

Uncle Russ in England

Russ Gibb

1968

The English musical scene is really a bummer. English audiences are mostly composed of teenyboppers that still dig "The Midnight Hour." Yet there is a growing group that is really beginning to get into the music thing and love to hear a band kick out the jams.

Probably the most interesting musical group on the English horizon is "The Family." It is composed of some older college type cats who are not only saying something in their music about the conditions of the society that we live in, but also happen to be very expert musicians.

Spooky Tooth, a group of four English men and an American are probably the most exciting, musically, that I heard during my visit in England. It's a hard driving band with a vocalist who has a voice somewhere between Ray Charles and Elvis Presley. They record for Island Records and I am told will have a new album out shortly.

During a visit to a benefit concert in the Albert Hall, there was a line up that would have broke any American promotor back in America. The Move, the Byrds, Spooky Tooth, Jo Crocker, the Grape Fruit, Trantasaurus Rex [sic] were playing.

One group took it away from everyone. The Bonzo Dog Band. Musically they are where you're at! and that can be anywhere, depending on the time and the moment.

But visually they're a now band. How do you describe the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Spike Jones, The Grateful Dead, and the Canned Heat all in one band? Wait till you see the Bonzo Dog.

Had a chance while in London to interview Eric Clapton about the split in the Cream, and got the distinct impression musically they were tired of one another and that personality wise, Eric and Ginger were finding it practically impossible to live with one another. Watch for each guy forming his own group in the near future.

Clapton is tremendously interested in the Western-Country-Rock field and I wouldn't be a bit surprised to see the famous long solos, etc. of the Cream give way to tastee, well-planned, thought out numbers in the future.

Eric no longer is a man at odds with society, but a cat who's made it. He owns a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur.

An interesting possibility! that Chris Blackwell of Irlen records is kicking around is that he's bringing Clapton and Stevey Winwood and Buddy Miles of the Electric Flag together for a one shot album possibility.

Performance of the Byrds at the Albert Hall was a real let down and after the gig, singer-organist Parsons split from the group to take up forming his own band in London. Parsons and Clapton were jamming one night and all I can say is keep your ears on the vocalizing of Parsons. This kid is going somewhere. The number one group in England at the present is the Equals, and all I can say is they're a bummer.

The Grape Fruit have a long way to go before they come up with the originality of the Beatles. In fact, the one thing that strikes you when you see the group is that they look like the Beatles four years ago. They all wear pretty yellow suits.

The Mood for Apple, the Beatles' new help-everyone-Corporation. It's supposed to be real cool. It turns out that it has the most uptight people in it that I met in England—business types with ties and suits inhabited the Apple Corporation. So don't get your hopes up high. It seems to me that the Apple is just the tax man's way of losing money for the Beatles.

A real high. The Rolling Stones' office is probably the closest to what you and I understand as a happening place. Casual, down to earth, and where it's at.

The Stones are Cool. Rumor has it that after Jagger finishes working out a motion picture he's producing that then and only then will the Stones be ready for an American tour. Provided Uncle Sam lets them in.

Apple

(sidebar)

(LNS-Rolling Stone) — The Beatles' record company, Apple Corps., will be launched August 11 with three Beatle productions, and August 11–18 has been declared National Apple Week.

The first disks will include "Revolution" by John Lennon, "Thingumbob", an instrumental featuring Paul McCartney conducting the Black Dyke Mills Brass Band b/w a McCartney/Black Dyke version of "Yellow Submarine" with a children's choir, and an album of soundtrack music composed by George Harrison for the film "Wonderwall". The Beatles have recorded 30 tracks which may appear on their first Apple LP.

Their soundtrack recordings for the full-length cartoon "Yellow Submarine" will not be issued until just before Christmas, coinciding with the film's U.S. release. The film contains (four brand-new songs and eight oldies. It has not yet been decided whether to issue the four new tracks on an EP, as the soundtrack to "Magical Mystery Tour" was issued in England, or to put all twelve titles on an LP.

Cream Break Up

(sidebar)

London (LNS-Rolling Stone) — Eric Clapton announced recently that the members of the Cream, a well known virtuoso rock group made up of guitarists Clapton and Jack Bruce and drummer Ginger Baker, would be going their separate ways come autumn.

Clapton said he had other reasons as well. "I just want to perform contemporary blues. With the Cream, solos were the thing, but I'm really off that virtuoso kick. It was all over exposed. I've returned to what I like doing as an individual, and that is playing exploratory blues." Clapton reported that bass-player Jack Bruce will probably go into recording, while Ginger Baker will form a new group of his own.

"I think the Cream reached its peak last year at San Francisco," Clapton continued, "from that we all went on a huge ego trip. Making it in the States was a bang in the head. There is some really great music coming out of America. I think we are due for a whole new spate of 'Sgt. Pepper's.'"

Clapton has been getting into Bob Dylan's music and has been working with a group of his friends called the Band. "You get really hung up and try to write pop songs or create a pop image," Clapton said in reference to the pressures of touring with a top group. "I went through that stage and it was a shame because I was not being true to myself. I am and always will be a blues guitarist."

U.S. fans will have a last chance to see the Cream during the fifteen performances of its farewell tour.



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