

Rock & Roll Dope

John Sinclair

1968

People need music to live. We know that and act on it, all ways. Only straight people—honkies—think music is superfluous, that it doesn't make any difference what you listen to, and their lives demonstrate their ignorance. Music shapes us and makes us whole, as we would never be without it. We have to have it. There's no way you can get around it. For our generation music is the most vital force in most of our lives.

In older times people got their music from the troubadours, musicians who traveled the countryside on foot singing and playing to make the people happy and to keep food in their mouths. A couple weeks ago a modern bend of troubadours, the Hog Farm, arrived in Ann Arbor in all their glory to turn the people on. Originally based on a hog farm in southern California, the whole commune took to wheels at the beginning of last summer and started traveling across the country in six monstrous school buses, stopping in small towns in mid-America to put on their "people show" and blow the townfolks' minds. The Hog Farmers are the direct descendants of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters of psychedelic legend, and their present program carries then total life-style into the streets and parks of America—all for free.

The Hog Farm carries 36 freeks, including children and babies, a full electric band, a light show, filmmakers and assorted maniacs. When they get to town they start negotiating with the local constabulary and public officials for a place to put on their "People Show." After ten days in Ann Arbor they were finally able to procure the Union Ballroom for a two-day bash, where they were joined by the MC5, the UP, and other local powers for a total assault on the culture. If you missed it you shouldn't have—you may not get to see it again. But there will be a lot more of this in the future, as the established culture passes into history and thousands of liberated frocks take to the roads, spreading their message of rock and roll, dope, and fucking in the streets into every corner of America. You'll see.

You also have to take into account the advances being made in radio and other media, especially in the Detroit area WABX has developed and continues to develop into a community voice, giving us access to the public airwaves and eardrums for the first time. The programming is improving all the time, and the people behind the station are getting deeper into it every day. Larry Miller has been a real bonus, and station manager John Detz has rewarded Miller's excellent radio work by giving him three hours of prime time every night during the week. The new ABX schedule has Jiro Hampton on from noon to 4, Jerry "Caveman" Lubin from 4 to 7, Danny Carlisle until 11, Miller from 11 to 2, and night-tripper Dave Dixon from 2 until 7 am every night except Monday, when the station signs off at 2.30 a.m.

WABX recently scooped the whole country by previewing both the Beatles new albums (the two-record set released last week and the soundtrack to their cartoon film "Yellow Submarine," which will be released next month for the Christmas money rush) and the Rolling Stones' "Beggars' Banquet." The repercussions were worldwide, and ABX's quick action helped put Detroit on the map in the music industry. They've been doing a lot of hip interviews too, grabbing everybody who comes to town and wants to rap.—John Mayall, Richie Havens, Peter, Paul & Mary, the Amboy Dukes, SRC, MC5, Nito, and a lot of other people have made it in the last couple weeks

Watch for a new underground news service on WABX soon, with the Trans-Love news bureau, Guerrilla, and the *Fifth Estate* writing the copy. The station will be drawing on local news sources as well as the national underground press (UPS) and LIBERATION News Service. This will really be something when it goes down.

Finally, anybody who plays "Sympathy for the Devil" by the Rolling Stones five or six times a day has to be all right with me. WABX does that, every day, before the other stations have even heard the jam.

P.S. Watch for WKNR-FM, home of Russ Gibb, to change their call letters to WWLV shortly after the first of the year. What does that mean?

Local news roundup: There have been a lot of quick changes within the Detroit music scene now that it's on the verge of being "discovered"—it looks like everyone's getting ready for the next step, milking sure that all angles are covered before the big money men move in. Or whatever. The fact remains that the changes are going down—here's some of them:

After a rocky period with plenty of unfortunate internal hassles, the Rationals have really pulled everything together and are sounding better than they ever have. Scott Morgan has developed into one of the most powerful lead singers on the whole scene, Steve Correll has moved into a very strong guitar bag, and Terry Trabandt and Bill Figg have got the rhythm down to the real nifty gritty. The Rats are smoking! Their recording scene has been very weird lately, due to mishandling on the part of Capitol, who signed them with "I Need You" but has refused to release their last two single offerings, "Sunset" and "Temptation's 'Bout to Get Me." Negotiations are presently underway for the Rats to free themselves from their contract, and hopefully somebody will sign them and do something with them. The group's manager Larry Feldman is considering forming his own label in order to get the jams out, but nothing definite has been set by this writing. They're scheduled to open at the Scene in New York next month, and that'll be a real treat for everyone concerned.

