

Around The Clock

# Our Musically Immature

By WAYNE A. SMITH

Some of today's "rock" music, we are compelled to say, is rubbish. And this goes both for the style of composition and method of delivery.

The years have produced a wealth of "rock", but unfortunately the present era has wrapped itself in the aura of protest, sex, filth and shock much as have the movies, novels and those little off-Broadway plays which do little more than strip their performers and force them to stand frontward.

It is all being cut from the same bolt of cloth — a disreputable piece of goods, if there ever was one. And music, at least that phase of it represented by many of the "rock" bands, "pop" and folk singers, and those young men and women who exploit themselves above and beyond the talent they possess, is as guilty of moral decay as the films, plays and literature which spew forth a vomit of profanity, filth and muck.

**WORSE THAN THIS**, the purveyors of this rubbish have been able to corral large numbers of unwitting young people and to make them believe that because what they offer is loud, it is good. But loudness never stood for quality, least of all intelligence. And "pop" music of this era is based more on loudness than on vitality.

Very little of it has form, style or even grace. Most of it is chaos, an attempt to overpower by force rather than through challenge, a sort of Pied Piper leading little children down a path of vulgarity and waste. And few of them, once infected by its hypnotic appeal, can see that they have been duped.

It is hard to say just where, when or how this trend came to reality. The Beatles may have had something to do with it. But the Beatles have very little talent for anything except disarranging their outward appearance. They started the men's long-hair craze, then combined it with beads when they fell under the charm of a guru and thereby altered both their personalities and styles. But was this ever music?

Before the Beatles was "Pelvis" Presley, who actually has been more successful as a movie idol than a platter clatterer even though his general style and appearance outdistance the modern variety of "pop" singer by far. Presley, in fact, is now old-fashioned. His well-scrubbed face, his neat, if long, hair and his general demeanor are so far removed from the grubbiness of contemporary rock groups that he seems to have come from the middle ages.

**APPEARANCE, OF COURSE**, could be overlooked, if there was a modicum of talent involved. But almost without exception whatever gift there may be vo-

cally or instrumentally has been wasted in musical drive and blown away in a cacophonous storm of violent attack. These stars excel only in showmanship.

For years the American "pop" scene was represented in part by jazz. And whereas there was some of this which hit below the proverbial belt, much of it was of value. Jazz always has had form, style and subtlety. Some has even been profoundly compulsive. And even if one didn't dig it, one could never ignore it as an American invention, a creation which sprang from a class of people and a way of life.

There are untold numbers today who cling to the cloth of Miss Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, and to dozens of other co-called "folk singers". But very few of them, including Miss Baez, could stand on a stage before an audience without the aid of electronic gadgetry and given an account of themselves. Few of them have singing voices. They speak more than they sing.

There is no life, no timber, no power. Even their beloved guitars have to be electrified. Magnification never did a thing for music except when it is being piped through a radio

receiver and then spread out through a system of two or more speakers. For the living voice it is murder. For any sort of instrument it is grotesque. A voice or instrument must live or die on its own power, not the contrivance of some backstage wizard. Hardly a "pop" star today can succeed on his own.

**THERE ARE A FEW** exceptions to today's trend. A group which rates a modest tribute for originality and style is Tijuana Brass and some of its imitators. Here is something of value and happily it is being recognized. And there are some good "pop" soloists like, for instance, Jerry Vale.

Much of what is being done today in the "pop" world will soon fade away, however, lost forever in a jungle of nonentities, and causing many to wonder what it was all about. Some of us already are wondering. But not hard.

Psychedelic "rock" is not worth the effort. The wonder is that it has captured anyone. As wise as the younger generation may be, it is taking a long time to grow up musically.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Commanding Officer Lauds Sgt. Wetherbe

To The Editor:

Having received this copy of the letter a Commanding Officer sent to the mother and father of Sgt. David Wetherbe, returned from his duty in Vietnam, I thought it might be an inspiration to our young protesters of Vietnam in our communities. The Bible says in Mark 13:7, "For when we hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet."

**"To Whom It May Concern:**  
"I have had the opportunity to be Sgt. David Wetherbe's commanding officer for a period of six months. During this time this individual has proved, without a doubt, to be a man of determination, leadership and courage. Because of his outstanding drive and initiative, he has won the respect of the officers and enlisted men of this battalion. He has been cited on numerous occasions for his achievements, culminating with a Bronze Star for service, an award reserved for few individuals.

"Sgt. Wetherbe has endured the many hardships of Vietnam

in an exemplary manner. His cheerful nature and positive attitude lessened the burden for many of his comrades during these trying times. The ability to lead his platoon on hazardous missions is a credit to himself, his unit and the United States Army.

"Without reservation, Sgt. Wetherbe is one of the finest men I have known. He would be an asset to any organization.

"I would be honored if I could be of more assistance to this young man, Thomas A. Van Meter, 1 Lt. Infantry, Commanding."

This is the same David Wetherbe, formally of Moore's Corner. I wrote about some time ago who always shared his bed and food with the little Vietnamese boys when possible. He taught them to pray and sing gospel choruses. Pray for our boys in Vietnam. Our part calls for obedience — and even this is the gift of God, we can do nothing of ourselves, but as we abide in Him and trust Him and follow Him, we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us.

VERA CAREY  
Moore's Corner