Most Popular Band?

By MICHAEL BARACKMAN

"I have *got* to see Stevie Nicks," the trembling, young female stranger told the receptionist at the front desk of the Record Plant in Sausalito. The startled receptionist politely replied that Nicks, the radiant, gorgeous vocalist for Fleetwood Mac, was unavailable, for she and the rest of the band were in the midst of an important recording session. Voice quivering and close to tears, the girl grew more adamant: "I've had an intense emotional reaction to her song 'Rhiannon' that's led to some abrupt and important changes in my life. I *must* talk with her!" To avoid a complete mental collapse, a meeting between the two was hastily arranged.

"It's freaky," Nicks said later, "but people will come up to me every place we play and tell me what an effect 'Rhiannon' has had over their lives; as if it has some spiritual power over them.

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Aerosmith Shot In New York

By MITCH COHEN

New York—Photo sessions are a pain in the ass. 8 x 10 glossies are made, not born; press kits aren't built in a day. Not every magazine can afford to pay private photographers to get pictures for use with album and concert reviews. That being the case, Aerosmith had to sacrifice three hours an a Sunday afternoon to pose for the camera. It requires a major effort to round up the members of Aerosmith from their respective hotel rooms to have their pictures took. But it's gotta be done, one way or another: the publicity machine demands personality shots for circulation

because at this moment this band is riding high and you can't let up, can't let the

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REBEL WITH A CAUSE

Fogerty Speaks Out

By GREG SHAW

BERKELEY, CA—"Let's face it," John Fogerty was saying, "could I wear eye shadow and get away with it?" He was speaking of the sense of alienation he feels from most of today's music, and the difficulty of defining his own image. Since his first solo album, over a year ago, and in a larger sense since the breakup of Creedence Clearwater Revival in 1971, Fogerty has been trying to settle in his own mind the question of how he, a musician with simple, honest roots, fits into the musical spectrum of the '70s, a decade he finds, at times, bewildering.

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Bee Gees: New LP, Film & TV Series

By IAN DOVE

MIAMI—Talk with Barry Gibb, the one Bee Gee remaining in Miami to work on the group's album, revolved a lot around, not art or relevance in music, but business. "The Bee Gees are very much business-minded now," he says.

There's a new five year agreement signed with long-time manager Robert Stigwood—"Any arguments we've had in the past will be null and void now," comments Barry—a new music publishing company (publishing accounts for around 30% of Barry's income), and a new distribution deal, with whoever Stigwood chooses.

This, again a business decision, caused a certain amount of anguish to the three Gibb brothers. *Main Course* their last and most successful album ever, was produced by Arif Mardin. In June of last year Barry said, "I don't want any other producer with this group. If we couldn't do the next album with Arif, I'd hold the album until we could."

But business is business, and when the distribution hassles let-up, it was thumbs-down for 1976 Grammy winner Mardin, who is basically a house-producer at Atlantic Records. Comments Barry: "It's business—we respect that. On the personal side, it upset us quite a bit. Now we are doing it ourselves, but remembering what Arif has taught us."

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BOWIE ON STAGE

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PERFORMANCES

JONI MITCHELL
The Spectrum Theatre
Philadelphia, PA.

By MICHAEL TEARSON

Nobody in Philadelphia could have expected 70 degree temperatures on Washington's non-birthday (what Bi-centennial?), but it was at least the third straight time that unseasonably warm weather hit town the day of a mid-winter Joni Mitchell concert. The first break after two months of dreadful weather, it lent the city an uneasy euphoria perfectly suited for the night's show.

Apart from the normal carping about how crummy it was for an artist of Joni Mitchell's sensitivity to be playing The Spectrum hockey rink, the crowd was unusually genial and eager.

With saxophonist David Luell having replaced Tom Scott, the L.A. Express opened, blowing the fashionable brand of noodling pop-jazz expected of them, energetic if not impassioned, engaging if not original. Okay for preliminaries.

As anticipation grew to fever pitch, Joni entered the spotlight. With the Express supporting, she performed the all-too similar "Help Me" and "Free Man In Paris," which sandwiched the last tour's set closer, "For Love Or Money." So far uninspired. But as the band departed, Joni settled into an enrapturing, intimate (as can be in a cavern) acoustic set that was mesmerizing. Even with a broken string, she continued undaunted: she sang the traditional "Yarrow" a capella. She prefaced it with recollections of playing the local coffeehouses; the poignancy of the moment made me remember the nervous, fragile Joni who played her first Philly dates in 1966.

