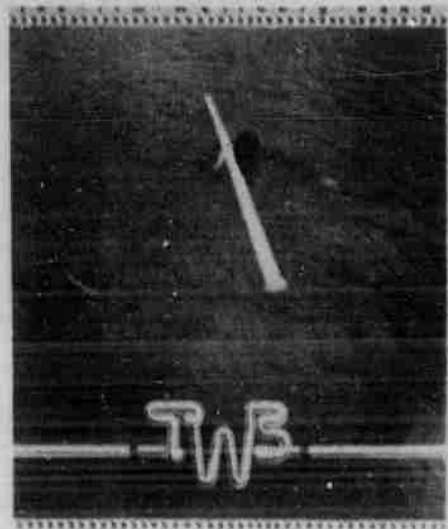


New albums feature good and bad surprises

By DOUG GRAVES
DTH Contributor



TWB

The Tim Weisberg Band (United Artists)

Tim Weisberg's concert at Memorial Hall was one of the best shows to come to UNC last year. There are few groups today playing rock/jazz fusion music better than the TWB, who are a little lighter and funkier on this LP than on their previous efforts. Maybe they aren't as flashy as Weather Report or Return To Forever, but there's no way these guys should be neglected the way they have been. Get this record and see for yourself.



CSN

Crosby, Stills & Nash (Atlantic)

The successful return of Crosby, Stills and Nash has to be one of the major events in music recently, because it's unusual for a reunited group to attain the level of its initial success, either commercially or artistically. These guys have managed to do both. All three have written their best songs in a long time and their harmonies are as beautiful as ever. "See the Changes" and "Carried Away" are especially overwhelming, with the three voices blending in a way that only these three voices can. It's a joy to have this group back and I hope they stay together for a while this time.



The Grand Illusion
Styx (A&M)

Styx combines the high harmonies and keyboard effects of a British band like Yes with good ol' boogie, ending up sounding something like a classy Uriah Heep. The dual

guitar attack, however, keeps them from dwelling too much in the realms of arty rock and distracts attention from the often-slightly-pretentious lyrics. Nonetheless, I've got to admire any band that devotes a rock 'n' roll number ("Miss America") to exposing the shallowness of beauty contests. Roll over, Bert Parks, and tell Bob Barker the news.



Steve Winwood

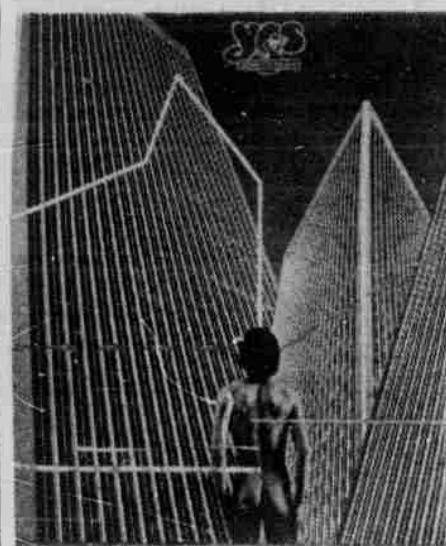
Steve Winwood (Island)

No matter what musical surroundings he's been put in, Steve Winwood has sounded pretty much the same since he left the Spencer Davis Group eons ago. This album takes up where Traffic and Blind Faith left off, featuring Steve's plaintive vocals and laid-back instrumental support. It's not disappointing unless you remember how 17-year-old Stevie belted out his vocals on oldies like "Gimme Some Lovin'" or "I'm A Man." I'd enjoy hearing him do it again for old times' sake, but I don't want to complain. This is a quality LP which should please those who enjoyed Traffic.

Manifest Destiny

The Dictators (Elektra)

From the same producers who gave us the Blue Oyster Cult comes this more-than-slightly askew hard rock outfit, who deserve more than an automatic write-off as just another bunch of heavy metal brats. These boys are capable of smooth harmonies as well as sonic blasting, and writer Adny (yes, Adny — no typos here) Shernoff specializes in putting his tongue so far in his cheek that he might be the Jewish John Entwistle. These guys are just as silly as Kiss or the Ramones but about five hundred times as clever, and you can bet they won't go disco. Give 'em a chance, will ya?



Going For the One

Yes (Atlantic)

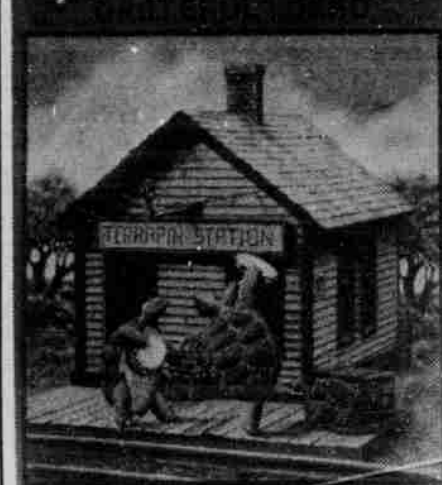
Yes has finally put out another album which isn't so grandiose and overproduced I can't listen to it. Rick Wakeman actually plays his array of keyboards with some taste (take note, Keith Emerson) and Jon Anderson has thankfully gone back to being abstract rather than preachy with his lyrics. With a return to the style of *The Yes Album* and *Fragile*, this group has made itself interesting again. I suppose Starcastle can sit down now.



