

# Hail Cat Stevens as 'New' Star--Second Time Around

One year ago, a record review on this page predicted that Cat Stevens' "Mona Bone Jakon" album would rocket Stevens to instant stardom. Well, Stevens' stardom had to wait a few months, until he achieved nearly-instant fame through a Troubadour appearance and his second A&M album "Tea for the Tillerman" was released.

Many of Stevens' fans refer to these records as Stevens' first and second albums. But they are only the first and second albums of his second career. For a few years and a tuberculosis attack, Stevens was—as he sings on "Mona Bone Jakon"—a "Pop Star."

## Shed Image

Some five years ago, Stevens wrote and sang highly creative songs, finally achieving hit status in 1967 with "Matthew and Son." Stevens—born Steve Georgiou—became a genuine teen idol, complete with considerable promotion, whirlwind schedules and lush string arrangements to "protect" his original songs.

His career was interrupted by TB ("I'm goin' in the cold bank," he sings in the autobiographical "Pop Star"), and during some 18 months of recuperation he shed the pop star image and sought an expression for the real Cat Stevens.

In the hospital, he

wrote most of the songs on "Mona Bone Jakon," and "Tea for the Tillerman" contains 11 songs written mostly in July and August 1970, just after the release of "Mona Bone Jakon."

"Songs like 'Miles from Nowhere' and 'Father and Son' have been roaming around in my mind for quite some time," said Stevens.



CAT STEVENS  
Second Career

Two of the songs, "But I Might Die Tonight" and "Father and Son," were written respectively for a film and an original music drama.

"Wild World," Stevens' first hit single in his second career, is from the "Tea for the Tillerman" album.

His new single, "Moon Shadow," is from a forthcoming A&M album. Stevens opened the show at the Troubadour with "Moon Shadow."

Musicians on "Tea for the Tillerman" include Stevens, guitar and keyboards; Alan Davies, second guitar; John Ryan, bass; Harvey Burns, drums, and John Rostein, solo violin.

## Starts Young

Davies accompanied Stevens both at the Troubadour and on the recent half-hour special telecast on Channel 28 and broadcast simultaneously in stereo on KPCC-FM.

Davies also is a veteran of the music business. At 28 he is seven years older than Stevens, and his first professional experience as a guitarist was with various English Skiffle bands in the early 1950s.

Veering away from this musical form, Davies began playing traditional English and American folk music, and eventually ended up as part of a folk act with Jon Mark, a former guitarist with John Mayall and now half of "Mark-Almond."

Davies played in a group called "Sweet Thursday" in 1968, and then worked with Spencer Davis' group for a short time. Soon he met Paul Samwell-Smith, producer of both of Stevens' A&M albums, and played on both.

With a gold record to his credit this year, Stevens has achieved renewed stardom, and has been paid a supreme compliment: Deram has rereleased Stevens' earlier albums on that label, and they too are selling well.



HAMILTON, Joe Frank and Reynolds have released first album on Dunhill label. Included is their hit single "Don't Pull Your Love." Album blends jazz, calypso, folk and rock, and five of 11 songs are originals. Single is currently fifth on national best-seller list.

## John Stewart Appearing at Ice House

Singer-composer John Stewart is appearing at the Ice House in Pasadena through Sunday, along with Ron Coden and comedian Eric Cohen.

Stewart has written such songs as "California Bloodlines," "July You're a Woman" and "Never Goin' Back." He has recorded two solo albums for Capitol Records, and is now under contract to Reprise.

## Give Schedule

Persons attending his concerts often are surprised to discover a talent not evident on Stewart's musical albums. He tells humorous stories, usually tied to his songs.

Advance reservations are advised (MU 1-8942), as sizable crowds are expected. Opening next Tuesday at the Ice House and appearing through July 25 are balladeer Chuck Mitchell, singer Jimmy Crickett and comedian Gabe Kaplan.

July 27 through Aug. 1, Kaplan will be joined by singer Tim Morgon. Aug. 3 through 8, We 5 will be at the Ice House, along with Michael Johnson.

Song stylist Denny Brooks will be at the Pasadena spot Aug. 10 through 15, with Belland and Somerville appearing Aug. 17 through 22. The Ice House recommends reservations for Morgon and Belland and Somerville in addition to Stewart.

## King to Appear

Meanwhile, blues guitarist Albert King will be appearing at the Ash Grove in Los Angeles through Sunday.

King played the Ash Grove in 1967 in his West Coast debut. Since then his albums "Born Under a Bad Sign," "Live Wire Blues Power" and "Love Joy" have catapulted him to the top echelon of blues artists, alongside such greats as his legendary cousin B. B. King.

Albert King perhaps is best known for his song "Born Under a Bad Sign," which has been recorded by the Cream and the Paul Butterfield Blues Band.

Sharing the Ash Grove bill with King is Alice Stuart, country folk singer.

## Albums Issued

Among new album releases are Johnny Cash's "Man in Black," "Vikki Carr's Love Story," Rod Stewart's "Every Picture Tells a Story," Leon Russell and the Shelter People's "The Byrds' 'Byrdmaniax.'" Most appear to be destined for top sales.

