

RECORDS



"He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother," the Hollies (Epic 5-10532)

Two men appear on the horizon just as the curtain lifts. A harmonica straight out of *Shane* or something like it moans melancholy, giving way to the rich twangy Orbison-cum-Everly baritone of handsome Alan Clarke: The road is long, with many a winding turn . . . *The two men grow closer and we recognize them as David Niven and Sidney Poitier. Sidney, wounded and limping, is being sort of dragged along by Dave . . .* "But I'm strong enough to carry him/ He ain't heavy, he's my brother." The title song from the film, uh . . .

Well, friends, there is no such film, but this amazing new Hollies single is perfect for it in spite of such obstacles, being all priceless melodrama.

Mind you, this single has no more to do with rock and roll than did Matt Monro's "Born Free," but remember, the Hollies are in it for the charts. This is something like their twentieth successive hit in England. What, after all, could have greater chart appeal in these troubled times than a disarmingly overdone version of a tear-jerkingly inspirational universal-love-plea inspired (as rumor has it) by one of those Give Generously charity posters?

Sure it sounds better suited to Lulu than to the Hollies, the emotions so evocatively voiced are coming to us second-hand, having been written by Bobbys Scott and Russell (of, I believe, "A Taste Of Honey" fame), but never you mind—this record is fun, not to mention certain to appeal to the older, less rowdy, folks out there is Radioland.

JOHN MENDELSON



Live Dead, the Grateful Dead (Warners 1830)

Live Dead explains why the Dead are one of the best performing bands in America, why their music touches on ground that most other groups don't even know exists.

A list of song titles would mean very little in terms of what actually goes on inside the album. Like the early Cream, the Dead in concert tend to use their regular material as a jumping-off point, as little frameworks that exist only for what can be built on top of them. In "Dark Star," for example, they give a token reading of the song itself, waiting patiently until the vocal drops and Garcia's guitar comes out front to begin the action. About ten minutes later, if you can manage to look up by then, you might realize that what is happening bears a little resemblance to "Dark Star" as all that rollin' and tumblin' stuff did to "Spoonful." But of course, by that time, it just doesn't matter, and when the Dead slowing bring the song back around to "Dark Star," each change made with care and a strange kind of tact, you can only marvel at the distance you've traveled in such a short period of time.

Live Dead also exhibits the group's quite considerable ability in tying together differing song-threads, letting

BY J. R. YOUNG

Marsha Steinburger and her best friend, Starglow Peterson, had hitchhiked into Mill Valley from Sacramento in the early afternoon and were now sitting in Sheila Titterwell's front room on the hillside of Mount Tam. Sheila lived with some guy neither Marcia nor Starglow knew, but about whom they had heard nice things. He was at work now and would be home shortly. In the meantime, the three young lovelies were smoking some very potent dope, and were sitting on Sheila's floor watching the orange sun go down. By dusk, they were all four joints to the cosmos, and everything was a barrel of laughs.

"And that crazy fart is going to be home any minute," Sheila laughed as she took the toilet paper roll from Starglow. "You know what he does now? He comes screaming up that hill each night with Hugh Jardon, hollering as loud as he can like an asshole, 'GET OUT THE PIPE, PUT ON THE DEAD, AND SPREAD!' And like the cat is stark raving naked by the time he hits the front door." Sheila laughed again and shook her head, and then inhaled deeply on the roll.

"Put on the dead, and spread?" Marcia looked puzzled. Sheila raised one slim finger, held her breath a few seconds longer, and then exhaled slowly.

"Right. As in the Grateful Dead and legs. Real George thinks that it's the greatest to . . ."

She was interrupted as the quiet of the early evening disintegrated around them in a confusion of sound and squalor as the high whine of a VW wound down to a quick halt, and a huge voice called up to them.

"PUT ON THE DEAD AND SPREAD, 'CAUSE I'M LOADED AND READY TO GO!"



them pass naturally into one another, almost if they had been especially designed for such a move. A jamming band (and the Dead are that, if nothing else) has to rely on its sense of Flow, on its talent in taking that small series of steps which will ultimately bring it to some entirely different place from where it started. On side two, they begin with "St. Stephen," working at that until they magically appear in "The Eleven," and then, just before the final tape cut-off, you can hear them changing again with "Turn On Your Lovelight." It's beautifully conceived and done, each piece clicking together perfectly.

One of the finer things about the record is that the cuts seem to have been chosen with a great deal of care. Even on the best of nights, the group as a whole has a tendency to be spotty, with the many good moments intermingled with the bad. This is not necessarily a minus factor; when you work on such tenuous ground as the Dead, where each note means holding a balance between seven very different people and a less concrete mass out front, it's only logical to expect a large number of misses. If you've ever seen them live, you know that there are

"It's Real George now," Sheila said jumping to her feet. "Excuse me." She pulled her sweater up over her head and off her arms, and then slipped out of her jeans. She was naked in a jiffy. "It's been like this for a week now, almost two."

