

ARTS and CULTURE

DISCUSSIONS

By Greg Hall

This Year's Model

Elvis Costello (Columbia Records)
Rebirth. I sat listening to the hum in my headphones. Awestruck. Dumbfounded. Elvis Costello's new album had finished playing ten minutes ago, yet I could not rationalize the sense of Revelation, the refreshing bursts of enthusiasm, the feeling I had found something just minutes ago that had been lost for years. Ironical his name should be Elvis, for I see him now as, alongside Springsteen, The Great White Hope of Rock n' Roll.

The songs, "This Year's Girl", "No Action", "Living In Paradise", "Little Triggers", "Radio, Radio". The urgent melodies, the gripping rhythm, the electric guitar, the harmonies, the toughness and the intelligence. The production by Nick Lowe is crisp and perfect

to enhance the vitality and presence of the performance. Elvis is out front, and his three-piece band has been stripped down to the essence of Form—the guitar plus bass, drums, and Farfisa organ.

Elvis Costello's minimalist philosophy could spark an architectural restoration of musical form, much the same as removing an Art-Deco facade from a Victorian building. Costello borrows from subterranean styles, taking what appeals to his art and discarding the rest. Yet, he is not an imitator. What comes out is very much original, inventive, and multi-dimensional. In his music, Costello pays homage to, and in some places even worships his obvious influences in much the same sense that the Beatles owed a debt to Elvis (Presley) as a groundbreaker and

originator of ideas.

All the great influences are there in **This Year's Model**. Early Beatles. Early Stones. Early Small Faces. Early Who. Traces of the Zombies, and the Mysterians, and The Sir Douglas Quintet. A casual tip of the hat to Springsteen and to the New Wave. In the decade where all but a handful of aging rockers have become purveyors of public taste and popular entertainment, **This Year's Model** stands as a statement of what has been misplaced. Naked metaphors. Honest anger. Disillusion. If **This Year's Model** is not the best rock n' roll album of the seventies, then it surely is the most important.

Excitable Boy

Warren Zevon, although a native Californian, has managed to transcend the California Sound prevalent in the stylized music of The Eagles, Linda Ronstadt, and Jackson Browne. The regional influence is definitely there, but is thoroughly diffused by his sometimes manic personality and the rumors of a personal legacy being formulated. The definition of Zevon's music, presented fully-baked on his second album **Excitable Boy**, makes him a unique presence

and important contributor to a rather sterile scene.

Zevon is a skillful songwriter with a penchant for bizarre humor ("Werewolves of London", "Excitable Boy"). His themes also deal with introspective romance ("Accidentally Like a Martyr", "Tenderness on the Block"), political atrophy ("Lawyers, Guns, & Money", "Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner"), and characters caught in a lapse of history ("Veracruz"). Along with his interest in songwriting, he also professes to be a serious pianist and classical composer, with a first symphony in the works. Quite a combination, but it works perfectly.

Excitable Boy displays Zevon's technical expertise and powerful vocal phrasing, all while rocking out with the best of the American Bunch. The quality and command of this album should firmly place Warren Zevon as one of Rock's most promising contenders, and **Excitable Boy** as one of the more refreshing albums in 1978.

Easter Patti Smith Group

(Arista Records)
Easter swallows the spirit and the flesh of Rock n' Roll. It is Patti Smith's statement of rebirth and regeneration, with

amplified electric energy and spontaneous fits of poetry as a vehicle to achieve pre-planned ends. It is also the first Patti Smith album that works towards a concrete statement of the artist's ideas and intentions.

I have always had trouble getting past Smith's outward "punk" manifestations—just when I thought she might be serious, her credibility as an articulate human being convinced me opposite. **Easter** proves her posing and posturing as a front, a persona, a fantasy situation of the most violent nature.

To be able to spit and snarl poetry in front of a wall of sound, white noise, and before a captive audience—there exists a strange S & M relationship between audience and Star. If Elvis Costello captures the Essence of Form, then Smith captures the raw, spirit of Rock n' Roll. Her fantasy is kindled by recalling her muses Rimbaud and Jim Morrison.

Like Morrison, she too is obsessed with the image, the role, and the vision of the Rock Star as Prometheus with an electric guitar. **Easter** is not for everyone, nor will it get much radio airplay. Yet it is a vital and necessary statement, a stark portrait of an artist's insight.

