

# DISCUSSIONS

By Gregory Hall

**Jethro Tull**

**Songs From The Wood**  
(Chrysalis Records)

Ian Anderson has taken Jethro Tull back to the days of old, both in history and in career. The collection of songs Anderson presents on *Songs* are medieval tales of lust, seduction, ribald life, and courtly love; all updated and given the distinctive Tull signature.

The most obvious difference in *Songs*, compared to the last three Jethro Tull albums, is that Anderson is no longer engaged in parody of himself, or in over-indulgent self pity. Anderson's approach to this new group of songs immediately recalls the Tull of the early seventies. Restored to the music is the freshness, urgency, and fun missing from previous projects.

However, the most welcome addition to the band's sound in the restoration and renewed emphasis on Anderson jazz-tinged flute. Using the flute as centerpiece, the band functions with clock-work precision and musical skill. Anderson's voice is sure and believable, his readings of lyrics suggestive and well phrased, and his production of the album superb; making most of the songs instant Tull classics.

**Rick Wakeman**  
**White Rock**  
(A&M Records)

*White Rock* is a soundtrack to the film of the same name, with all original music composed by multi-keyboardist Rick Wakeman. Wakeman handles all keyboards and synthesizers; the only other person on the album is a drummer.

The movie is based on the Winter Olympic Games, and is a documentary of sorts depicting the action, intensity, and thrill of winter sports. Wakeman had the job of setting the film to music, and to convey the feeling of the scenes within the dynamics of the music. Wakeman combines his classical prowess and flair for romantic drama with his trademark of contemporary keyboard technology. What results is music so descriptive that the listener does not feel

he must go to the movie to understand the music. Simply closing the eyes and letting the imagination wonder to snowy mountains suffices.

**Justin Hayward**  
**Songwriter**  
(Deram Records)

In five solo attempts from the five members of the Moody Blues, there has not been enough decent material to comprise one Moody Blues group album. Justin Hayward's previous project was an album called *Bluejays*, recorded in collaboration with ex-Moody John Lodge. *Bluejays*, released early last year, was the best of the solos recorded by any of the Moodies, even though the album was flawed by uneven writing and aural sameness.

Justin Hayward, in his latest album *Songwriter*, has lived up to my expectations by making an album the same all-around quality as a Moody Blues album. *Songwriter* recalls the Moodie's best moments, with a collection of songs evenly paced, well-produced, and often brilliantly arranged by Hayward. String arrangements by Peter Knight, known for his work on the classic *Days Of Future Passed* album, highlight two songs—"Stage Door" and "One Lonely Room."

**Quincy Jones**  
**Roots**  
(A&M Records)

Most of the music on this album comes in tight, less-than-a-minute snips laced together on each side of the record and mixed with a minimum of key dialogue from the cast of the show. My main complaint with *Roots* is that there is too little music: the album's playing time is less than 25 minutes, and it seems there was a lot more excellent music that could have been drawn from the show that would not have acted merely as filler for the album.

Musically, *Roots* is faithful to the show except that the original acapella gospel arrangement of "Somebody's Callin' My Name" has been replaced by a spruced-up organ-accompanied version sung by Rev. James Cleveland, conducting the Wattline Choir. I find this change annoying because the original was

inspired, naturally potent, and a musical highpoint of the show.

Letta Mbulu's vocal on "Many Rains Ago" is worth the price of the album. Her voice combined with Jones' beautiful score and arrangement end side two with a dash of simple splendor.

**Booker T. & The M.G.'s**  
**Universal Language**  
(Asylum Records)

Back in the sixties, Booker T. & The M.G.'s became known for their work as session musicians behind Otis Redding, Carla Thomas, and Wilson Pickett. Their tight and disciplined brand of music was a major influence in the development of contemporary soul from the then-legendary "Memphis sound." On their own, they gained fame with a string of instrumental hits, which started with "Green Onions" and ended with the groups' disbanding in the early seventies.

Now, after pursuing individual ambitions, including session work, production of other artists, and solo albums, Booker T. & The M.G.'s have reformed. Their new album, *Universal Language*, immediately places the group in the commercial jazz mainstream, which hints at disco, but retains its sophistication and expert crafting.

Out front is Booker T.'s expressive and funky organ, surrounded by Steve Cropper's guitar counterpoint. If nothing else, this album proves why Cropper has been called one of the great masters of the electric guitar. Throughout *Universal Language's* nine instrumental cuts, Booker T. and Cropper complement each other perfectly and trade solo riffs with tight precision and skill. Most of the cuts, most notably "Moto Cross", put the rhythm section through the paces with quick tempo and color changes. Another song, "Last Tango In Memphis," is mellow and bluesy.

The group has pulled their roots out of the sixties and transplanted them into the seventies. Their music is packed with energy, and mostly fun; which makes *Universal Language* much more than a gathering of musicians. Its good to have them back.

## Herman Thunders His Herd Through Harrisburg

By Steve Nailor

On Thursday, March 3, 1977, 351 people at the Harrisburg Area Community College were treated to several hours of alluring jazz which they won't soon forget. Woody Herman and the Young Thundering Herd were in town with some of the many sounds which they have made popular.

Herman and the Young Thundering Herd played quite a variety of jazz compositions. They started by playing several songs which have been with the band for years, among them "Reunion at Newport" and "Woodchoppers Ball." These were greeted by momentous applause by all, but especially from the older members of the audience.