## HYBRID EXPERIENCE

### Howard Roberts Blends Music, Freeway Sounds

Would you believe "freeway rock?"

The mythical Antelope Freeway joins Howard Roberts on his latest album, which Roberts said "has been planned with great care aimed at protecting the structures that result from a highly charged atmosphere existing within the boundaries of totally spontaneous improvisation."

"Antelope Freeway" combines instrumental virtuosity, studio technicians and a blend of jazz, blues and outer-space sounds. Roberts, a master guitarist, producer Ed Michel, and skilled musicians and technicians have concocted a hybrid music-freeway experience.

## Double Sonata

Part of the album is musical. Part of it consists of two freeway travelers tuning from one radio station to another (turning in the end of Leon Russell's "Hummingbird" among other things).

And the rest is a blend of guitar and jackhammer, horns and traffic.

"Fundamentally, it would be strange, but the strangeness had to serve the music," Michel said.

"Antelope Freeway" is a double-sonata. Its two parts being the music and the freeway, which develop separately but criss-cross frequently.

Most of the music was recorded in one afternoon by an improvisational quintet. Roberts knew drummer Bob Morin, and knew but had never ex-

plored jazz material with guitarist Mike Deasy.

Morin knew, but had never played with, pianist Pete Robinson. None of the others knew rock-oriented bassist Brian Garofalo, Michel noted.

## Use Energy Bow

"The material was played, not discussed, in a free format—that is, no tempo, key, pattern or style was predetermined."

After the material was recorded, the tracks became the base for improvising and developing in later sessions, using new musicians.

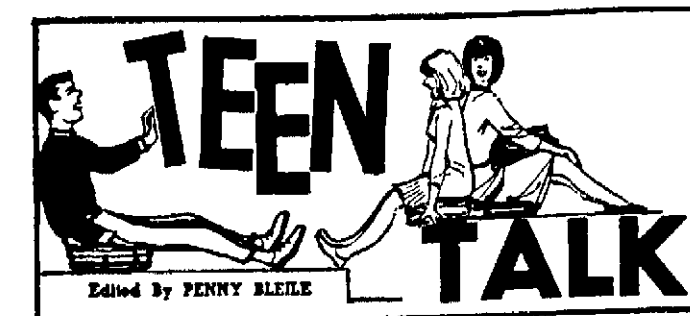
"A number of startling technical devices were employed, including the Energy Bow which allows any instrument distortion—free sustaining power—definitely, and the more common Ring Modulator," said Michel.

## Note Influence

And the freeway sort of goes on forever. If the record is played on an automatic changer, the sound continues until the moment the tone arm is lifted from the disc.

The title "Antelope Freeway" grew out of an episode of the Firesign Theater, whose influence is gratefully acknowledged by Roberts and Michel.

On the Firesign Theater's album "How Can You Be in Two Places at Once when You're Not Anywhere at All?" a driver hears road signs as he goes past them. This phenomenon is reproduced on a part of Howard Roberts' "Antelope Freeway" album.



## RECORDS IN REVIEW

### 'Stephen Stills 2' Seen to Be Significant Album

By PETER BRONSON

Stephen Stills' first solo album (he is, of course, one-fourth of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young) was not well liked by the critics, but not because of poor musicianship or Stills' singing.

What faults the album had seemed to lie in the relationship between Stills' performance and his material. His voice was strong but rather colorless; and the music was technically fine, but without many memorable or extraordinary tunes.

With the release of "Stephen Stills 2" Stills has overcome many of these problems. His melody lines still wander sometimes, but both the songs and their lyrics are polished and have an aura of importance and significance that was missing before.

Behind Stills, vocals, the music is alive. There have been few major changes in musicians, but the very major addition of Eric Clapton, Nils Lofgren and a brass section has made a big difference.

The songs themselves are on the order of "Church" and "We are Not Helpless," perhaps the best on Stills' first album. "Stephen Stills 2" is a more revealing slice of Stills' own personality, and the songs cover topics from ecology and astrology to his own attempts to reconcile a desire for a simple life and concern over America's social problems.

Altogether, this is a chance to discover viewpoints and appreciate talent, not just an obligation to listen because Stephen Stills is a "superstar."

Hamilton, Joe Frank and Reynolds currently have the nation's number five single in "Don't Pull Your Love." The group's first album, "Hamilton, Joe Frank and Reynolds," is a difficult one to assess in terms of what it means for the group's future. It is a well-performed, pleasant offering and shows promise, but the group is still searching for originality and a distinctive style—and hasn't yet found either.

The vocal work is adequate, and the instrumental—especially by Tommy Reynolds—are excellent. But it remains to be seen whether Hamilton, Joe Frank and Reynolds

Reynolds become an original, important band or just another bubble-gum group.

A Reynolds vibe solo on his "Nora" (one of five original songs on the album) is very good, and several songs here have infectious melodies, but the total effect is one of dabbings—a little jazz, some calypso, some brass here, folk and rock there.

These three musicians show great capabilities. I hope they will direct their talents to more daring and original musical thoughts, because the raw material is there.

