

Trouser Press

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AMERICA'S ONLY BRITISH ROCK MAGAZINE



**Cleaning Out
BOWIE's Closet**

**JOHN ENTWISTLE
Blows His Own Horn**

**BRITISH NEW WAVE:
Rods, Pistols,
Danned, Clash**

EDDIE JOBSON

All this and Australia Two

Reviews

Auctions

**WIN A STIFF!
Contest inside**

SEX PISTOLS

EDDIE and the HOT RODS

THE BRITISH NEW WAVE

or
**Will there always be
 an England?**

The DAMNED

The VIBRATORS

GENERATION X

The BLUES BROTHERS

Dole-queue rock explored
 by our London correspondents

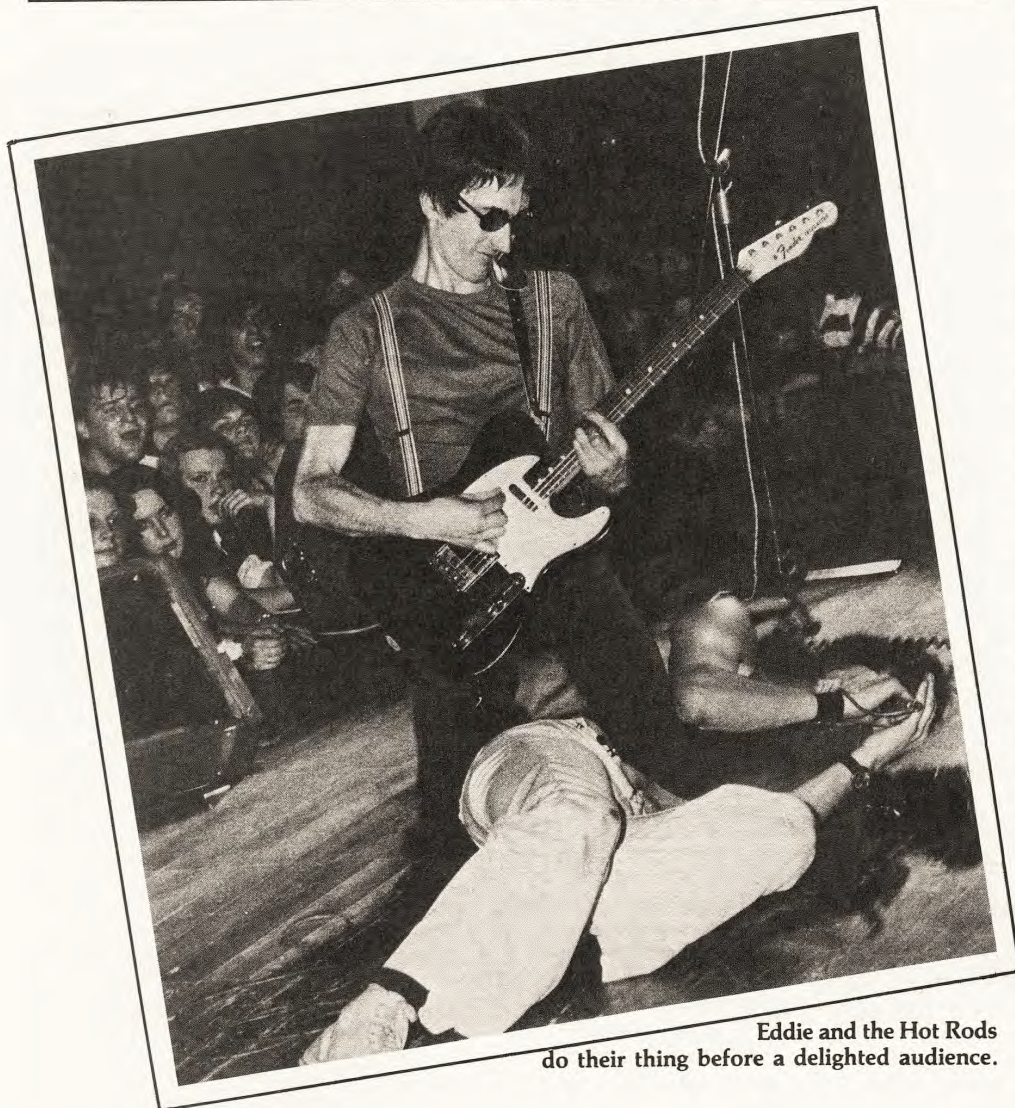
By Pete Silverton and Paul Rambali

"Sgt. Pepper" might have been a great album but it also killed rock 'n' roll. It wiped out the singles market and marked the beginning of a period dominated by album sides filled with pretensions and indulgences.

