

THE MUSIC PLAYING

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The songs are Davies' impressions of England as seen by the young radical today. They contain humor, wit, charm, tragedy, and drama. Above all, *Arthur* is good, clean rock and roll done Kinks' style, which you may learn, is unlike any other. (Of course, *Arthur* will draw the inevitable comparisons with the Who's rock-opera, *Tommy*; but it's a waste of time, because *Tommy*, despite all its shortcomings, is a major work and an entity unto itself. Neither *Arthur* nor *Tommy* should not be judged in terms of comparisons, but on its own merits).

Although *Arthur* isn't completely successful (as a unified work), most of the songs work and are delights. Ray Davies is a rock composer equal to a Lennon or McCartney, a Dylan or a Townshend. Like these major names, Ray's field of vision has no limits, he is open to all human experience, although he chooses to relate from a British point of view. But the musical pictures Davies offers are just

as evocative and important as those of any writer in rock.

For example, *Some Mother's Son* is an anti-war song. This is how Davies expresses his viewpoint: "Some mother's son lies in a field/back home they put his picture in a frame/but all dead soldiers look the same". I can't think of any protest song that makes a stronger statement. And around this lyric, Davies wraps a pristine harpsichord and a lilting guitar which make love to each other; the effect is shattering. Davies' voice on all cuts is superb. He really can't sing ("Ah, what is so rare but a Kink in tune"), but it's the way he says things, the intonation and inflection his words receive that make his performances remarkable.

Other fine cuts include *Mr. Churchill Says*, which is unbearable funny. Davies' voice is masterful as he delivers Sir Winston's famous "We shall fight..." speech. In a few short moments, the Kinks destroy centuries of stiff upper-

lip British tradition. Davies' delicate sense of the past is evident on *Young and Innocent Days*, a tender, sensitive recalling of his younger years. But Ray doesn't allow sentimentality to infiltrate. The song is filled with reminders, suggestions, small, sad scenes which gently fill your head with longing. His phrases open memories the way the smell of a bakery can bring back a glimpse of something long forgotten. He doesn't bring back things as much as he does feelings.

The LP's final song is *Arthur*, which is just plain old rousing rock and roll that screams to be danced to. It's a rave-up, typical of the old days and it ends with a great chant, the Kinks, representing the young telling their defeated elders: "Yeah we love you and we want to help you, don't you know it?" The song is bursting with such energy and gusto that it threatens to fly right off the turntable. I suppose that this cut will remind many of the finale from *Hair!* and *Tommy's* powerful last song. But Davies has kept his creation fresh and vital, having plagiarized only the spirit of these two works. The end result is Ray's - and the Kinks' - own unique statement. (A word should be said about Davies' production of this record; great, absolutely great!)

Arthur is an LP I urge each of you to hear sometime soon. The music is nearly always perfect rock and the Kinks are one group you

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STUDENT LETTER

Since the very beginning of school this year, I have sensed something ominous; something which might just be the downfall of NCSA. (Not the institution, but our school.) It wasn't until I was reading last week's *Essay* that I began to understand why I have this feeling. In previous years, this school has survived upon the joint involvement of the students and administration. This year there seems to be no involvement anywhere, much less joint involvement. It looks to me like most people just don't care, and the few who do, feel that it isn't worth fighting for because there is so little interest in the school. May I add my theory as to why there is so much indifference. Students seem to be too wrapped up in themselves to feel that they have anything left to give this zoo, which is the general opinion of NCSA this year. But did anyone ever consider that if he did anything constructive to make the school better, he might feel better and could then be involved in something other than his own personal frustrations?

In reading the *Essay* this year, I have noticed that it seems to be written by only a very few people. This, I think, is cause for concern. It's not that I mind reading articles these few people write, it's just that I'm wondering where everybody else is.

The *Essay* is only one example of the apathy displayed by students and administration this year. Not directly related to the school, but certainly involving student partici-

ation, was the Vietnam Moratorium. Where was everyone on October 15? The people who did take part, which as far as I can tell were not all that many, were not really sure what their opinions of the war are. When one of our students was criminally attacked on campus, why did it take so long to provide communication and security at the new drom site? What has happened to the social activities which were at least somewhat satisfactory in frequency last year? Everyone is climbing the walls from boredom, and yet very few people have shown interest in working on a social activities committee. Unless I'm just plain unaware and missed it, there was little, if any, publicity for the orchestra concert. A lot of people are complaining about the length and frequency of rehearsals and just plain daily work to develop as artists. Well, if that's the way the majority of the students feel, I don't see the purpose of this school.

As Jim Bobbitt said in his review of the orchestra concert in last week's *Essay*: the basic problem is not with the higher-ups, although authority certainly does play a part. The major problem is disinterest on the students' part and the major factor in removing this problem is interest and activity of the students. There has been an unusual amount of complaining since school opened; I think anyone will acknowledge that. I'm just wondering what would happen if we had as much positive, well-planned action as we have complaints. We just might get somewhere.

Celia Sparger

TAX BILL

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replaced could spell the end of the operation of many of the United States symphony orchestras.

Granted that Wangerin has put the gloomiest interpretation on the tax reform bill - it is his job to do so - all authorities are agreed that some of the provisions will do a hatchet job on various American institutions, and not only symphony orchestras. Hospitals, universities, medical schools, churches, museums - all will suffer if the bill goes through, for there will be something like \$100-million less to give away. (That extra \$100-million going into the federal coffers will be diverted into normal expenses which means that the military will get around 70 per cent of it. To the military, it is peanuts: another few dozen helicopters, or some research into an airplane that might or might not fly. To some of the tottering cultural facilities of the United States, on the other hand, that \$100-million means the difference between life and death. Our insane priorities')