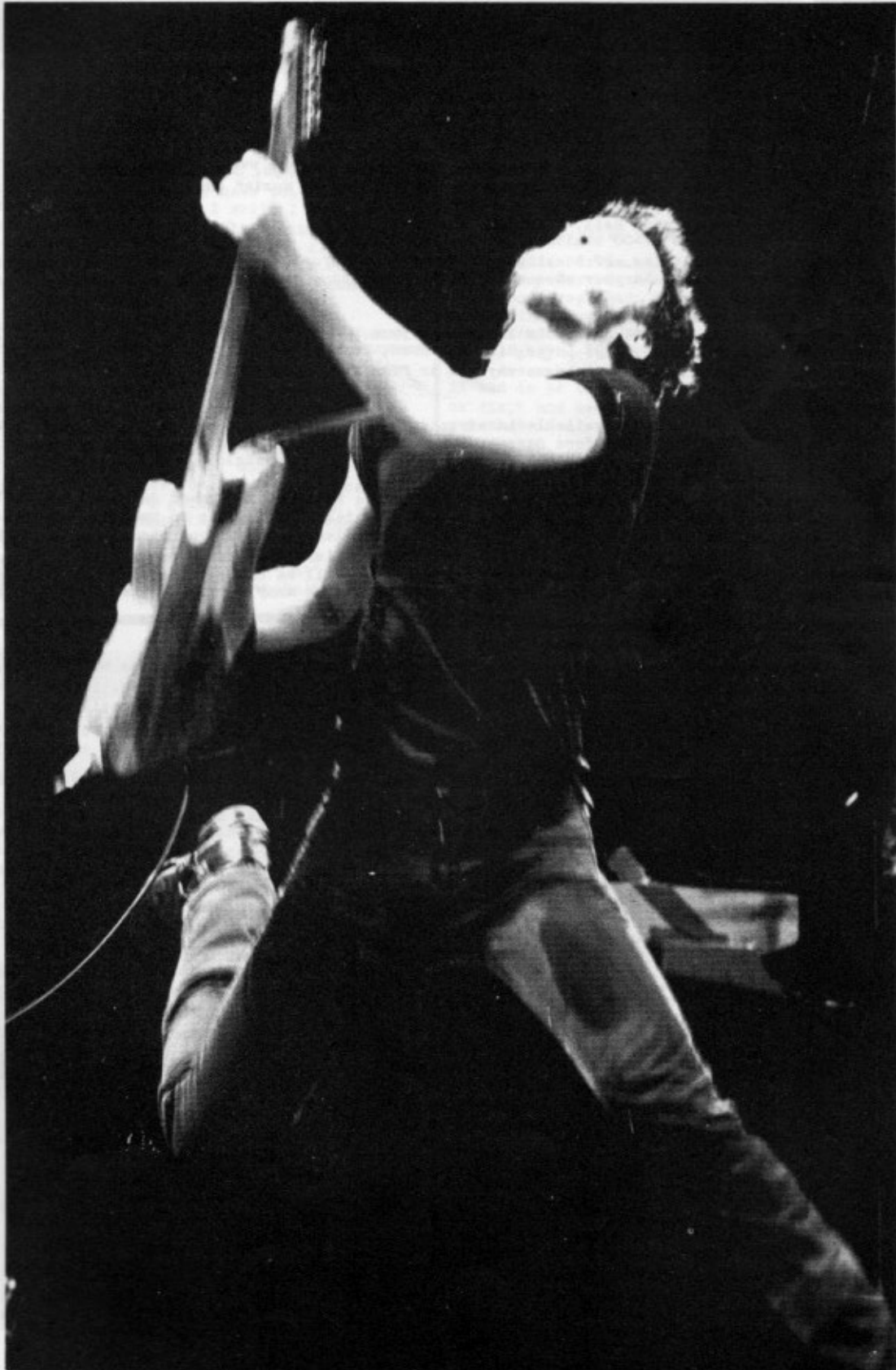


# OMAHA RAINBOW

Spring 1985

36



\$2

90p

# SUN STORM RECORDS

Following the success of our debut album, John Stewart's "Trancas," we are preparing to release two more records.

The first is CHUCK McDERMOTT "THE TURNING OF THE WHEEL" - Sunstorm SSAD-02. Recorded in Los Angeles and Boston, it contains ten of Chuck's own songs with a total track time of over 38 minutes.

SIDE ONE : The Turning of the Wheel/Inspiration Point/Not With You/Working Day/Turn the Rain Down.

SIDE TWO : Rock Americana/It Could Make You Blue/Wild One/Blue Steel/So Right.

I don't think anyone who heard Chuck sing his songs during John Stewart's UK tour last summer, or who has seen him play with his own band in America will be disappointed by this album.

Nor, now, will all the JOHN STEWART fans who missed out on the 1972 US Warner Bros. release of "SUNSTORM" and have coveted a copy ever since. Six months of negotiation have ended successfully. We have just received the tapes from America (we're still waiting for Chuck's!) and are aiming for a 1 July release date.