In London, the first signs of a reaction against this was Pub Rock in 1972. The phrase itself was only a journalistic cliché but at least the music returned to short sharp songs clocking in at under three minutes. Brinsley Schwarz' Nick Lowe was a great song-writer (and someone who'll crop up later in our story). Ducks Deluxe marked the first, if balding, awakening of a "punk" consciousness, and Dr. Feelgood was just a helluva fine rock 'n' roll band.

But, because it never reached a large audience (the Feelgoods didn't hit the charts over here until late '75/'76), pub rock was a false dawn and it wasn't until January 1976 when Nick Kent wrote an article in the NME lauding the New York punk explosion that things started moving again. Then in April came the mercenary fiasco of the five-day Stones bash at Earl's Court. They were no more than the shell of what was expected and a sizeable section of the audience felt like animated puppets at the end of strings joggled by the music industry hierarchy. If Kent's article showed there were alternatives, the Stones' gig gave a lot of people the impetus to go out and find them nearer home. To wit, the Ramones came over to tour.

Suddenly (or not so suddenly, actually) a whole new wave of bands were upon us. They drew shamelessly from the teen-oriented attack of the mid-sixties English bands and the over-the-top naked energy of Detroit heavy metal, added their own songs and produced a form of rock 'n' roll that was an expression of frustration with current English social conditions. With the



Eddie and the Hot Rods
 do their thing before a delighted audience.



Sex Pistols celebrate being dropped from their record contract.

highest level of unemployment since the thirties (especially severe amongst kids just leaving school) and widespread uncertainty about the future economic stability of the country, that frustration takes a stance of antagonism towards the powers that be (even if the highest expression of that is often only heaving half a brick through the window of the nearest rock star's Rolls).

Not that the bands themselves would always put it that way. The Clash might. But Sex Pistols' vocalist, Johnny Rotten says, "We're not into music. We're into anarchy." Taking that as a founding statement of the movement, the English rock press went overboard with extensive coverage varying from gratuitous slurs on the bands' musical abilities and personal morals to low-grade post-Marcuse sociology to "this is the only future of rock 'n' roll" gush. The rock press has settled down to a more balanced view in the last couple of months. The nationals, however, are something else again as you'll read about in the Pistols' piece.

Most of the bands are truly new wave having sprung up out of nowhere in the last six months, though some of them have been around longer. Eddie and the Hot Rods have been playing for a couple of years. Joe Strummer was the founder and leading light of the seminal 101'ers. And the semi-legendary London SS spawned Mick Jones (the Clash), Brian James (the Damned) and Tony James (Generation X)—the band never got off the ground but they're supposed to have had a wild version of "Slow Death."

Bands that have just sprung up are Siouxsie and the Banshees, Eater (average age 15), Subway Sect, the Slits, the Wet Lepers, Slaughter and the Dogs and Manchester's Buzzcocks. They have spawned

their own fanzines, notably "Sniffin' Glue" and the brand-new "Bondage"; even their own club (as so many venues are closed to them), the Roxy in Covent Garden.

In case you must know (and why not?) the dance craze currently "sweeping" town is, kid you not, the Pogo. The dancer's purpose is, as someone else so beautifully put it, to launch himself or herself vertically towards the ceiling with maximum velocity and let everything else take its natural course. Chris Spedding, trend spotter extraordinaire, even put out a record about it—"Pogo Dancing".

