

'Ear ye!

Bob Stark

1969

The on again-off again break up of the Red, White and Blues Band is On-again-off again. After the original guitarist-harpist quit, he was replaced by two people, a singer-harpist and a lead player who never really worked out.

It was announced that the group was breaking up for good, then that they would just replace the singer and the guitarist with two new people. But bigger things were in the air, and now, it seems, piano player Skip has left the group to join the Wilson Mower Pursuit.

My! My! Look how much progress we're making: the *Free Press* gave over almost the entire back page of its July 15 edition to coverage of the WABX rock concert last weekend (July 13) at Jackson Prison. Maybe somebody paid them off.

If Jimi Hendrix at Monterey was "rock's most significant burlesque" (Craw-daddy) then what do you call Hendrix waltzing off the Tonight Show stage with Flip Wilson while Wilson Pickett and Joe Tex dueted on "Funky Broadway?" Broadway Woman?

Revolutionary bullshit reached a new low last Saturday night at the Grande when an unidentified shirtless protector of the oppressed masses took it upon himself to take control of one of the microphones and try to convince the assembled throngs that "Uncle Russ was not a 'revolutionary,'" but actually was exploiting them for everything they were worth by charging them \$5 to get in. This brilliant revolutionary tactic quickly degenerated as our hero engaged in a brief debate with Grande announcer Tony Reay (Rhea?) trading insult for insult with each other. What does all this mean?

Most people expected Blind Faith to be a new-improved Cream and reports indicate that many were really upset that they wouldn't play Cream's old material on stage.

These are the kind of bullshit audiences that want everybody to play their hits.

It's about time these people realized that if everybody played just their hits, the music would go nowhere and it would be 1959 again. Cream is dead. Blind Faith is something new and different and should be treated as such. They should make it or bust on what they do, not on who they are.

Record of the month: "Those Who are About to Die" by Jon Hiseman's Coliseum. Tenorist Dick Heckstall-Smith was with the original Grahame Bond Organization. Drummer Hiseman replaced Ginger Baker with the Bond group. In 1967 they both left Bond, but got together with each other about six months later in a John Mayall group which also included bassist Tony Reeves (who wrote "Cast Your Fate to the Wind").

Heckstall-Smith and Hiseman did the arrangements for Mayan's "Barewires" LP. Leaving Mayall when John decided to go back to a quartet, Hiseman, Heckstall-Smith and Reeves added organist Dave Greenslade and guitarist-vocalist James Lintherland. This is Coliseum. Their record shows their years of musical experience and how well they know each other's music.

Perhaps the most ambitious work on the album is the fifteen minute song, three part "Valentyne Sweet," an extended jazz piece that works because the Coliseum avoids all the pitfalls that such groups as the Nice and Blood Sweat and Tears fell into when they attempted such experiments. In striking together two totally disparate pieces of

music they have successfully avoided pretentious, and poorly done electronics and long, boring, over-complicated transitions which never work anyway. They just play music.

The first part "January's Theme" features Dave improvising on organ and vibes piano off a theme he wrote. The solo builds into a dialogue with the soprano and the guitar then breaks quickly and cleanly into the second theme "February's Valentyne," also by Dave, from which Dick builds into a towering tenor solo, notable as much for its being unlike the playing of any other sax! I've heard as it is for its own power.

This in turn breaks into "Beware the Ides of March," the theme of which utilized the same Bach chord structure that Procol Harum employed for "A Whiter Shade of Pale." This builds into a three part improvisation by Dick, Dave, and James that builds far better than any of the recorded work of Larry Coryell and Steve Marcus, who had the reputation amongst rock critics of being the best at this sort of thing (jazz improvisations over a rock framework).

Of the other cuts (all of which are excellent) note Dick's blues solo on "Plenty Hard Luck," and the whole group on "Those About to Die," as well as Jon's drumming throughout as he changes from rock to jazz figures almost at will, yet constantly plays what the piece needs.

Contrary to published rumors, Russ Gibb has not bought the Eastown yet, though he and Eastown owner Bob Bageris have been talking about it for some time. If Russ does take over an interest in the Eastown it will probably end most of the major problems the Eastown now faces.

Like the shortage of money for advances and for needed repairs to the building (the air conditioner), and the difficulty they have incurred in booking name groups even when they had the money. Russ can make the Eastown a profit making operation and whatever your feelings about Russ may be, a Gibb run Eastown is much better for Detroit than no Eastown at all.

Last weekend two groups, the Brownsville Station and the Sunday Funnies, recorded live at Something Different and proved that small clubs provide a much better atmosphere for listening and for recording rock & roll. Though limited capacity prevents Something Different from booking big name acts, they always provide good music in what is probably the nicest setting for hearing music in the Detroit area. Try to make it there next Saturday for Catfish and the fabulous Gold Brothers.

fifth Estate

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