"SUNSTORM" is on Sunstorm SSAD-03 with a track listing SIDE ONE : Kansas Rain/Cheyenne/Bring It On Home/Sunstorm/Arkansas Breakout. SIDE TWO : An Account of Haley's Comet/Joe/Light Come Shine/Lonesome John/Drive Again.

Copies of each album will sell in the shops for £5-99. You can order yours direct from us at the Omaha Rainbow address. £6-50 inc. p.&p. in the UK; £8-00 or \$9.60 (US) in Europe or by surface mail elsewhere; £10-00 or \$12.00 (US) by air mail anywhere.

Please make cheques payable to "Sunstorm Records." If you want both albums, send separate cheques. We will not pay them into our account until your album is available for dispatch. In the even of any unforeseen delay, you will be informed.

John Stewart's own label, Homecoming Records, has now released two albums in his 'American Journey' series. "Centennial" is instrumental while "The Last Campaign" is John's tribute in words and music to the inspirational memory of Robert Kennedy. A wonderful, wonderful album, I cannot recommend it too highly.



**OMAHA RAINBOW  
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
BY PETER O'BRIEN  
10 LESLEY COURT  
HARCOURT ROAD  
WALLINGTON  
SURREY SM6 8AZ  
ENGLAND**

## CONTENTS

2...O'BSESSIONS WITH JOHN STEWART - Summer '85 Tour.

2...JOHN STEWART, interviewed by Mike Davies for Radio Beacon in Kingswinford on Friday 10 August 1984. Special thanks to John Atkins. Photographs of John Stewart on pages 3 and 5 are by Dave Burton.

7...ROXY GORDON - Growing up in Talpa, Texas. A reprint of the of the article which first appeared in the Southwest Letter column of the Dallas Times Herald on Sunday 3 February 1985. Hello to Bob & Louise and J.D. & Marcille out there in Coleman County.

8...BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, interviewed by Roger Scott in Hartford, Connecticut - 7/8 September 1984. This interview is copyright Roger Scott and Patrick Humphries. Roger is a Capital Radio DJ and Patrick is co-author of "Bruce Springsteen : Blinded By the Light," published in London by Plexus. Many thanks to them both. All the Bruce Springsteen photographs in this issue were taken by Terry Lott at Wembley Arena, London, during "The River" tour in June 1981.

12..Roxy Gordon's life and times with TOWNES VAN ZANDT - Get Involved With a Legend.....or two!!!

14..PETE FRAME's "LOS ANGELES '85" Family Tree.

16..PETE FRAME's LONG RYDERS Family Tree. Hello and best wishes to Pete Planagan at Zipco Music.

17..PETE FRAME's RAIN PARADE Family Tree. Thanks, Pete!

18..GENE CLARK, interviewed by Barry Ballard in Wimbledon on Thursday 14 March and Aldershot on Thursday 21 March 1985. Thanks to Nigel Cross and Geraint Davies for permission to use extracts from their respective interviews in London on Tuesday 2 April and in Cardiff on Saturday 9 March. Thanks also to Chrissie Oakes, Dave Minns, Tony Pincham and Joe Slattery. The photographs of Gene on pages 18 and 20 were taken by Tony Pincham in Brighton on Wednesday 3 April 1985.

22..CHRIS HILLMAN, interviewed by Geraint Davies in Cardiff on Friday 7 September 1984.

23..JIM ROONEY - "SILVER" - One more time at Club 47.

24..TOM RUSSELL, in conversation with Ed Becker of Illinois. Ed is a long-time subscriber to Omaha Rainbow and has great taste in music. Tom Russell you should know already and will know even better after reading this. The photo of Tom was taken by Tom Grillo. Special thanks to Carlos Zaragoza.

26..RICHARD DOBSON - Don Ricardo's Life and Times. The seventh in a continuing series.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - A four issue subscription to OMAHA RAINBOW costs £4-20 in the UK, £5-00 in the rest of Europe and by surface mail elsewhere. A subscription by air mail outside Europe is £7-50 or \$12.00 (US).

Please make all cheques payable to 'Peter O'Brien.'

BACK ISSUES - At the time of going to print, OR's 9-17, 22-33 and 35 are available at a total cost of £13-20. Single copies: OR's 9-17 cost 50p, OR's 22-24 are 70p, OR's 25-27 are 75p, OR's 28-30 are 85p, OR's 31-32 are 95p, OR's 33 & 35 are £1-05.

OR9...Jimmy Buffett, Emory Gordy, Ian Matthews.  
OR10...Hal Blaine, Hank De Vito, Doug Dillard, John Forsha.

OR11...Al Garth, Terry Cagle, Mike Smith, Steve Goodman, Skip Battin, Gib Guilbeau.  
OR12...Dan Dugmore, David Lindley, Bryan Garofolo.  
OR13...Mickey Newbury, Asleep at the Wheel, Steve Young, Rodney Crowell.