And, once you've got your dance steps together, it's time to start thinking about your threads. And, if you want to be the star of the night, you'll be sporting some sort of S/M gear from Malcolm McLaren's King's Road shop, Sex (preferably stolen), and odd bits and pieces picked up from jumble sales all held together with bondage straps or safety pins (although they're probably a thing of the past by now) and topped off with enough make up to hide Mae West's age. Or, if you want to be truly original, it's only a matter of inventing your own clothes. Fancy a "Chuck Berry is Dead" t-shirt, anyone?

All these bands are singles-oriented, the single having become once again a viable force. No small thinks for this are due Nick Lowe's "So It Goes" and the surprising success of the other Stiff and Chiswick releases (and also, to be more cynical, due to the fact that nobody can afford to buy albums on impulse anymore—they're too expensive).

Don't believe these bands are no more than CBGB copyists. Beyond the superficial lunacies of their names there's some real rock 'n' roll.

Sex Pistols

Would you believe me if I told you that towards the end of last year one band managed to make themselves known to almost the entire populace of Britain, a feat probably achieved by no one since the Beatles? The Sex Pistols did it, got themselves branded as corrupters of youth on the front page of every national daily. It wasn't deliberate, though, and they probably regret it as it caused the virtual collapse of their first national tour. The Pistols appeared for a short interview on a current affairs TV programme hosted by Bill Grundy. That they appeared at all was surprising, considering they didn't have a record in the shops at the time. They were, and still are, the spearhead of a whole cluster of Punk Rock/New Wave bands that have been given widespread (and possibly premature) coverage in the rock press here.

Bill Grundy has a sarcastic tone at the best of times but he was really on form that Wednesday. He set out to make the Pistols look like a bunch of stupid kids, being as condescending and sardonic as possible. The group chose not to be fodder for him and he was looking progressively more foolish. Then someone in the band muttered "shit" under his breath. Grundy seized his chance.

"What?"

"Nothing, a rude word, next question."

"No, no, what was the rude word?"

"Shit."

"Was it really, good heavens, you frightened me to death."

The rest of the interview was reduced to goading by Grundy and more swearing from the band.

The following day everybody knew who the Sex Pistols were. The dailies had taken "Anarchy in the UK," the odd fight at Pistols' gigs and the TV debacle and turned "punk" into a fascist teen army with violent Nazi overtones—cheap sensationalism, but nonetheless uncomfortable topics in England.

What's this got to do with rock 'n' roll? It's beginning to sound like politics. It is politics. The Sex Pistols have chosen an inflammatory political statement as their first release. Some of it is just shock tactics; it contradicts itself and the political theory behind it is questionable. But it is a forceful statement, driven by volatile, adrenochrome rock like you haven't heard in years; a reaction to the decadence and apathy that has infected a lot of other things besides music recently.

