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Life & Times Of...

The Kinks. Page 23.

**A WELL-NEGLECTED
MAN**

Good time
country swing
is not dead.

it's only
Asleep At The
Wheel.
live at Hammersmith
Odeon Sat. April 16th.



EST 1960

The Wheel
their latest album



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CLASH OFFER -FREE E.P!



A RIOT OF YOUR OWN! 1977 is the Year Of

Holmes Bill Gargano says so—and this is a second chance to obtain some of The Sound Of The Wrenway X-CLUSIVE for those NME readers showed enough to buy, borrow or steal (and in Holmes old fellow! Ed) a copy of the band's first album which is going into the record shops now. What we're giving away (yeah, giving away) is a genuine collector's item—a 14-minute E.P. which contains two new Clash, "Lions" and the UTTERLY INCREDIBLE "Capital Radio" plus an extended burst of our very own goading Tony Parsons interviewing the band about Clash Philosophy 1977. This is the stuff you need in NME. Hear it from their own lips (if you don't believe us) on this FREE 45. To get this contemporary classic here's what you gotta do. On the inner bag of the first 10,000 copies of The Clash album you'll find a red sticker. Attach this to the announcement that you're now reading, legibly scrawl your name and address across the shaded area of the sticker and mail the lot to the following address: The Clash Offer, Pembroke House, Campden Road, London N8 7PE. That's all. You don't need to enclose stamped addressed envelopes, and we don't want any money. The whole deal (including postage and packing of the single) is FREE. A gift from NME and The Sound Of Wrenway to anyone who's interested enough in getting hold of a copy of the new Clash e.p. Got it? Right? Can you think of a better way to spend Easter? N.B. This offer is open to readers in the U.K. only, and closes at the end of April '77.

FROM THE ARCHIVES



An archive pic that will inevitably evoke feelings of sadness. The Jimi Hendrix Experience—Noel Redding, Mick Minihall and Hendrix—posed with Maureen Cass Elliott. We'd date the shot sometime in 1968. Both Hendrix and Maureen Cass died in London—the former in September 1970 and the latter in July 1974.

New Deal in New York

THE CONTINUING relaxation of U.S. laws relating to "soft" drugs was taken a step further last week by the District Attorney of Manhattan, who announced that no one would in future be prosecuted for possession of two ounces or less of marijuana.

This is even more lenient than the newly-enacted steps towards decriminalisation in California, where maximum fines of £40 have been introduced for possession of one ounce or more.

MEANWHILE, calls for changes in the criminal laws in the U.S. were made last week by 76-year-old Labour MP Michael Lipton.

The Sun reported that Lipton had shocked his colleagues in the House of Commons by suggesting that cannabis should be freely available over the counter to the "average citizen". He said that the present laws were a mess and should be scrapped.

More surprising, perhaps, than this, was the fact that the delegates at the annual conference of the Federation of Conservative Students voted overwhelmingly in favour of the legalisation of cannabis. All they need to do now is convince Maggie.

AT SAN on the morning of Saturday 26th March, the police raid, "Julia has arrived", went out. It was the signal for 800 police, drawn from six of Britain's most regional crime squads, to swing into action, in the largest police drug operation in Britain in living memory.

More than 60 search warrants and some 500 officers were issued for the massive series of raids in Scotland, Wales and the South West, aimed at breaking up what was alleged to be a major manufacturing and distribution organisation for LSD.

The outcome of the weekend raid, and others carried out in the following days, was that a total of 127 people were arrested.

Twenty-six people including two women, have been remanded in custody, while the rest have been bailed for various times and are expected to appear in court in July.

Operation Julia, named after undercover W.F.C. Julia Taylor, was, in the words of Deputy Superintendent Dennis Greenfield of the South Western Regional Crime Squad, "successful beyond any wildest dreams." The police said they found two LSD factories and seized a large quantity of LSD.

Detectives from Scotland Yard co-operated fully with US authorities agents. Interpol and various continental police forces.

Needless to say, Fleet Street took the opportunity to embellish the story. The Express for instance, quoted an unnamed detective as saying: "Some aspects of this operation make anything you have seen on TV or in the papers seem very ordinary."

NME contacted Superintendent Winkley at Twickenham Police HQ, from where the raids were co-ordinated. He claimed that the police operation had been going on "in excess of six months," and confirmed that it had been "extremely successful."

The News of the World claimed that when the case came to court, "well-known names will be mentioned including a friend of the Royal Family."

The paper's other claims that undercover detectives spent 12 months posing as members of hippie communities in the West Country were described by Winkley as "purely speculative" and the estimate that the raid "handled half the world market in LSD" as "unsubstantiated."

The Superintendent did confirm that no "senior figures" were involved, and that among the people remanded were two doctors and two chemists. He could not confirm another press statement that among those still being sought was the brother of an ex-member of the Animals.

The most puzzling factor in the whole affair is that in the experience of Britain, LSD has not been a common street drug in this country in recent years, which perhaps leads credence to reports that the epidemic was working mainly for the export market.

