

Mott plays it honest

by Alan Bisbort
Features Editor

Mott the Hoople. They're as honest as a rock n' roll band can be. I say that with a certain amount of reservation and only after having seen them recently in concert. Finding it very hard to believe anyone these days, I approached their recent album *The Hoople* (Columbia) with my expectations too high. Their albums have never let me down. Each one stood apart from its predecessor, a hard-to-equal string of six fine albums (topped by *Mott*, regarded by many as the best rock album of 1973).

So, where could they go? Mick Ralphs, their lead guitarist, split the group after *Mott*, leaving things in doubt. He was replaced by the proficient, but less than spectacular, Aerial Bender. The talk was that Ian Hunter, singer and figurehead of the group, wielded too much power for Ralphs' liking. With *The Hoople*, Hunter now completely controls the direction of the group.

It would be easy for me to say that they failed to progress far with their new album. It does sound as if *The Hoople* was a bit hurried through its production, and the same "rock n' roll's a loser's game" themes predominate.

But, like I said, I trust Mott the Hoople. They're honest. They don't want to be separated from their audience. When Hunter sings, "You're not the nazz/You're just a buzz/Some kind of temporary..." in his *Hymn for the Dudes*, he isn't chastising anyone. Maybe himself. But certainly not his audience.

Hunter doesn't want to fail. He wants to please. And, perhaps more eloquently and convincingly than any other rocker, he realizes that stardom is all just a buzz. He will eventually fail. All things must pass, so to speak, but with no religious overtones.

But suddenly, through lots of promotional work and critical acclaim, Mott the Hoople

have arrived as stars. Despite a counter-attitude that Mott the Hoople are just "the decadent chic for the week," they are one of the few deserving of the bucks that the record-buying public like to throw around.

The Hoople is just a slice of pop pie. It is not a landmark album. In fact, as they will undoubtedly go on to record many more albums (hopefully), it will be looked upon as one of their minor albums, like the Stones' *Goat's Head Soup*.

That's not necessarily a knock on them. But, they have discarded their roles as observers and reporters by trying TOO HARD to be saviours. In concert, Hunter opens the show by singing the first verse of McLean's *American Pie* (music is going to die, etc.). Then, the band launches into *Golden Age of Rock 'N Roll* from their new album, with the words: "The golden age of rock n' roll will never die/As long as children feel the need to laugh and cry." Sadly, Hunter wants to believe that, but he knows it's a joke.

Hand in hand with the saviour-complex comes the theatrical flair. The song *Marionette* works completely and is a shattering cut (who can resist a Cockney voice ending a song with "Oh God, these wires are so tight...?") On the other hand, *Through the Looking Glass* fails, mainly because Hunter has taken his theatrics into the realm of histrionics (the thing I most fear happening to this band).

Hunter, who wrote all the songs but one (the forgettable *Born Late '58*) is a master at phrasing, certain lines sticking out all over the place, and when he's doing that on this album, it works. *Alice and Roll Away the Stone* will become classics.

OK. He's a big star. Until a year ago, he had no idea what that meant. You're a star. What do you do? Prance around and not think about it like Black Oak Arkansas? Or think about it always like Mott the Hoople? You have a choice. I'll take Mott the Hoople any day of the week.

Beer and other love songs

by C. B. Gaines
Asst. Features Editor

Beer is beer and you can get it almost anywhere in town, except on campus. You can go out and buy a six-pack and take it home. You can sit on the Franklin Street wall and drink it. You can cry in it. Or, you can choose one of fifteen places that exist for your beer drinking pleasure.

Every bar is unique. Each offers its own special touch. The following is a little list noting each bar's special points.

****Four Star Rating: Four stars go to Town Hall for having the best location and being the biggest place around. Town Hall is also noted for its deli, live music every night, and the nice paintings on the walls. Cat's Cradle gets four stars for being the best place to hear Arrogance and Miles Beyond. It also has a talking parrot and unusual artwork.