RIGHT.....NOW

I am an antichrist

I am an anarchist

Don't know what I want but I know how to get it

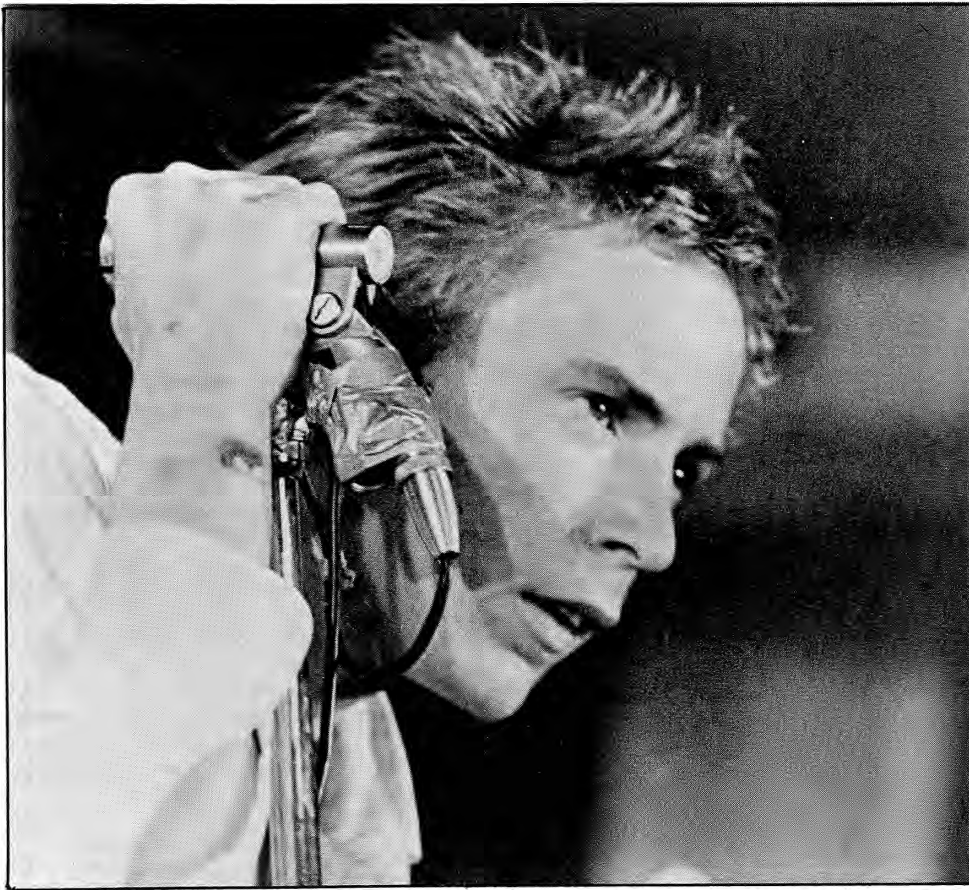
I wanna destroy passers-by

I wanna be anarchy

Anarchy in the UK

Coming for you, coming for me

Whether the Pistols will be catalysts for any social change remains to be seen. They've come on stronger than anyone has ever dared and been rewarded so far with being unable to play—most promoters won't book them. The single entered the charts at 43 (quite an achievement) and



Sex Pistols singer Johnny Rotten shows off his cigarette burns—way to go, Johnny!

didn't show the following week because EMI (their label and one of the three biggest) suspended it for a while following the TV appearance. On stage the Bowie influence is less discernible but they still sound like the Who when Daltrey was a Young Man. Steve Jones's guitar is pure rock 'n' roll energy and getting better, Glen Matlock (bass) and Paul Cook (drums) provide the

pumping rhythm and Johnny Rotten the twisted, snarling voice. Do anything necessary to lay your hands on the single; it's the most important British record of '76. And one of the best.

—PR
[Editor's note: On January 7, 1977 EMI officially announced that the Sex Pistols were no longer on the label. No further details were available at press time.]

The Damned

If you like the Ramones the Damned will be a treat. The Ramones know their limitations and stick well within them. The Damned might be aware of theirs but don't appear to let it worry them. Play loud, hard, and fast, the criteria is "the attitude." "The kids see us and they think, hey, that could be me up on that stage, I could be as good as that," says Brian James, founder member, guitarist and main songwriter. Formed at the beginning of the summer from the debris of a band Nick Kent was mentor to, the Damned are Rat Scabies on drums, Captain Sensible (Ray Burns) on bass, Dave Vanium on vocals and the aforementioned Brian James. Their rise to fame came suddenly on the night of the near notorious "punk rock festival" at the 100 Club. They had the dubious honor of being the band on stage when the fighting broke out, which they were in no way responsible for. At that time I felt and wrote that they were the nadir of an uninspiring evening.

Since then I've had an attack of remorse; giving the Damned another chance, I went to see them at the Hope and Anchor, and they were entertaining, noisy and showed lots of spirit. Rat played powerful drums, Captain Sensible and Brian James played appallingly and Dave Vanium stalked about the stage with the required menace, but I still wasn't persuaded to think of them as anything more than an amusement.

Trouble is, their single "New Rose" vastly exaggerates them; its infectious chorus kicks like hell. This could be explained by the presence of Nick Lowe as producer and would be borne out by the fact that they mimed to it for a promo film being made that night at the Hope.

If the Damned ever make it to your town don't let good taste stand in your way, go out and have a laugh.