OR14...Steven Fromholz, Meal Ticket, Albert Lee, Thomas Jefferson Kaye, Larry Gatlin  
OR15...Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, Steven Fromholz, Gene Clark, Rosslyn Mountain Boys and Steve Young.

OR16...Joe Ely, Jerry Jeff Walker, Tommy Hancock, Butch Hancock, Tommy Allsup, Mike Smith, Roxy Gordon.  
OR17...Roxy Gordon, Johnnie Allan, Carlene Carter, Ricky Skaggs, Delbert McClinton.

\*\*\*\*\*

OR22...Lots of John Stewart, Chris Whelan, Roxy Gordon, Richard Dobson.

OR23...Bobby Bare, Cliff and the Shadows Family Tree, Lee Clayton, Ian Dunlop.  
OR24...Emmylou Harris, Albert Lee, Butch Hancock.

\*\*\*\*\*

OR25...Ian Tyson, Bobby Bare, Roxy Gordon, Richard Dobson and even more Ian Tyson.  
OR26...Neil Flanz, Hoyt Axton and all the regular crew.  
OR27...Phil Everly, Juice Newton, Steve Young, Frank Davis.

\*\*\*\*\*

OR28...John Ware, Rodney Crowell, Jesse Taylor.  
OR29...Eagles, Terry Allen, Gram Parsons Family Tree, Kingston Trio Reunion.  
OR30...Albert Lee Family Tree, Billy Swan, Guy Clark, Tom Russell on Gram Parsons.

\*\*\*\*\*

OR31...Eric Taylor, Butch Hancock, Miami Steve Van Zandt, Jim Dickinson.  
OR32...Tom Rush, Bobby King, Richard Thompson, Willie Nelson.

\*\*\*\*\*

OR33...Chuck McDermott, Billy Joe Shaver, Cliff Bennett Family Tree, Wes McGhee, Ian Tyson.  
OR35...Rick Roberts, Rusty Young, John Stewart.



# GENE



# CLARK

Unfortunately, due to its relatively last minute nature, for many Gene Clark's month long UK sojourn was to be one of the best kept secrets since that elite bunch of boffins gathered in New Mexico to tinker discreetly with things atomic. Mind you, for those who caught either of Gene's truly 'solo' dates, when he convincingly demonstrated that his unique voice and remarkable writing ability were still both firmly intact, the effect was just as devastating. Gene was happy for me to interview him on several occasions during his visit, for which I thank him, and I asked him first of all what Tipton's favourite son had been up to since we saw him last.

Around mid 1979 the bottom just dropped out of the industry. It dropped out to the point where people like Willie Nelson and Kenny Rogers were having to cancel their tours because they couldn't sell tickets. People were not buying records and they just weren't buying tickets for concerts. The last time I saw Roger and Chris's performance in LA I joined them on stage for the last couple of songs. Up to that point every time we played the Roxy we had filled the place, but there was only about one third of an audience there. I was really shocked. I walked through the audience and there was just a couple of hundred people, maybe less. The vibe was bad everywhere and nothing was happening.

I couldn't get work and, as I said, even the big stars could not sell records or sell concert tickets. Consequently everything went dead. Everybody was looking at each other and saying 'Is it over? Is this the end of the music industry, is that what's happening?' So, right after the 'City' album I split and went to Hawaii for a year just to get out of the whole thing. Things just didn't feel good. Nobody felt good about anything they were doing. I played a couple of local clubs in Hawaii, but I didn't really pursue anything. The break was just to cool out, clear my head, and get my thoughts together. After that I came back to Northern California, lived there for a year and did the 'Firebyrd' album. I started the album in '82, but because it was stop, go, we didn't get it finished until '83. We only had a certain budget to work on, a certain period of time, and we were researching things and getting different people together. Also, there was a bit of confusion amongst the people who were involved in it, but at least it was a project. I had something to work on and so I was pleased about that. Anyway, one thing lead to another and through some friends of mine we got a deal with Takoma and the record came out in '84.

I already had it in my mind to do a longer version of 'Tambourine Man', and as I had always wanted to record that version I started messing around with it



in the studio. Everybody picked up on it and so we went ahead and did it. Although re-doing 'Feel A Whole Lot Better' wasn't strongly in my mind at first so many people had asked me to do it that I figured it would probably be a good thing to do so I just said 'Well, OK'. One of the reasons for doing the Gordon Lightfoot song was that it had always been one of my favourite songs, but I wanted to approach it differently. I had always heard it that way and so decided to do it that way also. Chris Hillman's on 'Something About You Baby' and Herb Pederson's on the album in and out. In fact he's on a lot of the album. Herb's a great guy, I really like working with him. He's one of those people that definitely is a solid professional there's no doubt about it. He'll come into the studio and you'll play him a take and he'll sit there for a few minutes and then he'll come out and do it. He's like the Leon Russell of vocals; the Glen Campbell of vocals! You know what I mean!

