

Inside Sounds

Marshall Rubinoff

1967

The Jefferson Airplane arrived in New York for what is probably the beginning of the San Francisco music “explosion-exploitation.” I still can’t believe I heard them on the radio advertising some thing besides music; but since that was the only time I heard them via mass media I guess I shouldn’t put it all down. Its like color TV, the commercials are better than the shows themselves.

I jammed into the Cafe A Go Go with a bunch of very hip teeny boppers (quiet; listening to the music) to welcome and celebrate the arrival of white soul rock. I guess that’s what impressed me most, seeing them in person. They are all about Soul. Marty Baline’s voice is more feeling in person than on their records. And I still can’t believe their full sound is created for the most part with just two guitars, a bass and a drum. They’ll probably do groovy coke commercials someday?

The Butterfield band at the Living End was minus Mike Bloomfield for what I assume was the first time. It was great; a whole new way. They weren’t as “heady” as before, because they were all consciously filling in the open gaps that appeared when all of a sudden one sixth of their sound disappeared. They took turns filling in where Bloomfield was no longer, and for the first time I took the time to really listen to the rest of the band. Everyone has been telling me for a long while how much groovier and less obvious Bishop and Naftalin were; this time I saw it for myself. I never got that rush they used to lay on me in “East-West when Bloomfield and Butterfield took you up to an incredible peak. Instead, I heard all of them working things a new way; it’s being is still an exciting experience.

The Beatles presented their two new songs on TV, and like Van Johnson said it would be, it was a mind expanding experience in consciousness ... How do you explain the visual acid experience, shout the sameness and beauty of everything and everyone? Just one sense perception after another with nothing but good feeling. The Beatles are into a love thing entirely different than the new SF music. Driven into the studios, out of necessity, they’ve found a new freedom in electronic and super technical machines.

The natural freedom of groups like the Jefferson Airplane, has so far not encountered the steaming hostility of teeny bopper fans to their idols. I really respect the “old” groups like the Stones, Kinks, and Beatles for the new experimental, and creative things they are doing. It must be hard (when your audience is not listening to you) to play music and just smile, turn out rubbish, and rake in the money.

A TV show called the “Songmakers” was full of rock ‘n roll and greasy well rehearsed bullshit. They had these corny people trying to explain in words, how to write a song. The Mamas and Papas looked and sounded too rich and too self conscious. Simon and Garfunkle sounded like the hippest guys on campus five years ago, and the Byrds just looked bored.

The best the show could take up was Butterfield’s band sweating thru some changes. It seems they were talking about making “tunes” and not about music. They didn’t have Coltrane, or Ravi Shankar to talk about how they heard sounds. It was disappointing, although I guess I shouldn’t have anticipated anything better. The Blues Project surprisingly were the only ones to make it all look free and natural.

The Byrds have a new album out called YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY that has some nice things on it, They freak out in such a tasteful way. It seems that as one of the originators of electrical rock, they are super-careful not

to just make loud sounds that go nowhere, like a lot of their predecessors. I think its obvious that Hillman, the bass player used to be a mandolin player. He gives them the feeling that maybe there is no bass at all, it's so quick you almost don't hear it.

The new Kinks album is FACE TO FACE. Way back then (three years ago) I used to love the da dada dadadada kinky sound they used to make. It seems they disappeared for three years to suddenly reappear all of a sudden in my consciousness as a very hip group. Their music and lyrics are in their own bag. Ray Davies just talks about how it is being a rock musician. His blues is so positive.

After he loses his money and girlfriend and being harassed by the taxman he still is grooving on a sunny afternoon. FANCY is a song that you keep finding yourself singing in the back of your mind. It's one of those records you might have to hear more than once before feeling familiar enough to get into it.

The Spencer Davis Group has a good album out. ENGLISH BLUES. That their lead singer is white and 18, is pretty amazing. I heard a couple of songs from an album of Janis Ian's that I think were really great. She is only 15 and so turned on and beautiful. The new MAMMAS AND PAPAS album is very disappointing. It makes good light listening; only I thought they were better than that. A group called the FREE SPIRITS have a record out that is pretty weird. It's intense and jazz oriented; they use a saxophone a new way inside the expanding definition of Rock.

fifth Estate

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Fifth Estate #26, March 15-31, 1967

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