

# "Chr★st You Know It Ain't Easy"

by Charles Peter Eschweiler  
In Derek Taylor's liner notes for the Byrd's *Turn Turn Turn* album, he said of the disc "Give this album to grumpy uncles for Christmas, it will help". The statement is the sort of thing that is whimsical and slightly ridiculous sounding.

The statement, however, fits John Sebastian's solo albums **JOHN B. SEBASTIAN . . . RE-PRISE '6379** perfectly.

Sebastian has always had a gift for being amiable, as any old time Lovin Spoonful freak can tell you. Unfortunately too much of his verbal warmth of the Spoonful days was spoiled by the rest of the band's slapstick clowning.

When the Spoonful broke up, Sebastian went into hiding and was heard of once in a while, as being contracted to Elektra and doing an album that would knock everyone out.

A year ago Elektra sent out their press releases and Hit Parade got an interview with Sebastian wherein he described his album. Elektra never got around to

releasing it, and Sebastian was moving to Reprise records. Somehow in the shuffle MGM came in and a year after the Sebastian album was recorded moved by Elektra, it was brought out under Reprises label. A few days later MGM released an identical version, both albums being called John B. Sebastian.

Reprise had the legal right to the album, since they bought it from Elektra. MGM was being charged with simply taping it off a Reprise copy. At any rate MGM is going broke and deservedly so—they are rip-off artists.

While all this legal hassle was going on, Sebastian was touring. The album was being praised and it would seem he is at least recognized as the superstar (to use that worn out term) he is.

The reason is his amiability. He never forces a point when insinuation will do. You might say that he's still thinking in 1967 terms of flower power but the maturity of his work on this album rules that out.

Every number on the album has

a mood of reflection, as if Sebastian is giving us advice by simply relating his past experiences. Thus when Sebastian sings about an old lover instead of Dylan's anguished and still hoping there might be something left as shown in *Just Like a Woman*, he looks at a more objective way, such as in one line from *She's A Lady*:

She's a lady, give her time for she's allowed to change her mind

She's a lady, happy to say that she once was mine.

It is interesting to compare Sebastian's feelings about many things in his music to those of Dylan's. Both men are the same age and have the same background (they probably played together in the village folk scene at one time).

Basically, Dylan and Sebastian write on the same level, except that Dylan is surrealistic and Sebastian is realistic. When you listen to *Darling Be Home Soon* and then to *I Want You*, you can realize that there is little difference between the two. Dylan is a bit more complex and hostile. Sebastian is hopeful, but practical, and strangely fatalistic. Yet both songs communicate the yearning they are supposed to.

Sebastian's style would be superficially dismissed as not being serious enough, yet it is just difficult to write of complex situations realistically and communicate them well as it is to take them and fit them into a surreal vein.

As for hostility, most artists realize maturity only after they've gone through enough changes to substitute communications of hostility to those of contentment. Dylan managed to reach his maturity in an ungraceful series of moves that can be traced from

*Blond on Blond* to Nashville Skyline, the line of separation being the way John Wesley Harding differentiated from *Blond on Blond*.

Sebastian had achieved his style by the time his music for the soundtrack of *You're A Big Boy Now* came out. His way with words have become so skillful that his lyrics often outshine the music.

Musically, the album is a delight. Crosby Stills and Nash do most of the backing, and there's not a false note anywhere. Yet it's Sebastian's show all the way, and it wouldn't matter if a bunch of unknowns backed him.

Anyone who can comment a bit on the good old situation of getting, keeping, and worrying about chicks with lines like:

"Dream on my man, you'll understand what you do and what you say her world turns another way."

But you just can't figure out, just what she thinks about after singing two verses before a few lines that go:

"Well you say you been around and you got it all together and your diggin' where it's at any your feeling real groovy."

Well that's not quite true, but nice to meet you

I heard you spent time trying to figure out a reason

Why you couldn't get along but now the pain's easing" and be able to sing it with a dirty hard rock beat and some soul horns punching it around, with a great big grin in his voice does have something together.

Those lines are from one song, *What She Thinks About*, and there are 10 others, each one as good as the other. This album is a fantastic joy. John Sebastian is a big boy now.

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## Delay Costs Money

University Park, Pa.—Delay in the State appropriation for 1969-70 cost The Pennsylvania State University \$1,034,000 in interest charges, President Eric A. Walker said today.

The appropriation bill for the year starting July 1, 1969, was not signed into law until March 13, 1970. Payment of funds due was made by the State late April, 1970.

In expressing the hope that no

such delay would be encountered in passage of the 1970-71 appropriations bill, President Walker said the cost resulting from the delay had to be absorbed in the education and research programs of the University.

"We can ill afford this loss, especially in a year when inflation also reduced the net value of the University appropriation", he noted.

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## Students Discuss Students In Revolt

A crucial question: where peaceful demonstrations end and where an angry confrontation begins, is discussed by those directly involved, in Janet Harris's new book, *Students in Revolt* (McGraw-Hill, \$4.95).

Eyewitness accounts on what is happening today are provided by Nesbitt Crutchfield, a member of the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College; Robert Friedman, editor-in-chief of Columbia University's daily newspaper; Heidi Reichling and Karl Dietrick Wolff, respectively secretary and president of the West German radical student organization, *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, plus others.

The young authors boldly question the universities' dedication in preparing students for jobs, rather than allowing time for true intellectual exploration; the students question their own demands—are they too ambitious, or too timid? They examine reasons for the spread of the revolutionary spirit world-wide.

The contributors to "Students in Revolt" basically express the students' desire for a larger share in determining their own future. They feel a need to participate in the black-white issue, the Vietnam War, and opposition to the draft and R.O.T.C.

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