American Short Stories

Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the AMERICAN SHORT STORIES series was aired for the first time last year over PBS affiliated television stations across the country.

Now a unique paperback edition called **The American Short Story** has been issued by Dell Publishing Company as an outgrowth of the video films. The new volume draws together under one cover nine short stories, written by prominent American authors, which were used as the basis of the six-week television series.

American authors represented in the book are: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Richard Wright, Ambrose Bierce, Henry James, Stephen Crane, Flannery O'Connor, and John Updike. Their stories are: **Bernice Bobs Her Hair**, **I'm a Fool**, **Soldier's Home**, **Almos' a Man**, **Parker Adderson**, **Philosopher**, **The Jolly Corner**, **The Blue Hotel**, **The Displaced Person**, and **The Music School**.

In addition to the authors' texts, **The American Short Story** contains three complete teleplays. These are: **Bernice Bobs Her Hair** by Joan Micklin Silver; **Soldier's Home** by Robert Geller; and **The Music School** by John Korty. Representative scenes from each of the other six stories include teleplay excerpts from: **I'm a Fool** by Ron Cowen; **Almos' a Man** by Leslie Lee;

Parker Adderson, Philosopher by Arthur Barron; **The Blue Hotel** by H.M. Petrakis; **The Displaced Person** by Horton Foote; and **The Jolly Corner** by Arthur Barron.

The American Short Story contains: a foreword by Robert Geller (Executive Producer of the AMERICAN SHORT STORIES series); an introduction by Calvin Skaggs (Chairman of the Literary Advisory Committee which participated in script development); and interpretive essays and interviews with Jan Kadar, Horton Foote, and Joan Micklin Silver (writers and/or directors of teleplays).

The format of **The American Short Story** presents the reader with a happy marriage of original text and teleplay. It is fascinating, for example, to read John Updike's **Music School** as he wrote it; then to reread it with its parallel action as presented on television. The rereading is accomplished by printing the teleplay actions on the left of the page while carrying the narrative on the right. One benefit in using this format is that such a careful rereading brings a new perspective to the meaning of the original words.

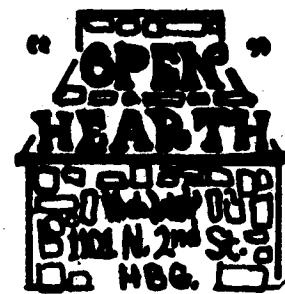
The American Short Story was developed in response to requests from individual viewers and schools and colleges throughout the country. The stories, which span the past century, present dramatic insights into the lifestyles and

social issues of the American people. It is this collection examination of American culture which led the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide funds for the first television series on the subject.

The National Endowment considers the AMERICAN SHORT STORIES grant to be a good example on the expanding influence of humanities on this country. The Humanities award of just over two million dollars which was made to "Learning in Focus" in New York, provided a television series which reached millions of Americans during its first showing and millions more during its rebroadcast. That successful series in turn led to the production of a useful and enjoyable book and to plans for combining the television reruns with both credit and non-credit courses at some of the nation's colleges.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has provided a second grant of \$350,000 to "Learning in Focus," for pre-production work on another short story series, as well as a matching grant of \$1,000,000 for production. The eight stories for this second series are in the process of being selected.

The American Short Story is the first dramatic series seen on U.S. public television to have been purchased by BBC II for presentation in the United Kingdom.



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Sat. April 8 - American Standard Band

Wed. April 12 - Winter Solstice

LCB REQUIRED

Dance Recital

Middletown - Won-Kyung Cho, Korean classical dancer, actor, scholar and dance critic will present a solo recital in the auditorium at Penn State-Capitol Campus on Tuesday, April 11, at noon.

Cho graduated with an M.A. degree from Yonsei University, where he then became assistant professor and visiting lecturer on Korean literature and dance. He conducted his own dance studio in Seoul and also served as dance critic for four of Korea's leading newspapers. Coming to the United States

in 1960, Cho studied at Juilliard School of Music and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. He was awarded the Doctor of Fine Arts Degree from Monmouth College in 1963. Cho has performed and given lectures at colleges, universities, museums, and television stations across five continents. He has published two books: "Dances of Korea" in 1962 and "Dance in Korean Culture" in 1967.

The public is cordially invited to attend what promises to be a fascinating performance.