When I finished 'Firebyrd' I had a little project I was working on with Jim Dickson, Eddie Tickner, Michael Clarke, Chris Hillman, Herb Pederson and Al Perkins. We went into the studio, made a few tapes, and we did a couple of shows with Emmylou in Los Angeles. We had mandolin, banjo, dobro and guitar, and it was the first time we had all done a straight acoustic show for quite a while. It was really nice and it came off great. We finished up that project and I went down to Nashville with Eddie for a week or so just putting out feelers to see what we could come up with. It went real well, and I might be doing a solo album down there very shortly. The 'Firebyrd' album has so far been received really well, but its not being pressed any more. I don't know the reasons, and I can't understand it because I know that all the copies sold out and there were some back orders that weren't filled.

Can you tell me how the Firebyrds came about?

Well Michael and I were at the end of a couple of projects and we said 'What are we going to do?' Things were getting really boring. Everybody was sitting around and nobody was working so we decided to put together some kind of project.

We were certain that there had to be some work somewhere, so we got a few of the guys together and went out on the road. As it had been a few years since I had been out with McGuinn and those guys things started off a little slow. However, there were certain areas like Austin, Texas where it was just fantastic. The original Firebyrd group was me, Michael Clarke, Mark and Matt Andes; the Clark(e) and Andes Brothers! It was an awfully hot rock 'n' roll group. We had arrangements of 'She Loves You' and some things like that which were just dynamite, and although we didn't make a lot of money or anything at least we were getting something started. Mark though had just finished the Heart album and all of a sudden they wanted him for a world tour. As he had to fulfil that commitment we had to cancel the tour until we got somebody else. Well we ended up getting Peter Oliva back who was with the group when I was over here last time with them. We then decided that we wanted another guitar player, and so we went to see Tim Goodman play with his group. They were very good but he was bored, wanted something to do, and so he came in for a while. Unfortunately all at once he had a double album deal to do and so he split off and we went and got a guy called Trace Harill who played rhythm guitar. Matt was on lead, I was lead singer, Michael was on drums and Peter was bass. Peter was also singing with me, and Matt at times. We did one tour and then that group started to fall apart. Trace left the group and we got Michael Hardwick from Texas who had been with Michael in the Jerry Jeff Walker band. He's a great musician and he played steel and rhythm guitar. We went out on a very long tour with this group across the US and back across Canada. It worked really well, but some of the bookings were a little awkward in certain places because the resurgence of popularity in our kind of music had not taken hold like it has in other parts of the States. I think that altogether we did three, maybe four, tours which all went over real good, but the only problem was there were more offers for me as a solo act than there were to bring the Firebyrds out.

So what happened was Michael and I went out with the Band, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel, Garth Hudson, and I did a solo opening slot for them for a couple of tours. I also picked up a few gigs with what was left of the Firebyrds and did some solo dates too. Although everything was going real good somehow it just wasn't to the level that we really wanted. About this time though we changed management and changed agents and suddenly everything started falling into place.

I had gotten hooked up with Michael Gamon in New York, and it turned out that Michael was handling Crosby, working with McGuinn off and on, as well as looking after Danko, Richard Manuel, and all those guys. Well we all began to see a lot of each other, started talking and came up with this idea that we should do a tribute because its twenty years since 'Tambourine Man' came out. We called up Hillman and McGuinn, put the word out to them, but in both their cases, Crosby's too, they had prior commitments which they really wanted to go ahead and complete. We invited Gene Parsons too, but he held back also. Even though we had been concentrating and working on trying to put this thing together for quite some time when it did come together it happened very quickly and with people like McGuinn he had a schedule with his solo thing and was pretty well committed. In that effect its certainly not out of the picture that they might join up down line. Especially McGuinn, I feel that at this point there's a greater possibility of McGuinn joining up later on than anyone.

So what we are doing is a '20th Anniversary Tribute To The Byrds'. We are not calling it 'The Byrds', but the press are and its at their discretion to do so. The Burritos open the show, then we do a solo part. Rick Roberts does a couple of solo songs, John York does a couple and then I come out and do a couple. Then we do the set with the band, and at the finale Sneaky Pete and Greg Harris come out on stage and we do the whole thing. In the Flying Burritos we have Sneaky Pete on steel, Jim Goodall playing drums, Greg Harris who plays banjo, guitar, fiddle and sings most of the lead vocals and Skip Battin playing bass and singing too. Also in and out of the Burritos show is Rick Roberts. In the tribute group there is myself, and I'm doing most of the lead kind of things, Rick Danko playing bass and singing, Blondie Chaplin lead guitar and singing, and John York, who was also a Byrd, playing 12 string and singing as well. We have Michael Clarke on drums and Jim Goodall also sits in with Michael, so there's two drummers on that set which gives it a nice punch. We also have Greg Harris, Rick Roberts, Sneaky Pete and Skip sitting in on part of the show with us, and we trade off. The show is pretty long. Its a good 3 hours, especially if we put in the acoustic set. The band set alone is at least an hour. We do all the old classics, but we're working in new material as we're going along and as you've got a lot of writers in the group you can bet that there'll be new material coming out of it. Its turned into a big Byrds band and the whole thing is going over so great everywhere. Danko and I have been friends for years and we've always wanted to have a chance to work together and we've attempted to organize something several times but the ingredients were never there; this is the first time they have been. We've just finished a 3 week tour of the Eastern half of the US from Chicago on back to the East Coast. We played all the major cities and it just went like crazy, really well, really great. The shows were on average sold out and we were playing anywhere from 500 seater dinner clubs where they would have people coming to two shows, on up to 3000 in some of the places, which is a lot without much prior notice and a good size for most concerts these days anyway.