"For The Roses," "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire" (Luell shining) and the classic "For Free" followed. To everyone's pleasant surprise, Joni then cracked: "Hate to be pushy, but I've got some new songs." As she brought back the band, she debuted "Coyote" and "Don Juan's Reckless Daughter"; later she introduced two more, "Talk To Me, Mr. Mystery" and "Furry Sings The Blues." Clearly none of the four are in finished form yet, but it is exciting to see an artist of Joni Mitchell's stature in the process of creation. It recalls those coffeehouse days when the most important part of her set would be the unveiling of brand new material, then something like "Circle Game," "Marcie" (originally "The Ballad In Red and Green") or "I Had A King." As it was with "Love Or Money" and "Jericho," the new pieces showcased during the last tour, these new tunes are difficult to assimilate into her concert program. As well, much of the material from *Hissing of Summer Lawns* has been extensively reworked for live performance. "Harry's House/Centerpiece" has become a not terribly successful solo acoustic number. "Shadow and Light," a vocal choir tour-de-force on the album, has mutated and expanded into an open-ended, meandering "Cold Blue Steel" affair.

While her experimentations weren't without flaws, it was exhilarating to see Joni Mitchell taking risks in public. Though the new and old favorites could have and have previously sounded better, she was in wondrously glorious voice and spirits. The lady has potential.

DAVID BOWIE
The Cow Palace
San Francisco, CA.

By TERI MORRIS

Whether it was his conscious plan or not, this time around David Bowie reciprocated the brush-off he felt as Ziggy Stardust in 1972 when he stepped onto the Winterland stage and found he was playing to a shamefaced handful of a few hundred fans. With the tables properly turned (the almost sold out Cow Palace demanded two encores), he proceeded in casual incommunication, seldom moving outside the three foot square he must have mentally chalked around the mike, parting with few words ("bless you," he murmured, motioning for the band to begin the next number), and even fewer moments where he betrayed signs of any great degree of interest in the proceedings. Still, the audience found him peculiarly charming because in 1976 his cool is his most outrageous prop.

"Station to Station" was a perfectly chosen show opener: its building machinations and guitar feedback may be no match for the opening chords of "Hang on to Yourself" when it comes to creating tense anticipation, but it did allow Bowie to emerge from backstage and slip inconspicuously into the song's presentation—no small feat for a man whose hair looks like a 50-50 ice cream bar in orange and vanilla. With a voice held in check, a studied reserve that matched his chic marching in place, sidelong glances backstage, and unimaginably elegant handling of cigarets and bottles of Heineken, he asserted dramatic presence. "Suffragette City" followed, bland except for some well-received pelvic snaps and a bit of R&B free-association ("she's so fine, wish she were mine, she's so cool..."); then came the evening's irreverent salute to Lou Reed, a harmless rhythmy "I'm Waiting for the Man" that seemed to momentarily amuse Bowie ("hey white boy") and encouraged him to let loose with a few soulful shouts. For the most part, though, he performed his older material ("Five Years," "Jean Genie," "Queen Bitch") with incredible ennui, dropping it only to rub the audience's nose in some of "Panic in Detroit"'s sillier lyrics, and grinning broadly during "Changes" when he sang "Look out you rock and rollers, pretty soon you're going to get older."

This was the fourth date of the tour and the band had not yet completely coordinated all of the diverse elements of the Bowie live set; absent were the bright melody peaks which distinguish "Life on Mars?" and "Diamond Dogs"—instead the band performed best with material that called for a prominent rhythm section, notably a pair of *Station to Station*'s strongest cuts, "Stay" and "TVC 15", where Bowie grabbed his sax and installed an appealingly easy counterbeat to the churning workings of guitarists Carlos Alomar (rhythm) and Stacy Heydon (lead). Naturally, Bowie's own energy went where it would do the most good, and when he started moving his body to "Fame"'s familiar rhythms the audience got its first teasing taste of his seductive white boy's dance. He confidently strolled the stage, made a few smooth spins and ran speedy fingers through his two-tone hair. Bassist George Murray and drummer Dennis Davis left little room for conjecture as to why "Fame" was Bowie's #1 single.

San Francisco was as ravingly receptive to the new suave and aloof Bowie as it had been stoney cold to the Ziggy manifestation, and one look at the 14,000 who filled the Cow Palace confirmed the fact that he is no longer a cult star playing to a cult following. Bowie communicated nothing so definite as an acute sense of style: evening gowns and spacesuits are less aesthetically provocative these days than his striking loose black trousers, vest, and white shirt. By no means the picture of effusive warmth, David Bowie's defiant blase did not stand in the way of his presenting himself as the star, a role that still fits him remarkably well.

Neil Reuben