

The Music Playing In My Head

by Mike Ferguson

Whenever a major development or deviation takes place in rock music, the change of direction is usually generated by those few artists who are the true spirits and life-forces of the art itself. After two years of experimentation with oscillators, ragas, and whatnot, rock needed to re-discover its roots; it was forced to re-examine its direction and seek another. In its several mutations, rock had somehow lost the sense of vibrancy it once possessed. And it was the Beatles, the Stones, and Dylan, among others, who felt this need and brought rock back home, revitalizing pure, honest-to-God rock and roll.

David Crosby, Stephen Stills, and Graham Nash, three major rock artists, also realized this necessity to get back to its roots. Each came from other groups, who in their own way had contributed to the growth of rock as an art form. The trio banded together to make music free from ego-trips, mis-directed experimentation, and hassles that had besieged their previous experiences in bands. Crosby was one of the original Byrds. Stills was an integral member of Buffalo Springfield, one of rock's most creative groups. Nash was, for five years, a member of the British Hollies. Crosby, Stills, and Nash was formed out of a collective energetic drive to create basic, honest music.

The group spent several months living, writing, and playing together in Still's Topanga Canyon home. Early this summer they released their first LP as a group, a smooth, multi-textured collection of folk, country, and rock songs. Titled simply *Crosby, Stills, and Nash* (Atlantic SD8229) the album is one of the year's finest. Rich with impeccable harmonies and fluid instrumental patterns, the album is a conscious effort to make simple and pure rock music; which by its nature, contains elements of both the folk and country idioms.

The nine songs on the LP depict the different style of each member, but also displays cohesiveness as a group effort. The song-writing talents are well distributed; Nash and Crosby wrote two each, Stills penned four, and Crosby and Stills (along with Paul Kanter of Jefferson Airplane, who could not receive composition credit because of copyright hassles) collaborated on one song.

Nash's songs are light, campy, whimsical. His are the least striking on the LP, but they are the type one finds himself humming all day. "Marakesh Express" is similar to Graham's work with the Hollies. It is a great car song. "Pre Road Downs", despite its title is a happy song, containing the impossible lines: "Hotels and midnight coaches, don't forget to hide the roaches".

"Guinivere" and "Long Time Comin'" are both Crosby songs. They are a study in contrasts. The first is a ballad, happy-sad, and very Byrd-like. "Long Time Comin'" is much more intense with political and social implications. The Crosby-Stills-Kanter composition is "Wooden Ships", a beautiful anthem of despair for the present and hope for the future: "Take a sister by the hand/ we're leaving this foreign land/ maybe we can smile again/ we are leaving/ you don't need us/ you don't need us."

But the real power behind this group is Steve Stills. He is their spirit, their soul, their force. He sings lead on most songs, plays lead guitar, and also dubbed in organ and bass parts for the LP. His songs are exceptional vignettes, containing incredible short, overpowering phrases. Of his four songs here, "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" (written for a rock and roll lady, Judy Collins), is the most evocative. The music shifts in style, mood and tempo through out as Steve's throaty voice quivers around the cool, crisp harmony of Crosby and Nash. The words are formed in a countrified stream-of-consciousness fashion, with the singers scattered emotions shifting as often as the music.

The song is, in all phases of execution, a masterpiece and it, along with his other work, marks Stills as one of contemporary rock's major songwriters.

This is a wonderful LP, one that does not require a certain mood to be listened to. There is not a poor cut on the record. It is an honest, free album made by three artists who understand the communicative power of rock and roll. If this is the style of music we can expect in the future, the wait was worthwhile indeed.

(NOTE: About a month ago, Neil Young, also a former member of Buffalo Springfield, joined C, S, & N. They are now known as Crosby Stills, Nash, and Young. A new LP is expected shortly and a concert tour is successfully in progress. Also, new things by the Beatles, Byrds, Kinks, Incredible String Band, Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver, Led Zeppelin, Flying Burrito Brothers, and the Youngbloods are all due out this month. The Band and Joplin are already out. Keep listening, it's getting better all the time.)

So to those of you lucky enough to be mentioned here, Super Sheep thanks you.....(and he's probably the only one!)

SON OF THE SUPERSHEEP

(from page 4)

For once wouldn't it be great NOT to hear: "the short comings of our society are to blame". For once I'd like to hear one of them say: "Hey guys, you know we really botched that one". (Important note to new students: AT N.C.S.A. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO FAIL.... AT ANYTHING. Another important rule: IF YOU DO, NEVER ADMIT IT.)

May we suggest a simple experiment? Simply pick five faculty or staff members at random; approach them with the question: "Is this a school or a performing arts center"? Another question: "When does this place cease being one to become the other"? If they don't hedge around it, you probably will get five different answers.

We need one person. We need to give him complete authority. He's gotta know what to do with it.

Is that so completely impossible? Is it because one is afraid to jepordize one's security by saying "There's something wrong here." Come on faculty; the pay ain't that great!

Well, it's simple really. It's got to happen or somebody is gonna say to somebody in Raleigh, "Hey, baby,

take a look at dis!" Or some tax payer is gonna get ticked having to sweep out garbage from a dorm room before his son can set his French Horn down. Or it's gonna take one student who has finally had enough. That's all there is to it. They'll then push a little button at the legislature and the ground underneath the campus will j it open right up and swallow the whole dump.

Of course, we might be lucky. If we are, nobody will do anything but gripe a little, and lose weight, or not get enough sleep and sit around on the grass when there's nothing else to do singing: "Where have all the flowers gone"? Yes sir, we might be lucky at that.

Some one, a visitor to N.C.S.A. summed it up nicely: "They call it an arts school", he said "but it's pure fraud. Look at the building plans! The last thing on the list is a concert hall and theatre". Something to kick around isn't it? Not logical? Think a moment. If you do, Super Sheep might not be needed too much longer.