When I get back to the States I'll have two days in New York to hang out with Michael Gamon and catch up on all of our business matters. Then I'm doing the Paradise in Boston with Rick Roberts, Rick Danko and Garth, and after that Rick, Rick and I are meeting up with Michael and the other group in Denver or Boulder where we'll rent a rehearsal studio for a couple of days. We're then going to go right back out and do Aspen, Vail, Boulder, Denver, and then off to Seattle where we'll start to work our way down the coast to end up in Los Angeles. After a couple of days off we'll start Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and cover that area. We're also going to Japan, Australia and New Zealand maybe, and then coming back here in June or July.



We'll probably do most of Europe and the major cities in the UK and I understand that there's already 3 weeks booked, although that's subject to change.

What's John York been up to?

Well I think he's just been writing and recording. I've heard some of his new stuff and it's excellent, really excellent. I think he was in and out of a couple of bands that really didn't make him happy because the guy is such an excellent professional musician and performer. When this thing came up it was by coincidence that we met John. We just happened to see him in a show in LA and we agreed to keep in touch. John came over one night and we just started playing and it was pure magic, so we said 'Let's do it!'

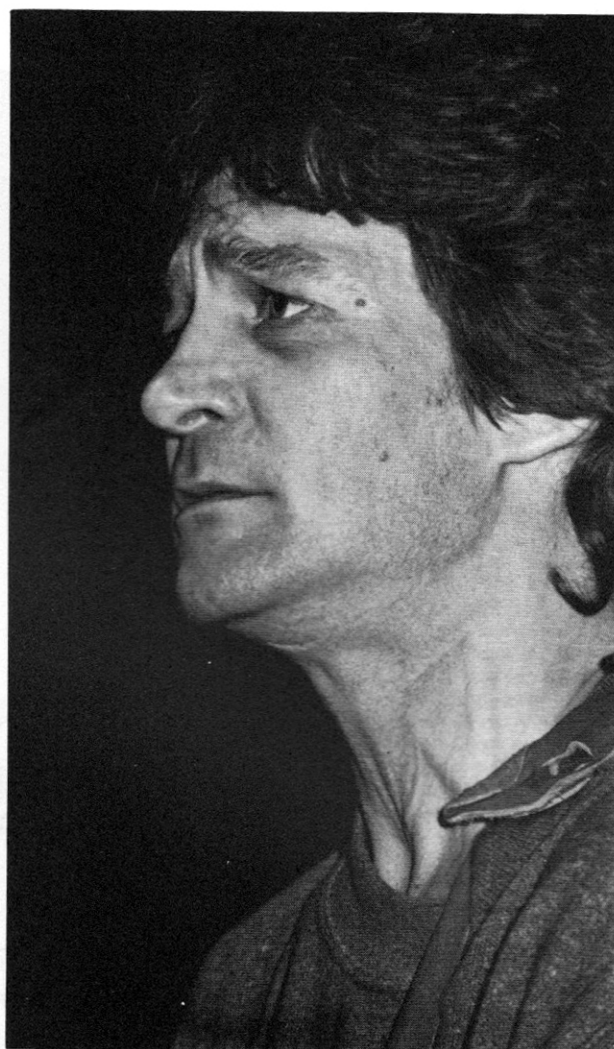
A lot of what's happening now has to do with hard work. Michael and I worked on this project for 3 years and we've just stuck with it whereas some people have come in and out and haven't really hung on in. The difference between late '79 and right now is that everything has done a complete 180 to the extent that now we can't even keep up with all the work that we do have. That's the pace I like though even if I am a little fatigued. That last tour really blew us all out because it was the first one of that kind that we had done in a long time. We had to make very long trips because it was booked really quickly and it wasn't mapped out as well as the next ones are. The next ones are going to be a lot more comfortable.

I've already been working on a project with new material and I have almost a whole album full of things recorded. I don't know whether I'm going to use that as a master or not though. I may use it as a kind of blueprint for what we are going to do, but now with all that's happening new material is going to come from that group of people too. I definitely have plans for a solo album but it does depend on the timing now and how the tour goes. You never know, maybe an album might come out of the other group too. The material's there so I'm sure it'll happen eventually, but I can't say when.

How did the connection with bands like the Long Ryders and the 3 O'Clock come about?