***Three Star Rating: He's Not Here, The Cave and The Endangered Species. He's Not Here for the balcony, the courtyard and the jukebox. The Cave for being open until 2 a.m. every night and for the juke. The Species for being the only place you can get Watney's Red Barrel on tap, and for the relaxed atmosphere.

**Two Star Rating: McCauley's for being the best bar in Carrboro and for the bathrooms labelled "Pointers," and "Setters." And to Holiday Inn's Tiffany's Lounge for having ABC permits and being across the street from Orange County ABC Store No. 2.

*One Star Rating: To every place else just for being a bar and having beer. To PJ's for wine and three-levels. To the Electric Company for telling it like it is. To The Scoreboard for the tilted bell tower and red-eyed Ram. To Clarence's for being next to

the bus station. To the Hideaway for having a nice garden to sit in. To The Shack for being a stone's throw from the police station and for being the site of a scene in *Three in the Attic*. And to the Bacchae for being under the Zoom-Zoom.

Food, game machines, and music are likely to be offered in one form or another in all these places. But some bars are specially noted for one or more of these qualities. First, for food.

Town Hall's Deli offers excellent sandwiches throughout the day and night. And, the Endangered Species on Rosemary Street has started serving lunches this summer. They offer deli-style sandwiches and big pickles.

Pinball, foosball, and computer Pong can be found in most bars. McCauley's, The Scoreboard, The Bacchae, Town Hall, Percy's Hideaway, and He's Not Here all have separate rooms full of games and machines to while away the hours while you drink their brew.

Then there's the live music vs. jukebox controversy. Many bar owners say live music costs them more than it is worth. Well, however the finances work out, live music is great, and it's the best thing in the world for dancing. So, if you want to boogie, head on down to Town Hall or Cat's Cradle where there is live music every night except some Sundays. Tiffany's Lounge also features live music every night except Sunday, and Monday thru Thursday there is no cover charge.

On the jukebox scene, He's Not Here and The Cave have the best oldies. Look out for, The Chiffons' *Sweet Talkin' Guy*, or *Be-Bop-A-Lula* by the Everly Brothers, and *Chantilly Lace* by Jerry Lee Lewis. It's just like being at the beach, but without the boardwalk.



Ian "King of the Dudes" Hunter

WEEKEND FILMS

Blazing Saddles—With Cleavon Little, Madeleine Kahn and Harvey Korman. (Continuing at Plaza 2.)

Dark Victory—Bette Davis's favorite film role; she has a brain tumor and marries her doctor. 1939. (Tonight, 8 p.m., Biological Sciences Auditorium, Duke.)

Duck Soup—The Marx Brothers. "I could dance with you till the cows come home. On second thought I'd rather dance with the cows till you came home." (Wednesday, 8 p.m., Gross Chemistry Building, Duke.)

Jeremiah Johnson—With Robert Redford. (Continuing at the Carolina.)

M*A*S*H—With Elliott Gould, Donald Sutherland and Sally Kellerman. Inspired. (Tuesday, 8:30 p.m., Union free flick.)

Midnight Cowboy—With Jon Voight and Dustin Hoffman. (Friday and Saturday late show, at the Carolina.)

A Night at the Opera—The Marx

Brothers. Again! (Thursday, 8:30 p.m., Union free flick.)

The Paper Chase—With Timothy Bottoms and Oscar-winner John Houseman. Very good. (Starts Wednesday, at the Varsity.)

Le Peau Douce—Francois Truffaut, more serious than usual and not so lyrical; he looks at adultery. (Sunday, 8:30 p.m., Union free flick.)

The Spikes Gang—With Lee Marvin and Ron Howard (of *American Graffiti*); a Western. (Through Thursday, at Plaza 1.)

The Super Cops—Ron Lieberman and David Selby as Batman and Robin of N.Y.P.D. (Through Thursday, at Plaza 3.)

Welcome to Arrow Beach—Directed by, and starring Laurence Harvey. (Through Saturday, at the Varsity.)