—PR

THE DAMNED



"We're not into music. We're into anarchy." —Sex Pistols

Eddie and the Hot Rods

To paraphrase Barrie Masters, second encore time at an Eddie and the Hot Rods gig is like being at the Stretford End when Denis Law puts the lads 3-2 up in the 89th minute of a cup-tie. Hot and sweaty band. Hot, sweaty, and jumping crowd. Maximum R&B 1976 style.

The Rods are definitely a force to be reckoned with. They've got their own night-on fanatical crowd. Their album is supposed to have shipped 20,000 in the first week. The Roundhouse was sold out for their first large-venue London appearance (which, unfortunately, was severely marred by an atrocious PA that cut in and out like the vocals on a slice of dub reggae—no matter, their crowd went wild anyway).

And they're such nice boys. The acceptable face of punk. Singer Barrie Masters especially. He's Canvey Island Tom Sawyer, the cliché of the bad boy with a heart of gold. If he ever wants, or has to, give up rocking he could probably still pull the birds working out in a gym or become a PT teacher and flash his muscles to impressionable nymphoids. With his onstage headsprings, forward rolls and daring-young-man-on-the-20-foot-PA-stacks leaps, it's a bit like watching someone practice for a Scout jamboree.

Paul Gray (bass) and Steve Nicol (drums) make up a competent rhythmic skeleton fleshed out by rhythm 'n' lead axe-man Dave Higgs, who's straight-ahead powerful but should relax a bit; his playing sometimes topples over into flashy Wilko Johnson nervous-breakdown frenetics.

Probably the last band to rise out of the London pub circuit, their roots were the same Thames estuary wasteland that produced Dr. Feelgood (Dave Higgs used to play with Lee and Wilko in a local band called the Fix). They spend the first year or so of their existence playing dead-in-the-hole Essex clubs, developing a manic stage show as a reaction borne out of frustration with audience apathy.

With a bit of help from the Feelgoods they got a gig at the Kensington, a London pub, and moved onto the regular metropolitan pub and club circuits roundabout, eventually being rewarded for their energetic determination by copping a contract with Island Records.

As each of the Rods' releases sold more than the company expected (*pace* Jim Green's scathing reviews), release dates were brought forward and, after two successful singles, a brace of Top of the Pops appearances and an EP recorded live at the Marquee, they schlepped out the best front cover of '76 wrapped around their album *Teenage Depression* right at the butt end of their super successful Winter Freeze-Out Tour of Britain.

They're making money, the album's in the charts and it's just what we cynics expected: a pale reflection of their live shows. To be unscrupulously fair, they shamelessly mash Joe Tex's "Show Me," pump out some bone-splitting rock 'n' roll and get down a potentially great single in "On the Run" (if they went back into the studio and

squeezed it into a sensible three minutes)—it's a teenybopper "Fingerprint File," complete with R.D. Laing on rhythm guitar.

Personally, I can't get too excited about the Rods but they are a pretty fine rock 'n' roll-shake-your-ass band, they've got stage presence (Barrie sported an Invisible Man



Steve White

The Clash

who not only had Patti Smith jump up and "play" with them at one gig, and prompted the comment from Lisa Robinson that they'd rejuvenated her faith in rock 'n' roll, but also happen to be the best band in the world right now.

Okay, so I'm biased. I'm a long-term fan of Joe Strummer (voice and coarse-as-coarse-can-be rhythm guitar). I'm also biased by natural temperament towards any aggregation which has "three people who all wanna be the star and have such big egos they all bust a gut trying to outdo each other," as Mick Jones (lead guitar, complementary vocals and third place in the Sounds Annual Keith Richard lookalike contest) put it.

The Clash are London late '76 boiled down into a one-inch concentrated stock cube. Rasta riot in the Gate, September Mas? Tapper Zukie tell his bredrin it's "Ten against One, Natty 'gainst Babylon"? The Clash come right back and replay it a few days later from white kid on the dole or just holding down a scumbag job point of view:

*Black people got a lot of problems
But they don't mind throwing a brick
But white men go to school
Where they teach you how to be thick
So everybody does what they're told to
And eats supermarket soul food
I wanna white riot*

I wanna riot of my own.