One, Trum Simmons, a HACC professor said, "This has always been my first love in music." Later, the tunes which are on their most recent albums, including "Pavan" were featured. These presented compositions by Herman, his lead trumpeter, Alan Visutti, and such well-known musicians as Chic Corea and Carole King. Highlighted in the evening's performance were several solos. They were performed by Herman, Visutti, Frank Zaiberi, a multi-talented musician on tenor sax, oboe, and percussion, and trumpeter, Nelson Hatt.

One of the highlights of the evening, for this reporter, was getting to know about the life of a "Big Band." Nelson Hatt, the trumpeter, revealed several points of interest. Hatt, who has been with the band for three years, said, "We play practically every night, with about one night off for every ten we play. Playing so often, we get to play many high schools and colleges. We enjoy these performances because we meet and hold seminars at many of these schools, on the average of three a month."

He went on to say that the band travels 300 - 400 miles daily. They normally travel by bus for local trips but fly to the West Coast, where they will play California, then on to Honolulu, for a week in May and June.

For those who have followed Woody Herman and the Young Thundering Herd over the years, Herman announced that in November, the band recorded an album in recognition of Herman's 40th year as a band leader. Featured on this album, to be released in March, are many of the performers who have played with Herman over the years as well as several outstanding tunes of today. It promises to be a great album.

## Mac-J Dance Troupe

The first Black dance troupe here at Penn State was entitled the Mac-J Dance Troupe, which was created during the Fall of 1973 by Ms. Glynise Cooley, a student who saw the need for a cultural outlook on dance.

In the Spring of 1976, Ms. Sybil Peachlum, another student, decided to renew this worthwhile endeavor; hence, founding the Paul Robeson Dance Troupe.

The variations of the Paul Robeson Dance Troupes' styles are embodied into a language that of which can be expressed in physical action to speak of the subtleties of the body and soul. The style also brings some revelation, some comment, some added shade of meaning

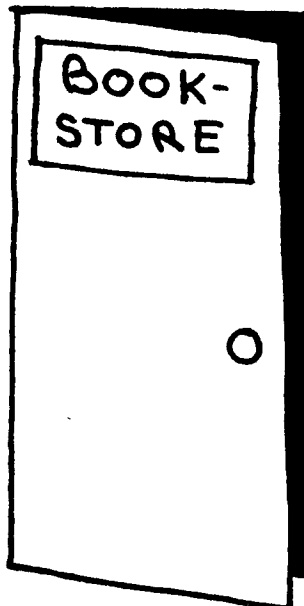
to a theme, which cannot be found in its original state.

The future dance performances will include variations of dance styles, such as: jazz, contemporary modern, modern, jazz, afrikan and rhymical jazz dance.

One need not be experienced to join the dance troupe. All that is required is that one be interested and devoted.

Along with the dance aspect is the executive branch of the troupe which is comprised of five positions -- president, secretary, treasurer, business manager, and activities committee.

For further information, contact the Paul Robeson Cultural Center at 865-3776.



"I'M LOOKING FOR ANOTHER COURSE FOR NEXT TERM. WHICH ONE HAS THE CHEAPEST BOOK?!"

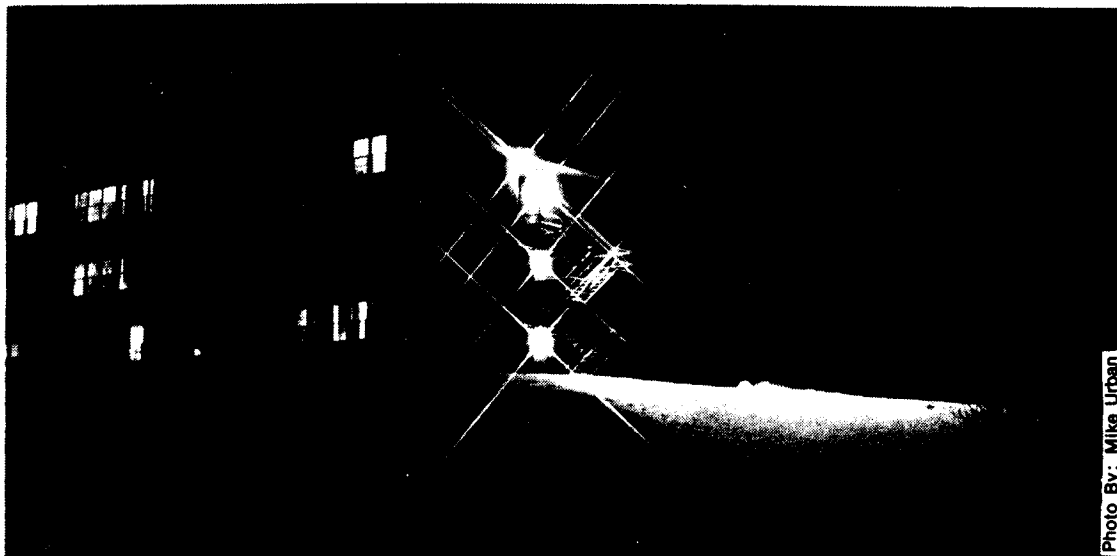


Photo By: Mike Urban