

Jim and Jean

Paula Stone

Be kind to other people—this is what Jim and Jean are essentially about. They were in town last week and during a 3 a.m. interview with WABX I had a chance to know them a little better.

I've always thought their act was one of the most independently polished in the business mainly because they seem to have a feeling for doing the right thing just at the right moment. Jim and Jean sparkle on stage and off and it's never an act. Jean sings even when she talks and when she describes a song she or Jim has written, you want to ask for more.

Their latest album is due out soon. It's called "It's a People World" and they worked on it alone with the exception of Detroit drummer Steve Booker. When they finished with the sessions, they called in their arranger, Pete Dino, to see what could be augmented, but not changed or altered.

On the record Jeanie plays organ, finger cymbals, electric bass and guitar. She used all these instruments masterfully during the Chessmate engagement here last week. Jim sticks to his old Guild Guitar with an electric pick-up to underline and delineate everything with his strong guitar work.

It would be impossible to pick out any of their songs as better than others. Some of their new material is done by Phil Ochs, whom Jim met at Ohio State many moons ago, and taught him to play guitar and later worked with him as a duo locally.

Another big happy surprise number "Sweet Water" was written by Detroit's own Carol Miller. Jim & Jean speak highly of Carol, now working with ex-Southbound Freewayers Marty and Lenny Somberg as a trio.

"Topango Canyon" is about the Buffalo-Springfield, Etc. Bust which missed Jim & Jean by a hair one lovely California evening. It is a great piece of musical editorial, softened in its revolutionary questioning by the lyricism and controlled delivery. "Time Goes Backwards" by Jim is based on a physics theory that lays down the premise that anti-matter is equal to matter in another dimension where the universe has a right and a left side; polarized, as it were. It is very science fiction; as is Jean's new "Planet of June" thing about a place where sound waves rather than gravity are the controlling factors. It even has a tinkling sort of sound which adds other-worldly quality. Its summation proposes that the people never die, just sort of lose some vibrations and drift away into space—akin to stars.

While talking about The Electric Flag and their visit to Detroit, Jim & Jean mentioned that Harvey Brooks did the words for a tune written and recorded by Jean, "One Sure Thing." (Done in their act with only a haunting vibrating guitar and solo voice—very groovy). Taking up the blues discussion begun in The Flag article, they touched on the point that they are not influenced by blues at all. They find this a major reason for their big West Coast popularity. Their single, "People World" was number six in L.A.—the soft white sound."

This was taken as a token of the prevalent Beach Boy influence out there. They also felt that people like the Doors and Buffalo Springfield are perhaps blues oriented, but very bleached.

But people are listening all over now—and it's taken a long six years or so for them to reach the top circle. Their future impressive gigs include a Bitter End engagement, a Tufts University concert with Richie Havens, a Rose Bowl appearance of all things and a commission from the American Shakespeare Festival for "Love's Labour Lost,"

doing the scoring. All together Jim & Jean are *strong*. Their music is inventive perceptive and moving. The new album is 70% original material, and obviously could have been filled brimful with their own stuff. But they have to let you reflect on other people's words too: Theirs is a People World.

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Fifth Estate #53, May 1-15, 1968

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