They've got a lot of other great songs which also creatively mirror the dead-end-

wraparound bandages mask for "On the Run" at the Roundhouse), and I ain't about to knock anybody that brings their degree of energy and enjoyment to music.

Even more importantly, I like 'em because their dance, sing, stun the audience stance certainly helped pave the way for....

street-kid universe, like their already neo-classics, "Janie Jones" and "1977."

But enough lyrics. They'd only prove that Joe's still the great metaphysical imagist he was when he wrote the 101'ers concluding statement, "Clang, Clang, Go the Jail Guitar Doors," and on to the one true kitsch masterwork in the band, Paul Simonon's bass. It's black with a perspex back, flecked with paint like a corporation urinal wall and... he's got the notes painted on the frets (in pink!—the color of '76) in case he forgets which notes are which. He's only been playing a few months, you see, and claims he achieved his fresh originality by playing along to reggae records because "they've got interesting bass lines."

The drummer's a moot point. They haven't settled on one full-time yet. The early standby, Terry Chimes, was replaced (by mutual consent) for the Pistols' tour by Rob Harper. But, all that really matters is that in Joe, Mick and Paul you've got a front line that'd put to shame the 1925 Muscovite troika for on the line aggression and ability.

They've not yet got a record contract, but they're being assiduously wooed by Polydor and should have signed by the time you read this. Their garage-owning manager, Bernie, and Pistols manager/safety-pin-and-general-schmutter-salesman, Malcolm McLaren, are reportedly intent on conquering the world by having their bands sign to two different major labels and then setting the labels at each other's throats,

THE VIBRATORS (see next page)



Steve White

Beatles vs. Stones style.

—PS

The Vibrators

The Vibrators are only a punk/new wave band by dint of an insidious process of self-adoption. Formed from the remnants of the good-timey Bazooka Joe and bits of what has since become the Lee Kosmin Band, they played an early residency at Holloway Road's Lord Nelson (that's where Dr. Feelgood got their first break) with a solid, enjoyable set of rock 'n' roll classics, the Stooges' "1969" and few of their own numbers.

Feeling their age (a disgusting, for London late '76, average of 29 years old), sensing the possibilities of the up 'n' coming bands and genuinely liking the music, they tightened up the act, joined up with Chris Spedding (mostly by chance) and got a record out.

It's the de rigueur punk hip chic thing to slam their single ("We Vibrate") but to me it's a more than passable piece of Mickie Most (he produced it) class pop with some added basic raunch courtesy of the band: Knox, lead guitar; John Ellis, second guitar; Pat Collier, bass; Johnny Wheels, drums.

The Vibrators got themselves stuck amidst all the Pistols TV furor and have also been banned from various venues—for no other reason than the fact that they have claimed, perhaps ingenuously, to be a punk band.

Do they deserve it, you ask? I don't think so because their shows are still innocently fun and they play some good songs. But

then again... I'm open to arguments.

—PS



Steve White

Generation X

Generation X are worth more than a passing mention because they're certainly the

best of the very latest wave of bands (class of December '76). They used to be called Chelsea until they junked the singer, Jean October, and reformed with a new guitarist, Bob Andrews, the other band members being Billy Idol, vocals, Tony James on bass and John Towe on drums. They've played two or three gigs so far and have in "Ready Steady Go" a song that'll make Greg Shaw cry his eyes out:

*I fell in love with the King's Road
I fell in love with Juke Box Jury
I fell in love with Cathy McGowan.*

Definitely a band to watch out for, the only obstacle in their way being the ridiculous advance they're apparently asking from record companies.