An important new name (that isn't really new) in pop music is Shawn Phillips, who co-wrote many songs with Donovan but is now recording on his own.

His latest album is "Second Contribution," the second part of a trilogy which is being released a disc at a time. Phillips' songs blend into each other, forming interesting and sometimes difficult-to-understand themes.

Phillips, a bearded Texan with hair practically to his waist, has a crisp and instantly recognizable voice. His songs are well-

written and sometimes just subtly different from each other. Rapid-fire lyrics add great energy to the songs.

Phillips, incidentally, has been signed to portray Jesus in the touring production of the rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Mary Travers, a third of Peter, Paul and Mary for more than 10 years, has one of the year's best records in "Mary," her first solo album. But it currently ranks 75th in national sales according to Billboard, behind such "gems" as the two latest Grand Funk Railroad albums.

Mary sings some original material, as well as three fine John Denver songs and others. She possesses one of the music world's great natural voices, and her singing is expressive and rich.

Included on "Mary" are an original poem, Elton John and Bernie Taupin's extended "Indian Sunset," the hit single "The Song is Love" and Rod McKuen's "Children One and All."

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Drama Unit of Los Angeles County Dept. of Parks and Recreation at 749-6911, extension 553.

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## CENTER AISLE

By OVID GOODE JR.

James Taylor makes his acting debut in Universal's "Two-Lane Blacktop," playing the part of a soft-spoken, easy-going street automobile racer.

Accompanied by his partner-mechanic (played by Dennis Wilson) they follow the sun in their rebuilt 1935 Chevy which boasts more than 300 horsepower from an engine in excess of 400 cubic inches. They manage to stay on the road and to make ends meet by challenging other street racers and beating them with uncanny ease.

Not long after the film starts they are joined by a girl (Laurie Bird) who, very nonchalantly, hops into the back seat of the Chevy while the fellows are grabbing a bite to eat. Without a word to the girl the two get in the car and drive away, making our duo a trio.

## Challenge GTO

The other main character in "Two-Lane Blacktop" is a middle-aged, egotistical guy played by Warren Oates. With a little maneuvering our trio goads him into a cross-country race to Washington, D.C., with the wager being pink slips.

Even though the stakes are high, Oates is sure his specially-built 1970 GTO can easily handle "those hot-rod punks" and off they go.

Although Taylor gives a fairly adequate performance in the movie, his characterization does not fit the usual stereotype of street racer, who is usually pictured as being outgoing, aggressive and cocky.

## Elvis to Appear at Hotel in Tahoe

The Sahara Tahoe Hotel has signed the "Elvis Summer Festival" to play in the High Sierra Theatre next Tuesday, July 20, through Aug. 2 (not Aug. 20 as erroneously stated last week). This engagement will mark Elvis Presley's Northern Nevada debut.

Presley is a veteran of live performances in Las Vegas, where he will return soon after concluding his Tahoe debut.

Unlike this image Taylor is quite reserved and hardly says 10 complete sentences in the entire movie. This doesn't mean he doesn't communicate however; his actions and mannerisms throughout the film portray quite a bit of the character and when he does say something it's right to the point without beating around the bush.

## Cite Loneliness

"Two-Lane Blacktop" is actually like two movies in one. The most obvious story deals with the car racing of the people involved, but underneath all this the second story deals with the loneliness of the characters.

Oates and Miss Bird seem to exemplify this picture of loneliness. Throughout the cross-country trip he picks up hitchhiker after hitchhiker telling each one a different lie hoping to win their approval and acceptance, while Miss Bird plays a free and unchained chick using her body as her ticket for transportation and getting rides leading to nowhere.

Both Taylor and Wilson seem to be spurred on by their street car racing as a means of either finding something missing in their lives or perhaps running away from something in their past. In many ways "Two-Lane Blacktop" could be called the four-wheel "Easy Rider."

## Four Give Up

While the film does not make any astounding social comment as was done in "Easy Rider," the fact that these four characters have more or less given up on the "establishment" and taken to the highways for their means of existence may quite well be considered a putdown on our society.

Several drawbacks in the movie include the fact that nobody has a name, quite an improbable turn of events, and the fact that the film editing could have been much improved. Oftentimes in the flick the camera shifts abruptly from one scene to another, leaving the viewer wondering what happened in the previous scene.

James Taylor fans may be a little disappointed over the fact that he doesn't do any singing in the movie, yet the film is worth seeing on its own merits.

## Columbia's New Group 'Simpson' Releases Album

Simpson is both a group—of four musicians—and a man, Bland Simpson, a singer-songwriter. The new group has released its first Columbia album, titled simply "Simpson," and it is set in a 19th century landscape of trains, sideshows, church bells and poker games.

Bland Simpson was born and raised in small-town North Carolina, and his upbringing is reflected in his music. It has a solid country flow, with a four-piece acoustic sound (piano, guitar, bass and drums).

After attending the University of North Carolina, Simpson worked for a New York book publisher for a time before quitting and turning full-time to songwriting.



DON McLEAN performs title song from his album "Tapestry" on public service television announcement for Sierra Club. Group's functions include wildlife conservation, anti-pollution programs, general counseling on ecologically important matters.