A fellow came to my show in LA and he happened to manage the Long Ryders, the Textones and a couple of other groups. His name was Saul Davis, and I got together with him and he started working as a manager with me. That's how it got set up. Saul just gave me a call one day to say that Sid and the guys wanted me to go down and lend my pipes to 'Ivory Tower', which I was happy to do. Saul brought me over a copy and I listened to it for an afternoon and did it. It was very quick and easy. The first time I heard the 3 O'Clock's 'Feel A Whole Lot Better' was when I was sitting over at a girlfriend's house and it came on the radio. I thought that it was really similar in a lot of ways to the original cut, almost note for note on the guitar solo. The band had their manager seek me out and he just invited me to perform with them at the Country Club. Then I got a call from the Red Rockers one day and they asked me to make a guest appearance at the Palace, and so this thing just started happening. Also I just found out that 'Eight Miles High' has two new covers on it and one is going to be a major video, but I just can't recall the names of the bands for sure right now. (Most likely Husker Du on SST records and The Thought on MCA - BB). I understand that 'Little Mama' has been recorded by some Japanese recording star too.

I don't know about here but in the States we have a whole new following of teenagers and young people. It is actually really amazing because these kids are serious fans and not just because their parents were or are fans but because they really like the music. Of course the new wave thing has its fans, but it seems to have reached its last throes in America because the popularity of groups from the 60s like the Beatles, Byrds, Rolling Stones, Animals and Hollies has become a real thing. Consequently a lot of new groups have sprung up who are all doing that kind of music. It's really nice to see because it's re-opened the market for what we are doing. When we did the tour there were certain places where we died because the kids were really into Top 40 and Heavy Metal and they didn't understand us at all. In other areas though where this new thing was happening it was just amazing. The place would be sold out and



things would be great. In the US in listening audiences the generation gap has been virtually eliminated in a lot of places. I just did a radio show in Norfolk, Virginia a couple of weeks ago and there were kids of 14 or 15 calling up who were real fans. Of course in California it's a big deal because they come to the shows too and if you look at the audiences they are anywhere from their early teens all the way up to people in their 50s. It's very far out to see that too because they're all so into it.

I wanted to ask you about all these unreleased tracks like 'The Daylight Line', 'Wheel Of Time', 'Crazy Ladies' and 'Last Of The Blue Diamond Miners'.

Well those songs were in a period of time of writing and just never ended up being recorded. 'Crazy Ladies' was recorded by Thomas Jefferson Kaye on his album and I saw him in New York a few weeks ago and he plans for a release of that record so the song may eventually come out. I don't know whether he's got that firmed up or not but he did do a great recording of it. 'Last Of The Blue Diamond Miners' I've always wanted to cut. I've done a couple of demos of that one but I've never really gotten that one recorded. When you're the artist, the writer too, and you're that familiar with your product, if material sits around for too long it sort of stagnates. I'm sure it must happen with people like Rodney Crowell too. Unless a producer comes along and hears it and asks you to go back and pay attention to it you lose the incentive to want to work with it anymore. If they were the only songs I had it would be different, but new things come along constantly. I don't know what we're going to do with all those songs. Maybe we'll put together an archive album or something.

Another project that I'm working on right now is outtakes and unreleased Byrd tracks. I don't know how many hours there are, but I've heard that there is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 100 hours of tape that has never been

released; outtakes, takes that we didn't put on albums, cuts that we didn't have time to put on albums. Things like the stereo version of 'She Don't Care About Time', the original 'Eight Miles High' cut at the RCA studio, some things like 'She Has A Way', a song of Crosby's called 'Psychodrama City'. Michael said he's heard a cut of 'She Has A Way' that's an absolute smash. So what we're going to do is go in and listen to all this stuff and mix it all in stereo for some volumes that are going to come out. That's all there is to it really.

Whose idea was it?

It has been a lot of peoples' idea for a long time, but I think that Jim Dickson's actually realised how much there is still in the can. There's 'Hey Joe', 'I Know You Rider', good songs or versions which never got on albums. There are some songs of David's, some of mine, some of Roger's and some of Chris's. Just tons of stuff that was cut. Sometimes we'd cut maybe 15 or 16 sides for an album and we'd choose the best ones. There's just so much and I don't even remember some of the songs myself. Some of them I know were cut when I wasn't around but most were cut when I was there. I saw a stack of paper about 1/2" thick with title after title after title on. There are probably several cuts of each one that we have to listen to in order to find out the best quality and best feel on each. I think that they all have vocals on them already, but if any of the vocals need touching up we'll probably go in and do that real quick.

One would hope that the album would come out this year to tie in with the tribute tour.

Yes probably, but I think that it depends on how much time we can get to go through it. I may not be able to be there to go through it because of my schedule, but I think that Jim and a couple of other people could probably go through it. Jim is real familiar with almost all of that. He remembers things that I've forgotten I'd ever recorded or been associated with throughout the years with the Byrds.

If it does come off I think that you should get Tickner or Dickson to do some really comprehensive liner notes with detailed information on where and when the cuts were made.