What's Up Tiger Lily?—Woody Allen dubs an awful Japanese secret-agent flick with a succession of one-liners. (Sunday, through Tuesday, at the Varsity.)

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Gatsby: flash not true life

by Peter Hardy
Film Critic

When Paramount bought the rights to F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous novel *The Great Gatsby*, the big mistake they made was deciding to sell it as a great romantic story, highlighted by '20s fashions. Those attracted by the gigantic advertising campaign may be frustrated by the strange, ambiguous love story. Fitzgerald's tale of a man who destroys himself trying to recapture a past love is simply not the stuff from which great, popular movie romances are made.

After all the fashion push and the "Gone is the romance that was so divine" ads, a viewer is likely to forget that what he's seeing is a film of a literary classic, one that has held onto its popularity and fascination for fifty years. Even on these grounds it is unsatisfying, but while those unfamiliar with the book may find the film baffling, admirers of the novel should find it highly interesting.

The selection of Jack Clayton as director may have been another mistake, and it was certainly a strange choice. Clayton is a little known Englishman who, as far as I know, hasn't made a film in seven years. Still, I had high hopes because the few films of his that I have seen are generally brilliant, and three of them—*The Innocents*, *The Pumpkin Eater* and *Our Mother's House*—are among my all-time favorites.

It may be that Fitzgerald's novel is impossible to film properly; earlier versions with Warner Baxter and Alan Ladd were failures. Action is the cinema's strong point, and Fitzgerald's story seems to be inseparable from his somewhat flowery writing style. His writing brings across moods and intimations that just don't come out when you merely film a scene. For the film *Gatsby* to equal the effect of the book, it would have to be rethought completely in cinematic terms.

So, we get a movie of bits and pieces, and our fascination comes from a kind of suspense: Will the director pull this scene off? Sometimes he does, sometimes he misses badly, and most of the time he almost makes it, but not quite. Good moments are Nick Carraway's first glimpse of Gatsby and the sequence leading up to the final tragedy. Most of the scenes with Tom Buchanan's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, are overcharged.

Robert Redford was, I think, a good choice for Gatsby, but, like the movie, his performance seems fragmented. I remember certain little bits that he got right and many where he didn't quite make it. To be fair, Gatsby may be an impossible character to portray, since so much of what is seen of his character comes from literary methods that should be changed completely for film.

The real casting disaster was Mia Farrow as Daisy. Perhaps she is better than Ali McGraw would have been, but she is still awful. She does manage to look attractive in a monkeyish way, but her attempts to capture Daisy's animated, almost mystical charm are forced and awkward. We should see gradually that Daisy is not worth Gatsby's love; in the movie we can tell from the first time we see her.

This flaws the film seriously, not only because Farrow is on the screen too much, and pulls the movie down whenever she is, but because it renders the story incredible. Why should this extraordinary man spend eight years trying to win her back? Dozens of actresses could have played this role better.

I thought somehow that the novel's narrator, Nick Carraway, would not be so important in the film, but Sam Waterston as Nick provides the movie's greatest strength. He is decent, humorous, sympathetic and always likable; he's the only character in the film we are really drawn to. Bruce Dern gives a solid, thoroughly unattractive performance as Tom Buchanan and Karen Black over-acts dreadfully as Myrtle Wilson. In the novel, one of the more intriguing characters was Jordan Baker, the lady golfer, but as portrayed by Lois Chiles, the Raquel Welch look alike from *The Way We Were*, she is stiff and boring.

The cinematography by Douglas Slocombe is impressive and only occasionally overly-opulent, while Nelson Riddle's music is often so heavy-handed it ruins what's going on in the movie. The sets and costumes are all very flashy but the much heralded party scenes have little real vibrancy and seem rather sad (which may have been what Fitzgerald thought of them himself). The really sad thing is that the people who see and enjoy *The Great Gatsby* for its fashions and party scenes are falling into the same trap many of Fitzgerald's characters did—mistaking flash for true life.

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