It seems that no-one outside the police have a clear overall picture of the true extent or nature of Operation Julia.

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PLATTERS

The Clash: Jones, Strummer, Simonon — no "politicians' fancy dress" for these chaps...



THE CLASH
The Clash (CBS)

VINYLED AFFIRMATION of the worth of The Clash. One in the face for the prejudiced, the ignorant and the complacent.

"I don't wanna hear about what the rich are doing / I don't wanna go to where the rich are going / They think they're so clever, they think they're so right / But the truth is only known... by guttersnipes."

Those sentiments, expressed in "Garage Land", are backed up in the 14 songs on the album. Jones and Strummer write with graphic perception about contemporary Great Britain urban reality as though it's suffocating them. Their frame of reference is a mirror reflection of the kind of 1977 white working-class experiences that only seem like a cliché to those people who haven't had to live through them.

Their songs don't lie. They crystallize growing up and getting out like no band ever have before. But they wear home-made battle fatigues, not Holy Man dog collars, not Politician fancy dress.

They put their emotion-wired imagery across with rock that displays an inherent sense of energy control exerted over the speeding Sound Of The Westway. They create membrane-scorching tension, a natural feel of dynamics and exhilarating rock 'n' roll excitement. They say something and they make you wanna dance.

Classic rock performs both functions. The Old Masters had that quality in another time. This generation has The Clash.

"Janie Jones" opens the album with buzzsaw staccato chords as Jones and Strummer interplay guitars over the obsessive drive of the rhythm section. Simonon joining them for an on-the-terraces chant of their anti-harmonies.

Repetitive, additive lyrics, the words howled by Strummer in his usual manner of making them discernible only to the people who should hear them — anyone who wants a riot of his own.

"Remote Control" is about the type of powers that Orwell forecast and that arrived sooner than he expected: the Tin Gods who butchered the Anarchy tour because they were terrified of something they didn't understand, didn't want to understand.

Jones occasionally sings about something he detests in such an inverted, celebratory way that the sardonic joy expresses his (and The Clash's) contempt far more effectively than any direct tirade.

"It's so grey in London Town / Panda cars crawling around / Here it comes / Eleven o'clock / Where can we go now?"

Strummer does the same and brilliantly on two of their finest songs: "London's Burning", the open wound, written in the middle of the night from a high-rise cage, and "Career Opportunities", their statement of signing-on reality.

The former is part of the frantic guided tour that Strummer gives of the futuristic slums surrounding the Westway inner-city flyover and the latter is the ecstatic shouting of the word "CAREEREEEEER!"



THE CLASH War On Inner City Front

after the bitter defiance of the lyrics:

They're gonna have to introduce conscription / They're gonna have to take away my prescription / If they wanna get me making toys / If they wanna get me where I got no choice / Career Opportunities / The ones that never knock / Every job they offer you is to keep you out the dock / Career Opportunities / The ones that never knock.

Strummer is almost incredulous as he recites a long list of nowhere jobs that they tried to sell him before eventually reaching the decision to send him away for rehabilitation.

The echo process used by producer Mickey Foote when Joe cries "OY!" shows how his production of the single and the album have about the same differential as a rabbit punch and a napalm bomb. He's done 'em proud and they were right to believe that spiritual affinity runs deeper than music biz reputation.

"White Riot" itself appears here as a furious, raw, live version, including an unexpurgated Strummer solo.

The demand for a culture of our own while retaining a respect for the heritage of others is an attitude defined in their magnificent tribute to J.A. This takes the form of a six minute version of the reggae number "Police And Thieves", the Trenchtown hit of the summer of 1976 written by Lee Perry / Junior Murvin and the only non-Strummer / Jones song on the album.

Strummer's vocal proves skin pigmentation has absolutely nothing to do with soul as Simonon's casual offbeat

base line rolls around the sparse chord chopping of Mick Jones — beautiful track and indicative of their willingness to experiment with any musical form that emotionally moves.

On either side of "Police And Thieves" are "Police Blue", a one minute 45 tribute to the method most of us don't prefer, and "48 Hours" which concerns the hedonistic horror-show of speeding through a weekend non-stop to taste as much and as many as possible before the five-day drag arrives.

"Monday's coming like a jail on wheels / You know a girl, yeah? / Well, she's bound to be rude / But 48 hours need 48 thrills / Cheap thrills / Any kind of thrills..."

The sadness and futility behind our desperate search for good times, Strummer's vocal redolent of Kerouac's Red Brick Vision; the boredom of the daytime red brick houses forever waiting behind the promise of night-time city neon. And never being able to admit to yourself that the promise is not true.

"I'm So Bored With The USA" could be taken as selective nihilism but, although Yankee Go Home is the basic gist, Strummer barks his vocal out over some fine inter-riffing with just enough sly mockery underneath the surface belligerence to keep the song out of the abyss cluttered with bands writing generalisations, platitudes and politico nursery rhymes.