Well all that will be on the boxes or on the docket, so we'll know the date and also who was involved from the track sheet. But who knows what it may turn into? With all the enthusiasm that's already been shown by Columbia and people who've been involved with the whole thing I think it's definitely the time for it, especially with all that's happening in the States right now with the re-popularity of the early Beatles, Byrds and all the others younger people are turning on to. I notice over here that the punk movement is still pretty strong whereas in the States it came and went real quick. It was strong for about two years, but that was about a year and a half ago and then it started to dwindle. As far as the archive stuff goes though we may have enough for a double album, or maybe even three separate volumes.

I think that what helps to continue the popularity of the group is that CBS over here and Columbia in the States have kept a lot of Byrds albums in catalogue.

That's true, but also in the States there's this free radio thing. There are certain stations in every city which play the Byrds several times a day, so kids, younger people, start hearing these things and go and find out what the hell it is. What I like is that almost every city has a station which has a mixed format of programming and they put in songs from the 50s on up through the 80s. I think that has helped because I know that there are several stations in LA where you can hear two or three Byrd songs every day. 'Turn! Turn! Turn!' and 'Mr Tambourine Man' mostly, but some obscure ones too like 'Times They Are A-Changin'' or 'It Won't Be Wrong'. Even 'Set You Free This Time' I hear on the radio once in a while. 'Feel A Whole Lot Better' you hear all the time.

You know it doesn't seem like 20 years to me. I'll be truthful: it seems like fucking yesterday! It just doesn't seem like it's been that long, yet in some ways it seems longer. For the most part though I can't believe it's been 20 years.

There were one or two general things I wanted to ask you. For instance, can you tell me about your involvement with 'The American Dreamer'?

'American Dreamer' was really Larry Schiller's baby. He wanted to do a documentary on Dennis (Hopper), just how Dennis really was, and because Dennis and I were old buddies he suggested to Larry that he came to me. Larry approached me to write some songs for the film but I had very little time to do it because Jesse (Ed Davis) and I were working on 'White Light' literally day and night in order to finish the album. They invited me to go to a screening and I left Jesse in the studio and ran down the street to see the film. I don't know whether you've seen the film, but it's a little strange. I think that it could have been handled a lot better because it turned out to be a bomb. I think that what Larry Schiller was trying to do was like a little cinéma vérité, to put across the truth about everything at that time, all the left-wing political attitude that was happening in the States especially in the early 70s. Well, I rushed in, saw the film, stumbled back out and ran back to the other studio. I got a call to do the title song and a couple of others, but the day I was suppose to go in and record those things I didn't have anything ready because I had been working solid on the 'White Light' album. When I wasn't in the studio I was spending all my time with my family, and that night we went out to dinner at Chuck's Steak House which is next door to the Record Plant down in Hollywood. As I had to go from there to the studio supposedly to cut the songs I sat down with some cocktail napkins and I wrote the songs there and then. I just had melodies in my head, so I walked right in and did the gig.

That's creativity for you!

Well I had a picture of the film in my mind, what I was supposed to say and how it was supposed to come across. It was just one of those things, but sometimes it works good that way. It's a very funny thing, that spontaneity can really happen, but it has to be right. Usually if you don't prepare something it's a drag, but in that particular case the spontaneity really made it work.

Can you tell me about 'The Farmer'?

Well they used the title of 'The American Dreamer' for the title of that. That film was like a World War II version of 'Taxi Driver'. It was set just after World War II, and this war veteran gets screwed over by these realtors in the South. It is a very violent movie, but it was done real well. The funny thing was that they didn't know what to do with the music because Hugo Montenegro was doing the track but he wanted songs which captured the mood of the film. So, one night the director was in a record store and he found 'The American Dreamer' album. Being a fan, he bought it, took it home, played it and called me immediately and asked if I would work on the film with Hugo. He asked me to do 'American Dreamer' for the movie, which I was happy to do. Hugo's son was also working on it and it turned out to be an excellent film score. The movie was really good, done really well, but it just didn't catch on. It ran in the theatres and I know it did pretty well, but other than that I don't know. The film score was even put in for an academy award nomination. They used 'American Dreamer' several times throughout the movie. I think that there was one other song I did for it, but I can't remember what it is right now because it's been so long since I've heard the record.

Finally, how's the tour been?

The thing I've enjoyed about this trip is that the guys in Lindisfarne are great people. We really did make friends there. They have a great sense of humour and are very much fun to travel with. They are very professional and handle themselves very professionally. We got a chance to get in to some quite interesting towns like Lincon and Cheltenham which I've never gotten to see before, and I really enjoyed doing it. I was glad to be back here as I've been reconnected with my friends and people I haven't seen for a while, and I've been able to re-establish my roots over here. This trip has been great in that respect, but I can't wait to get back to the guys and play with them because they're so much fun to play with. I'll tell you, by the time we get over here in the Summer we'll be smokin'!



# CHRIS HILLMAN

We saw you last in 1980 as McGuinn/Hillman. What's been happening since then?

