New Jersey band brings a drone and discipline to its music

By PAT GRANDJEAN
Collegian Arts Writer

One of the great unknown college bands plays at 8 tonight in the HUB Ballroom, sponsored by WPSU-FM. Not only are the Feelies celebrating their 10th anniversary as the archetypal modern guitar-based rock group, but with the recent release of their second album *The Good Earth*, the Feelies are once again a full-time band.

Their significance has been obscured by the spotty nature of their recording and performing career. Founded by rhythm guitarist Bill Million and lead singer and guitarist Glenn Mercer, natives of Haledon, N.J. (a suburb just outside of New York City), the Feelies spent the late 1970s playing regularly at CBGB's and Max's Kansas City, two New York City clubs that were also hosting Television and Talking Heads at the time.

Before long they obtained a contract with Stiff Records in England and recorded *Crazy Rhythms*. This 1980 release defined their ongoing approach to musical composition and guitar playing. "We use a lot of root chords, which is the traditional form in folk music," Million explained in a recent telephone interview. "It involves a lot of open strings ringing out, sort of a droning sound." The basic guitar attack is complemented by a richly invigorating percussive instrumentation, making the music "all-enveloping."

The power of the songs is strongly enhanced by the lyrics, which are always ambiguous. "Our writing is not systematic, but the lyrics are generally worked out last," Million said. "We're primarily interested in arrangements and will work those out over a period of time until we're satisfied. The songs' melodies generally stem from throwaway lyrics. We keep the vocals lower in the mix — they act as another instrument."

Though *Crazy Rhythms* was critically well-received, it laid an egg commercially, thanks in part to Stiff's inept methods of promotion. Million sensed that the British label held "a weird anti-American prejudice toward the band — the president of the company took every opportunity to bust us." A typical example Stiff's strategies was the one-date-only European appearance in London the company booked for the group.

Following the disappointment of *Crazy Rhythms*' release, the Feelies became a part-time band, performing mainly on holidays and other special occasions. They became known for their appearances at Maxwell's, home to the Hoboken, N.J. music scene. A national tour in early 1985 laid the groundwork for the eventual full-time reemergence of the group, but it was a near disaster: a major breakdown just prior to a performance in Athens, Ga. nearly sent them hobbling home for good.

Fired up by the tour experience, the Feelie's current lineup — including Brenda Sauter, Stan Demeski and Dave Weckerman — set about recording *The Good Earth* in early 1986. As they had for the first album, Mercer and Million controlled the production of *The Good Earth*, enlisting R.E.M. lead guitarist Peter Buck as an objective "third ear" in the recording process.

"(We use a) 'tag-team' production approach," Million said. "It helps out considerably just to have a third person to say, 'I think that was a good take,' or just to toss about some discussions about a particular part. Lots of times when you're working 15 to 18 hours a day, your ears start to vacate. It's good to have someone to take up the slack, even if only for a half-hour at a time."

The Feelies

Million thought Buck would aid the most with the process of recording guitar sounds ("because of our droning style of playing, it's hard to get a real good sound") but Buck actually was more helpful when it came to designing the drum tracks. He also tempered the band's relentless perfectionism.

"There were a few guitar parts on the album that I was not particularly happy with. Peter was actually able to convince me that the parts were nice because of the mistakes," Million said. As compared to *Crazy Rhythms*, *The Good Earth* was completed in record time (two weeks) — and at about one-tenth the cost, with a total budget of $4700.

Million feels that *The Good Earth* is the warmer record of the two, and that it reflects just how much "smarter" the Feelie's use of guitar has become in six years. He pointed out that on *Crazy Rhythms*'s "Loveless Love," "the guitars are slightly out of tune — that makes them a little more distinctive. It wasn't intentional, just our inability to tune a guitar at the time. There are a lot of situations like that where guitar rhythms go off and create interesting juxtapositions. That happens by accident to a lesser extent on the new record, where the playing is a little more fluid."

Stylistically *The Good Earth* ranges from the country and western inflections of "The Last Roundup" to the edgy and chaotic "Slipping (Into Something)" and the Magical Mystery Tour-ish "Tomorrow Today." "When Company Comes" incorporates the sound of a truck driving past Million's house and the voice of one of his woman neighbors. "Glenn and I used to have a lot of fun sticking microphones out of windows and stuff," Million said.

"One day I caught this conversation and thought it was real interesting, thought it really applied to 'When Company Comes' " — a song that is all bright choral vocals and ringing guitars. To Million this is a good example of a song "where the lyrics are really unimportant — the sound of the voices is really what counts.

"You can't hear everything that's going on in this album on the first or second listen, and that's what we go after," he said. "My favorite records have always been the ones where you can listen to them five years later and hear something new."