"Yan-kee detectives are always on TV / Coz killers in

America work seven days a week..."

"Hate And War" is about the currency of the times we live in and the band's acceptance of the fact that violence can only be met with the same.

"I have the will to survive / I cheat if I can't win / If someone locks me out I kick my way back in / And if I get aggression I'll give 'em two-times back."

The music's not really strong enough to fully complement the lyrics of the track until Strummer takes over lead vocal from Jones near the end and, as Simonon and Jones chant the title, he cries out a few of those quasi-throwaway lines that he scatters all over the album.

"I hate Englishmen / Just as bad as wops / I hate all the blindness / I hate all the cops."

"What's My Name" and "Cheat" are both musically and lyrically Casualty Ward Rock. The first is the kind of gratuitous and random GBH that you used to inflict on the away team's supporters' personality crisis temporarily forgotten as you act like a Pig and feel like a God. Strummer is crazed as he tries to articulate the desperation of a screwed-up, wanton thug.

"What the hell is wrong with me? / I'm not who I want to be / I got nicked for fighting in the road, / The judge didn't even know... what's my name!"

And there's "Cheat" with its pessimistic dog-eat-cat lyrics, the theme as offensive as it is defensive — hurt them before they hurt you, before they can hurt the people you love.

When how you play the game isn't important, it's whether you win or not.

"I get VIOLENT when I'm fucked-up / I get SILENT when I'm drugged-up / Don't use the rules / They're not for you, they're for the fools / And you're a fool if you don't know that / You better CHEAT if you wanna survive..."

A Seventies acceptance of violence as a fact of life harnessed to a vicious treble sound taut with repressed aggression, anger and energy — the twitching speed-burn paranoia of too much sulphate in too little time screaming for an outlet.

It's the perfect noise for a song like "Deny" about getting stitched-up by a girl with a habit.

"Deny you're such a liar? / Selling your honour all over town / You said you'd given it up / Gone and kicked it in the head / You said you ain't had none for weeks / But, baby, I seen your arm / Baby, I seen your arm / Deny you're such a liar?"

The Clash have made an album that consists of some of the most exciting rock 'n' roll in contemporary music.

Whether the great mass of British Youth can get into the sometimes painful but incisive reality of what the band are about is another matter. But they chronicle our lives and what it's like to be young in the Stinking Seventies better than any other band, and they do it with style, flash and excitement. The Clash have got it all.

I urge you to get your hands on a copy of this album. The strength of the nation lies in its youth.

Tony Parsons

GROVER WASHINGTON JR. Inner City Blues (Kudu) A Secret Place (Kudu)

THE ACCEPTABLE face of funk. If the name is new, you might remember "Mister Magic", a single that caused sufficient waves in the R&B charts to get Washington name checks both in the rock and jazz fields.

The man from Buffalo, New York, plays a mellow battery of saxophones in the manner of the new West Coast laid back jazz league as opposed to the coffee table funk of brass East Coast stars, the Brecker Brothers or Donald Byrd.

In fact, funk is probably not a suitable introductory description of Grover's style, as that has current overtones of ersatz big-boom, burger-joint top leaguers like George Benson at one end of the market and the tight fusion variations ad nauseam of Corea, Clarke and The Headhunters at the other.

Instead Washington is strictly a jazz, with a background of paying dues with Don Gardner and Johnny Smith and a desire to blow as melodically as mid-Sixties Miles and Coltrane — who didn't need no claviness to get down with a vengeance.

"Inner City Blues" is a release from '71 and marks an early date with producer Creed Taylor, a partnership that has lasted.

The track choices reflect Washington's approach, with class interpretations being the order of the day. Unlike the mass produced new wave sax shouters, he has soul. Two Marvin Gaye numbers, the title track and "Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)", don't prove that by definition but the playing does: able support and texture from bassist Ron Carter, super smooth guitarist Eric Gale and a host of band members that includes Idris Muhammad, Airto Moreira and Thad Jones.

The sound gells; it isn't a session hack job. My only grouse is that the strings occasionally intrude, they're thoughtful, but Bob James' arrangements are too safely cultured. Only "Ain't No Sunshine" doesn't lend itself easily to the mood. The tight jazz pure and simple of "Until It's Time For You To Go" and "I Loves You Porgy" are blue notes par excellence.

"A Secret Place" is far better all round, a real progression with the excess weight trimmed down to a neat ten piece.

The '77 Washington doesn't tell no lies — four long work outs utilising band material and Hancock's "Dolphin Dance" — slow, stately adventuresome rhythms that fans of Hathaway, The Crusaders and Merl Saunders can easily handle.

Gale plays a lot like Larry Carlton, so no complaints there, while Ralph Macdonald and Harvey Mason provide slinky percussive leads for bassist Anthony Jackson to bite on. Washington and pianist Dave Grusin maintain the traditional element, but there are plenty of hard angles to prevent the mixture sticking.

If you're looking for something to stretch out the late hours then Grover Washington is as seductive as they get. A very pleasant alternative.

Max Bell