Well Roger McGuinn and I opted to go our separate ways. We both decided that we would rather go out and do an acoustic type format, which is what he is doing at the moment too. We just decided that we really didn't want to play any more rock type things.

How long has the band that you have with you now been in existence?

Oh, about a year.

Is it likely to be a permanent set up?

I don't know. I wouldn't want to put that 'permanent' label on any band I've been in. It's mostly just old friends. We've known each other for so long and I don't know what will happen in a month or two, I really don't know.

Has Herb Pederson been involved with the band at all?

Herb's an old friend and he does work with us off and on. Actually, as Bernie was in Vermont he worked with us last weekend in California. In this particular musical family we're dealing with people that I've known for a good 15 to 20 years. We've all grown up together and as we know each others material so well we are all able to work in and out with each other. Herb and I might go out and do something later in the year as a duo, but I do like to have the freedom. You see we all came from that school of the rock band and the world is different now. We're all a little older, and I prefer the freedom to play with whomever I want whenever I want. The music business is a lot different as you well know, and we work around it that way. We aren't out making videos or anything because that's not what we're doing right now, but this is working good.

Your last album 'Morning Sky' was predominantly a bluegrass album and the new one 'Desert Rose' is more of a country album which is in keeping with all of your solo albums having a different feel to them. Is this deliberate, trying to move away each time?

No, I basically just didn't realise until 2 or 3 years ago that the best thing I do is country-oriented music. Having started in bluegrass in 1960 that's what I do the best and that's what I'll be doing. I doubt whether I'll be doing any rock.

Do you think then that you've come full circle from your time with the Hillmen?

Well in a way its full circle, but in another way I'm a little smarter than I was 20 years ago! I don't want to consider myself as a bluegrass musician though.

It's just a part of my background and I like to play this kind of music. It's fun, it's full of energy, and it's happy music. We all try to keep within that sphere

of presenting a joyful, happy sound in the world today because there is just so much negativity out there, especially in a lot of the new rock and roll. A lot of it is so down, the lyrics and everything. I like bluegrass. It's fun to play and it's fun to listen to, but I don't want to rely on that solely, I'd just like to use it in certain areas. We used to use it in the Burrito Brothers where we'd do a bluegrass set in the middle of the show and it worked quite well.

You and several of the people you are with at the moment have been involved in a number of Christian albums. Would you describe yourselves as a Christian band?

I would say that we are somewhat, but I think that we are more artists who happen to have a Christian faith. We are not Christian artists. We are not out there doing solely non-secular type music. I think that we all enjoy doing secular music, we've always done it and I find really nothing wrong with that. We enjoy being able to do both, gospel and non-gospel. In fact the four of us have just done another gospel album which should be out later this year, so we'll see what happens.

During the last couple of years your songwriting seems to have quietened down a little.

Well I have the songs, but some of them I don't think are that good. I don't have a big thing about having to put my own songs on an album. If I don't have something that's good enough I look for other material. There's a couple of my own songs on the new album, but there'll probably be more later. I have some that I've just written that I haven't recorded yet.

You appeared on the new Gene Clark album.

I sang on a song I believe. I've never seen the album! I don't even know what happened to that record, I guess it came out. I never got one!

Do you keep in touch with the old guys?

The only one I see a lot is Roger. I talk to Mike Clarke once in a while. I don't know what David Crosby's doing and I don't know what Gene Clark is doing, but I'm sure they're fine and well. I've told Roger that he should make an album for Rounder or Sugar Hill or something because it's been too long. The independent labels in the States are good. They're distributed well and they're in the stores. I think that the major labels have gotten out of hand in that they're so interested in returning a profit that they've forgotten about the music. There is an audience for people like Roger McGuinn. There's an audience for me, and there's an audience for Joan Baez too, but we're not dealing in two million sellers. It's just the same with jazz. If jazz guys go in and make an album on a \$10,000 budget which then sells 100,000 it's a big hit. It's all relative. The rock groups got so self-indulgent in the seventies that they were spending \$500,000 to make an album. It's preposterous!

There was a rumour that you and Rick Roberts were working together again.

No, no (laughs).

The inevitable last question, any chance of a Byrds reunion some time in the future?

Not likely. I think that as far as McGuinn and I are concerned it's put to bed. Let everybody remember the good times with the original five member group in the 60s, but let it lie, it's over with. I don't think that reunions work. They're a ploy, a desperation ploy when nothing else works. You've seen it in the States with the Mamas and the Papas and Three Dog Night. Reunions just become cheap and nostalgic. Let people remember the wonderful memory of the Byrds and how good it was. It was fun and it was something we all grew up with. I was in it, and the people who I grew up with and who bought the records are all my age now. They were wonderful, wonderful memories, but let it lie. The same with the Flying Burrito Brothers. It was wonderful then, and it doesn't mean that I don't do some of the old songs, but as far as a reunion goes, no. I think that the last time it just wasn't handled properly, and it just isn't a viable thing right now. I think it best to let the memory lie.