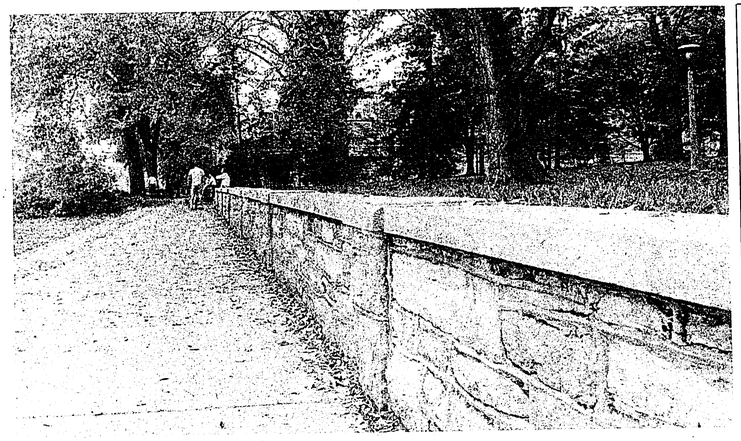
Not everyone shares his preferences. "We've had major labels real interested in the band since *The Good Earth* came out. Warner's told us they would put the record out tomorrow if we remixed it and brought the vocals up. We just said, 'thanks but no thanks.' The thought of going back and redoing this is completely out of the question."

Since completing the album the band has embarked on a college tour that has taken them from New England to Nebraska. Million worried unnecessarily about their low-profile working against them, especially in places like Champaign, Ill., which he described as "a real Republican-looking town" with no college radio station. "The promoter for the University of Illinois was nervous that no one would show. We got nervous ourselves, like maybe we should skip this one," he said. Ultimately over 400 people showed up.

After their University date, the Feelies will play the East Coast for two weeks as R.E.M.'s opening act, which will bring them to larger halls such as the Spectrum in Philadelphia and the Felt Forum in New York City. Though pleased to be part of the tour, Million admitted to being "a little apprehensive — we played at the Ritz (in New York City) when it was really crowded, and looking out and seeing all those people is a little off the wall. My biggest fear is sound — bands don't sound really good in large rooms."

Tonight's performance promises to be much more intimate, offering songs from both *Crazy Rhythms* and *The Good Earth* as well as covers of songs by the Beatles, Monkees, Velvet Underground, Wire and the Modern Lovers. Though the Feelies play a lot faster and louder onstage than in the studio, Million reported that they're still pretty disciplined:

"We're not the Replacements," he laughed.



CAMPUS ARCHITECTURE— WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Buildings/Interiors

1. What building has the most confusing floor plan? _____
2. What is the ugliest building on the inside? _____
3. What is the best-looking building on the inside? _____

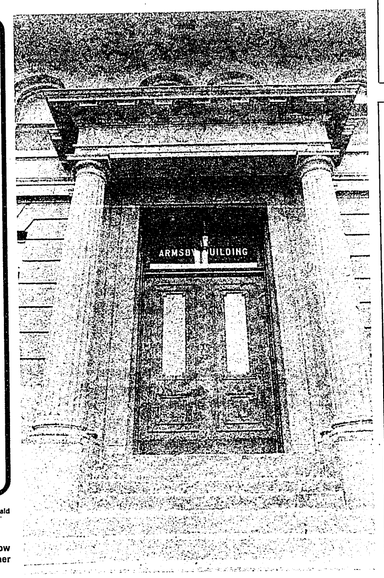
Buildings/Exteriors

1. What building is the ugliest on the outside? _____
2. What building is the best-looking on the outside? _____

Landscape Architecture
(These questions all deal with man-made structures that are not buildings. For example, the HUB lawn wouldn't be in this category, but the fountain outside the Arts Building would.)

1. Where is the best outdoor place to meet a friend and eat lunch? _____
2. What place is ugly and doesn't seem to fit in its location? _____

Fill out and return to 126 Carnegie Before Nov. 1



Collegian Photos / Ralph Oswald

The end is near

A little over a week remains for you to fill out your architecture survey form. How ugly or beautiful are the Wall on College Avenue, Armsby Building and other places on campus?

Turner doesn't see problem with giving old films color

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Media magnate Ted Turner, whose color-tinting of vintage black-and-white motion pictures has provoked protests from filmmakers, said he is shocked by the outcry but has no plans to alter his course.

"The last time I checked, I owned the films that we're in the process of colorizing," Turner said. "I can do whatever I want with them, and if they're going to be shown on television, they're going to be in color."

Turner discussed the color-tinting controversy after a speech Tuesday night at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

The debate erupted when the Turner Broadcasting System recently announced plans to color more than 100 movie classics, including *Casablanca*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*.

"All I'm trying to do is protect my investment in MGM," said Turner, who earlier this year paid more than $1.2 billion for the studio's 3,650-title library of movies.

