

# MUSIC PLAYING IN MY HEAD

by  
Mike  
Ferguson

"You had me on your trip right from the start" - *I Knew I'd Want You/Byrds*

A young lady I'm quite fond of (and whose opinions concerning rock I hold in high esteem) considers the Byrds to be the finest group in rock. She came to this conclusion this past summer after immersing herself in all eight Byrd LP's and seeing the group give two superb concerts within a month. I don't know that I'm ready to declare the Byrds the best in rock. I don't think that way, but I will agree that they certainly are (and have been) one of the finest and most consistent bands around. I know that there is rarely a time when I'm not in the mood for the Byrds and their version of *Mr. Tambourine Man* still puts me back together whenever I'm strung-out.

If you're not a believer, inspect the history of the group. Five years ago they came out of Los Angeles singing their electrified riff of Dylan's classic folk-rock poem, the first to grace the stage-nated airwaves. They helped to begin the American rock renaissance, as they were the first U.S. group to make an impact after the Beatles and the first to inject "meaningful" lyrics (i.e., which concerned something more than the typical boy-girl teenage love la-

ments) into the Top Forty. (To the occasional amusement and argument of friends, I've always insisted that the Byrds' first LP was a superior product to the Beatles' first). Just think back to the first time you turned on to the Byrds' trip. There was a lot of innocence and goo vibrations filling the air those days and a sense of expectancy which has passed. Things have changed since the Byrds first sang *Mr. Tambourine Man* and *Turn Turn Turn*. Those were the days, my friend.

Of course, the Byrds have changed too. Nowadays, they are into country rock, which is proper because they always were explorers, having initiated experiments with several previously "non-rock" styles, such as electronics, ragas, etc.; and country music has always flitted around Byrds music. There were five originally. The lady I spoke of earlie saw only one of the original Byrds on stage this summer. Five years ago was a long time. Back then it was Roger (nee Jim) McGuinn, Gene Clark, David Crosby, Chris Hillman, and Mike Clarke. Those names should sound familiar even today. Clark is one half of the *Dillard and Clark Expedition*; Crosby has just joined with *Stills, Nash and Young*; Hillman and Clarke are *Flying Burrito Brothers* (along with Gram Parsons, who

put in six months as a Byrd and was a main inspiration behind their *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* LP). I can't think of another group who has produced as much talent. And Paul Williams once wrote in *Crawdaddy*: "Once a Byrd, always a Byrd".

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Note: Although it is not my general policy or practice to defent what I write, I feel compelled to say something about the reviews I wrote of *A Streetcar Names Desire* and *Mr. Roberts*, which appeared in the October 21 issue of the *Essay*.

Unfortunately, in writing these reviews, I allowed myself to get sucked into the axiom that anything and everything we do here is great. It is not and in my reviews I failed to react to my responsibility as a critic. And thus, the reviews fail the school, the productions themselves, and myself. This is not to say the plays were without merit. To the contrary, both productions that I reviewed provided several fine moments. However, as I chose to negate the lesser aspects of the productions and concentrate on its merits, both reviews ended up by being only condescending and patronizing bull-shit.

This kind of writing serves no purpose and utterly fails the very nature of the art. There were reasons why this happened, but they are too detailed to list here. Besides I should know better. May I conclude that in the future I would hope that I (or whoever reviews such productions) can review plays with the honesty and integrity that is their due and the critic's responsibility.

Mike Ferguson

# IN ANGER OF DEATH



by David Wood

"When I wanted to know what it was like to be *schizophrenic*, I spent a lot of time with *schizophrenics*". Why not do the same with terminal patients to discover what happens to a human being who faces death? Dr. Kubler-Ross, a psychiatrist from Chicago, writes about this amazing "experiment" in her book, *On Death and Dying* (Macmillan; 6.95)

Through detailed interviews with 150 terminal patients Dr. Kubler-Ross has determined that a person facing death goes through 5 stages: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptances. (In that order.)

The patients, themselves, were perfectly willing to talk to interviewers as they lay dying. Resistance came from the patients' doctors, sometimes in forms of overt hostility. But once the breach was made, the interviews went smoothly and proved greatly beneficial to the entire project.

One observation: "It is not death they fear, but dying, a process almost as painful to see as to endure, and one on which society - and even medicine - so readily turns its back".

Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and finally Acceptance. Funny, it seems to me that the North Carolina School of the Arts is going through the same stages. There may be consolation in the fact that theatre is the "fabulous invalid", dying each night the curtains close only to be reborn the following night. Even if this was true, how often can one die and be revived without beginning to show signs of the nearness of death?

A part of those emotions, or rather stages, was Anger. That is the savior, I believe, if there is enough of it in a constructive form here at NCSA, we've got a chance. Anger that a magnificent potential is not being reached is a justified anger. Perhaps if, and when it becomes fury, things will begin to happen.

Until that time, content yourself with one of the following: Denial, Bargaining, Depression or Acceptance. The more I look at these choices, the more I tend toward Anger, and the more I tend toward Anger, the more it builds to fury. The more we build to fury, the better are the chances NCSA will survive.

to change something, such as a war or a system, we are going to have to be prepared to make sacrifices. We must be willing to run the risk which accompanies our actions; we must be aware of the consequences. In order for an event such as the Moratorium to be effective, it should be carried out. Which means wearing black arm bands every day. It means being constantly aware - and constantly making others aware - of the horror and stupidity of this and all war. It means a fulltime involvement, which also may mean risking our own personal comfort. Being opposed to this war can no longer mean just rapping down Nixon in our rooms, it's become a life-style.

Perhaps we can find the necessary strength together and perhaps we can, in our own way, make our lives a daily commitment. But think about it, it's a lot more serious than we ever cared to imagine. We can end this war, but it's going to take you and me - each and every one of us - doing our part every day. Not just October 15th.