Two of Jeep Holland's groups, the Thyme and the Jagged Edge, have split up leaving Jeep with tons of unusable tape and a tremendous recording bill. The Thyme's Ralph Cole has reportedly joined the Paupers on lead guitar, and Thyme bassist Al Wilmot has replaced the SRC's bassist Robin Dale in a lightning move. Drummer Jimmy Dinner is looking for musicians and wants to get something together. The SRC just came off their first tour and are working on their second Capitol album. The other established Detroit group, the Amboy Dukes, replaced John Brake as lead singer with Rusty Day, formerly of the Detroit Wheels. Day appears on the Dukes' new Mainstream album, which was released last week. Brake and Dukes' lead guitarist Ted Nugent had been together since the old Lords days.

The killer UP has changed drummers, with Scotty Bailey replacing Victor Peraino, and their new sound is incredibly different. The band has been playing a lot of groovy benefits lately, including rallies for the Black Panthers in Ypsilanti, EMU SDS, and an election eve rally in Detroit, where they shared the bill with Rennie Davis of the National Mobilization Committee and Frank Joyce of People Against Racism. UP manager Dave Sinclair has started staging and promoting the band's own gigs in Ann Arbor and will be working with Detroit Draft Resistance in a new program of dance-rallies aimed at high school students in the Detroit area.

Dirk Wagner and the Frost have been going through heavy changes with manager Jeep Holland, and no one really seems to know what's going on now. Somebody should sign up this band fast and get their music out on records. They were featured with the MC5 and the Stooges at the Grande over Thanksgiving for two nights.

The 3rd Power, a strong Detroit trio, have recorded their first single, "Snow," for Detroit's Baron Records. You can hear it on WABX. Another powerful Detroit band, the Wilson Mower Pursuit, has split in two, with the lead guitarist and drummer taking on two chicks on lead vocal and bass and a second guitarist who was formerly with Pete Woodman's Popcorn Blizzard. The Pursuit's former rhythm guitarist, bassist and lead singer have gotten together a new band, as yet unnamed, which should be out of sight.

Teagarden and VanWinkle have sold their Plumm album, produced and marketed in the Detroit area, to Atco Records. The record, "An Evening at Home with Teagarden and VanWinkle," was recorded live at the Red Carpet and is really a killer. Atco should get them the national exposure they deserve.

Blue Cheer was blown away again in their second Detroit appearance at the Grande, November 21st. When the Stooges unleashed their new show, the Stooges sound better every week, and that Thursday night they were stronger than they've been since last March, when I saw them, for the first time and came all over myself. There were times in their show when the music passed into pure magic, rising and rising in intensity until it was felt

inure than heard. They'll start work on their first Elektra album in Los Angeles in late February, with John Cale of the Velvet Underground producing

Bands to look out for. The Dharma, Target. John Angelo's new group. Lyman Woodard's United Soul, the dangerous Gypsy Blue from Toledo, McKenna Mendelssohn Mainline, Pete Woodman's Popcorn Blizzard from Saginaw, Billy C. and pianist Boot Hill are back with Sam Lay and it looks like there'll be a big recording contract this time.

Lay's Mojoworkers were in town for two weeks at the Chessmate and are back in Chicago. Boot says they've stopped playing show music and are back into the stone blues, which should make them a real destroyer blues band. Billy C. is the country's major blues vocal and harmonica talent as far as my ears can hear.

Ann Arbor's legendary blues band the Prime Movers is featured at Depot House on South Ashley in Az weekly. The Charging Rhino of Soul has been putting on its own gigs at Canterbury House and is still negotiating with several companies for a satisfactory recording deal.

All these bands are playing for you. Dig them every chance you get.

New Airplane Flick Flight

NEW YORK—The Jefferson Airplane will be appearing, in French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard's first American film that began filming in New York in mid-November.

Godard, noted for his classic film "Breathless" and the more recent "Week-end," meets with members of the San Francisco rock group Nov. 18 and begins shooting the following day in an East 55th Street rooftop. Airplane members will be interviewed in the film and following that, portions of the interview will be re-enacted by professional actors and actresses.

This cinematic exercise in reality and fiction also will include interviews with Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver, a 10-year-old ghetto girl, a Wall Street broker, and representative of the New Left.

The film is tentatively titled "An American Movie," the film assignment comes mid-way through the band's final 1968 American tour and following an appearance Nov. 10 on the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour.

Grace Slick appeared on the show, singing two songs in black face. At the close of one of the songs, she also raised a black-gloved hand in the Black Power close-fisted salute seen a month earlier at the Olympics.

Miss Slick included in her list of reasons for wearing black makeup, "Listen to the words in 'Crown of Creation' and think about a Negro singing them; it makes sense. Also, women wear makeup all the time, so why not black? Next time I might wear green. Besides, I think it very weird to have blue eyes and a black face. And there weren't any Negroes on the show and I thought the quota needed adjustment."

fifth Estate

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