—PS

BRITISH PUNK DISCOGRAPHY

(all releases are UK only)

SEX PISTOLS

Anarchy in the UK / I Wanna Be Me EMI 2566

THE DAMNED

New Rose / Help LP in progress Stiff BUY 6

EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS

Writing on the Wall / Cruisin' in the Lincoln
Wooly Bully / Horseplay (Weary of the Schmaltz)
96 Tears / Get Out of Denver / Gloria / Satisfaction
Teenage Depression / Shake
TEENAGE DEPRESSION

Island WIP 6270
Island WIP 6306
Island IEP 2
Island WIP 6354
Island ILPS 9456

THE VIBRATORS

We Vibrate / RAK

The New Model T

The official Trouser Press T-shirt is now ready. We don't have them...but we know who does! If you need a gorgeous piece of (let's not be modest) art to wear on your very own bod, then hurry up and order one from the only place that has them:

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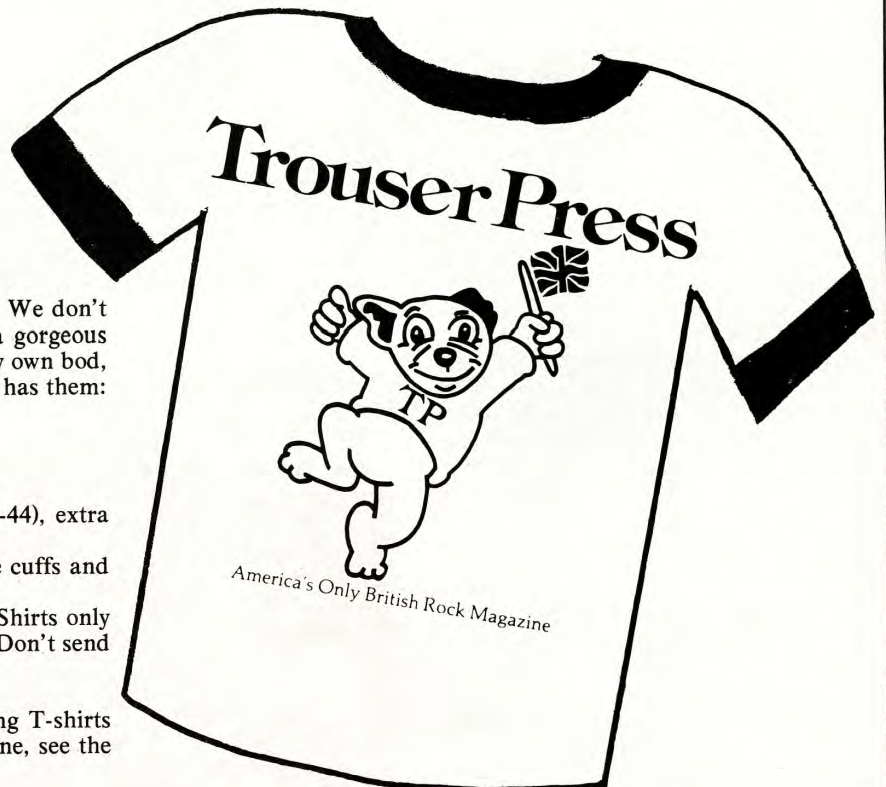
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Trans-Oceanic Trousers Press

Room 822

147 West 42 Street

New York, N.Y. 10036

Telephone (212) 354-4376

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Staff

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Managing Editor
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Associate Editor
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Art Director
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Intro

Welcome to round eighteen in the Trousers saga. This issue marks the close of three years of Trousers Pressdom, a feat so ludicrous we won't believe it until the time comes to mark our next anniversary. The entire imprecise history of this magazine is available in TPP 3, so we won't go into it again. Suffice it to say that whatever may have prompted us to start this thing in the first place has very little to do with what keeps it going. What keeps us (excuse me) pressing on at the moment however is the sudden rash of multi-partite articles that necessitate future issues to finish them up in. Trousers Press 19 therefore will contain

part 2 of the Bowie article featuring a complete discography of obscure Bowie recordings, as well as the third installment of the Australian Underview.

For this issue we've assembled a fairly interesting set of articles: the fascinating British scene gets a thorough going over as does the career of one Edward Jobson, violinist to the stars. An enlightening interview with John Alec for you bass/Who freaks, and a giveaway Stiff contest for those astute readers who care to enter.

Anyway, keep those cards and letters coming in, and give us a call sometime. The office may be small, but it's homey.

—Ira

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