American Stars 'N Bars

Neil Young (Reprise)

Since he doesn't have much of a voice, Neil Young has to rely on his talent as a songwriter to sell his albums to a mass audience. *American Stars 'N Bars* is Neil's best collection of songs since *After the Gold Rush* and his vocals never get in the way. "Like a Hurricane" features a long, stinging, Buffalo Springfield-style guitar solo. "The Old Country Waltz" and "Hold Back the Tears" are excellent country tunes; the latter features Linda Ronstadt and it wouldn't surprise me to see it on her next album. "Saddle Up the Palomino" is a tale of adultery. "Bite the Bullet" a viciously rocking tribute to "a bar hall queen down in Charlotte town," and "Hey Babe" a country love song which could be Neil's first hit single in ages. "Will to Love" and "Star of Bethlehem" are pretty and "Homegrown" could be NORM's theme song. Once upon a time, I said I'd never write a favorable review of a Neil Young album. I can't think of a time when I've been happier to eat my words.



Terrapin Station

I have always maintained that the mystique of the Grateful Dead has had a lot more to do with their popularity than their talent has. As survivors of the San Francisco scene, they are the darlings of those for whom the dream of the "revolution" has never died, and their penchant for extended jams to the point of tedium renders them about as uninteresting as any number of high-volume boogie bands even though they're not as hard on the ears. I suppose there are some loyal Deadheads out there who will argue that this is a good album, but if you've never had any interest in the Dead

The Grateful Dead (Arista)

before, I don't think this record will arouse any in you. Indeed, things have come to a pretty pass when Jerry Garcia and company resort to disco-ing down on "Dancing in the Streets," which they deliver with less than 1/100th of the power of the original. Maybe it'll become a hit and the next Dead album will be all disco. Stranger things have happened.



I'm In You

Peter Dinklage (A&M)

There seems to be a backlash against Frampton in most of the reviews I've read of this album. Critics who have praised him in the past have jumped all over him for producing an album of pretty but uninspiring material, which I guess is what they deserve for expecting Peter to be inspiring. He's a talented but limited singer and songwriter with a knack for catchy melodies, like the title cut of this album, which has been unavoidable on the radio lately. My favorite track on the album in the Little Feat tribute, "Won't You Be My Friend," which is right funky, and I also like the Motown medley. But Frampton's *Camel* is still my favorite album of Peter's, and though he does a fine job on "I'm A Road Runner," my favorite version of the tune is still the one done by the pre-Buckingham/Nicks Fleetwood Mac. How's that for reactionary?

Cat Scratch Fever

Ted Nugent (Epic)

Ted had probably become America's number one sexist pig rock star over the past two years. Song titles like "Wang Dang Sweet Poontang" and lyrics such as "I don't know where they come from but they sure do come" aren't going to make him popular with Gloria Steinem, but Mr. Nugent's the type who'd tell her to shut up and hustle her butt back to the kitchen where she belongs. Personally, I'm not at all in accord with Ted's caveman sexual attitudes, but I do like the way he plays the ever-lovin' daylights out of his guitar. The onslaught never stops on this disc. There's no middle ground here — love it or leave it.

Upcoming concerts

Schedules subject to change

Bread and Stephen Bishop
August 26
Greensboro Coliseum

Bay City Rollers
August 27
Carowinds, Charlotte

1st Annual N.C. Beach Music Convention
featuring the Coasters, Drifters,
Embers and others

1st Annual N.C. Beach Music Convention
featuring the Coasters, Drifters,
Embers and others
August 27
noon until midnight
Happy Acres Bluegrass Park at Lake Wheeler,
south of Raleigh

Peter Frampton and Geils
August 29
Greensboro Coliseum

Sea Level
August 30
Rowe Auditorium, UNC-Charlotte

Willie Nelson and Emmylou Harris
August 31
Greensboro Coliseum

BT Express and Brass Construction
September 3
Cumberland Memorial Auditorium
Fayetteville, N.C.

Grandfather Mountain Music Festival
featuring the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band,
Earl Scruggs Revue, Doc and Merle Watson
and others
September 9, 10, 11
Linville, N.C.

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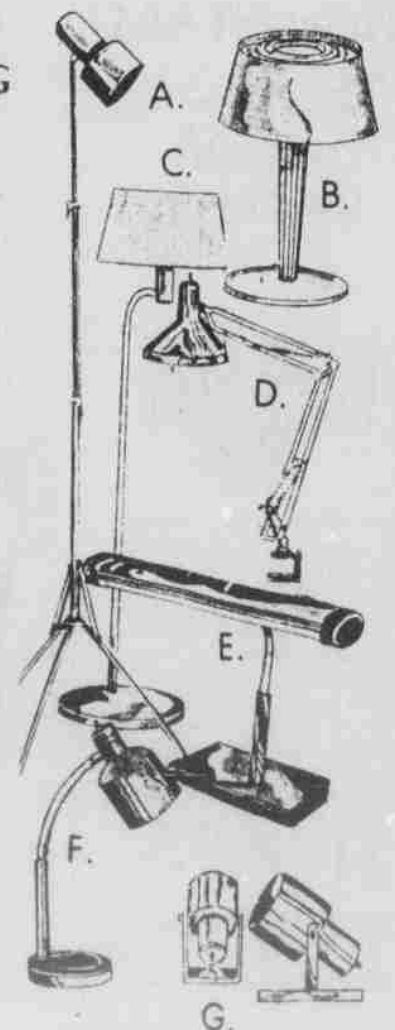
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