She quickly crossed the room to the tape deck, threaded a reel, and turned the machine on.

The two visiting girls peered at her for a long moment, and then turned their attention to the strange shadow figure charging up the front steps and leaving a trail of clothes strewn wildly behind him. He was going like sixty. "Ever since he got that album," Sheila said as she opened the bedroom door, "Real George likes nothing better than to fuck to the Grateful Dead. It makes him on fire." She winked. "It's groovy." Sheila then disappeared in the darkness of the bedroom.

And just as the Dead began "Dark Star," Real George hit the front door with his naked pink and hairy body and crashed through into the living room.

"Da da!" Marcia's and Starglow's mouths fell open as the fleeting vision swept through the room for a brief moment before disappearing along with Sheila in the darkness.

"Ahhh," someone said in there as Marcia and Starglow exchanged quizzical glances. "Ahh." The music grew louder.

"That's far out," Starglow said.

"Very far out," Marcia nodded. The two girls turned around and looked back out into the hills. Already lights were beginning to come on as the land grew blacker.

"Gee, I wish I had a date tonight," Marcia finally said.

BARON WOLMAN



Rainbow in Curved Air, Terry Riley (Columbia MS 7315)

Terry Riley is a composer-performer who has celebrated himself upwards to a new music. An endless rapper, like Castro (but without words), Terry presents night-long, sleep-in concert jam sessions. His idea is not to "entertain," but to create an environment of sound within which the listener can hold his own thought parties.

The first side of the new LP is the title piece, played entirely by Terry. Stretching out more than eighteen minutes, "Rainbow in Curved Air" is an exquisite panoply of bright and sharp musical tones that speed by the air without weighing the listener down.

Specifically, Terry laid down, with electronic keyboard instruments (organ, electric harpsichord, and rockscord), a base structure—a 14-beat cycle of pitches falling within the Mixolydian mode. This "drone" sets up a particular mood which Terry elaborates by adding melodic riffs that flow in and around the cycle, but remain detached from it. The tension that arises from balancing the drone and the free blowing gives the piece a vibrant feeling of taking off skywards.

Perhaps what's new about Riley is that his music, though in several respects "electronic," has none of the coldness usually associated with electronic sound. This is because fancy technical gimmickry is not exploited for its own sake with Terry. He uses tape delays, "band passes" and such for musical effects rather than for instant mind-blowing. His is a new kind of head music that's warmly outgoing but still demanding on the ear.

CONRAD SILVER

In Issue #48, December 13, in our review of Memphis Swamp Jam, we mistakenly identified Furry Lewis as Fred McDowell and Sleepy John Estes as Nathan Beauregard. We apologize for this error to the performers involved and to anyone who might have been misled or offended. On the following page of the same issue we mistakenly identified Son House as Skip James.

Condemned



Fiends & Angels, Martha Velez (Sire SES 97008). Hair meets the blues. The blues is poorer for it. Shirley and Lee also suffer.

Eight Miles High, The Golden Earring (Atlantic SD 8244). Scandinavia's answer to the Iron Butterfly. You were waiting for that, weren't you?

Blues Full Circle, Tim Williams (Epic BN 26472). The poor man's Dave Ray. Rock and roll has never been stiffer, and the blues have never been duller.

Moloch (Enterprise ENS 1002). Their ads said they eat little children. It doesn't seem unlikely. The ugliest rock around. Who Knocked the Brains Out of the Sky? Eric Von Schmidt (Smash SRS 67124). The times have been a-changin', and Von Schmidt, alas, has changed with them. A bummer.

On Time, Grand Funk Railroad (Capitol ST-307). One of the most simplistic, talentless, one-dimensional, unmusical groups of the year. The drumming guaranteed to send you up the wall. Absolutely unbelievable.

Truth, Lies, Magic & Faith, Dick Monda (Verve 5077). Studio-musician Christian-rock—like "Onward Christian Soldiers."

times when they simply can't do it, when the thread that has been so carefully nursed is suddenly snapped apart, when they amble around, trying to find the key that will unlock the door again.

Live Dead contains none of this searching. It's all there, up moment after moment, everything snugly tucked in place. "Turn On Your Lovelight," the usual Pippen show-stopper, is right to the point here, all the different sections coming together in a nice ripe whole, moving quickly with nary a jerk or piece left hanging. Even a long eight-minute section of feedback on side four is handled well, each individual howl pinpointed with unerring accuracy. And as in concert, a piece from the Incredible String Band's "A Very Cellular Song" is a perfect way to close out the show.

I'm not going to end this by using some overworn phrase about how this is possibly the best live album ever a must for your record collection something no fan should be without etc. etc. But if you'd like to visit a place where rock is likely to be in about five years, you might think of giving Live Dead a listen or two. LENNY KAYE