Woody Allen, Billy Wilder, Joe Dante, John Huston and Steven Spielberg are among the directors opposing what they call color tampering of films.

Last weekend the Directors Guild of America said it will fight vigorously to block Turner's colorization of old films. The directors also have asked the U.S. Copyright Office to investigate the legality of the process.

In addition, RKO Pictures Inc. filed suit Monday to keep its yesteryear films out of the color computer.

The American Film Institute, an independent, non-profit organization founded in 1967 to assure the preservation of the art form, announced Oct. 1 that it also opposes computer coloring.

"I'm really shocked at the fuss," Turner said. "I really don't think it makes that much difference in the end. I think editing these movies makes a hell of a lot more difference in how they look, especially when they're chopped up by 20 or more minutes in order to fit into time slots. Why aren't these people making a fuss about that?

"Besides, I like things in color. We see in color. Why didn't they make *The Sting* in black-and-white if they're so concerned about historical authenticity?"

The average cost of adding color to a film is $183,000. Companies that perform the work say they are helping introduce a new generation of viewers to classic movies because black and white films are getting harder to syndicate on television and are virtually shut out of the video market.

Cultural center presents a class act to University

By RON SWEGMAN
Collegian Arts Writer

A dash of commercial pop and traditional jazz adds some spice to the fusion sound of A Different Class, which will play a free concert at 7:30 this Saturday evening in the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.

Variety is the trademark of this New Jersey-based band, which is fronted by energetic vocalist Ken Covington. Its basic style revolves around modern soft fusion, but the group isn't afraid to step out of that idiom to try something different, like the cool sounds of jazz-pop, heard in performers like Sade and Simply Red. Those who saw the band play on campus last year can testify to its successful, entertaining blend of jazzy tunes.

One reason for their variety is Covington himself. Vocalists are rare in the jazz-fusion world, so his talents lend a definite edge when it comes to expanding the group's musical horizons and gives it a greater repertoire to draw from.

Covington has been compared to such famous jazz singers as Sara Vaughn and Ella Fitzgerald. Like those performers, his charismatic vocals add extra energy and dazzle to both the original and cover tunes the group performs. The band sports the usual fusion lineup: keyboards, guitar, bass, drums and saxophone. With Covington at the helm, the group's overall impact has been said to leave the audience spellbound by the show's end.

The band is fresh from an eight-week tour of Malaysia and Singapore and a group of performances at the Sands Casino in Atlantic City. A Different Class' visit to University Park marks the first gig on a tour that will swing through several of the Commonwealth campuses. Previous to these tours, the band had opened for such jazz greats as Grover Washington and Ramsey Lewis.

The fact that the band enjoys playing more than just straight-ahead fusion sets them apart from most traditional jazz outfits. Attendance was less than overwhelming the last time A Different Class appeared on campus, said Lawrence Young, director of the cultural center. That is surprising since the group seems to have something for almost every music lover.

Cyndi and Tina are at the top of the pops this week

By The Associated Press

The following are Billboard's hot record hits as they appear in next week's issue of Billboard magazine. Copyright 1986, Billboard Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

HOT SINGLES

1. "True Colors" Cyndi Lauper (Portrait)
2. "Typical Male" Tina Turner (Capitol)
3. "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On" Robert Palmer (Island)
4. "Amanda" Boston (MCA)
5. "Human" The Human League (Virgin)
6. "True Blue" Madonna (Sire)
7. "When I Think of You" Janet Jackson (A&M)
8. "Sweet Love" Anita Baker (Elektra)
9. "Take Me Home Tonight" Eddie Money (Columbia)
10. "All Cried Out" Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam with Full Force (Columbia)
11. "You Give Love A Bad Name" Bon Jovi (Mercury)
12. "Word Up" Cameo (Atlanta Artists)
13. "The Rain" Oran "Juice" Jones (Def Jam)
14. "Heartbeat" Don Johnson (Epic)
15. "The Next Time I Fall" Peter Cetera with Amy Grant (Columbia)
16. "Throwing It All Away" Genesis (Atlantic)
17. "Girl Can't Help It" Journey (Columbia)
18. "I'll Be Over You" Toto (Columbia)
19. "A Matter of Trust" Billy Joel (Columbia)
20. "Love Will Conquer All" Lionel Richie (Motown)

TOP LP'S

1. *Third Stage* Boston (MCA)
2. *Slippery When Wet* Bon Jovi (Mercury)
3. *Fore!* Huey Lewis and the News (Chrysalis)
4. *Top Gun* Soundtrack (Columbia)
5. *Break Every Rule* Tina Turner (Capitol)
6. *Back in the Highlife* Steve Winwood (Island)
7. *Dancing on the Ceiling* Lionel Richie (Motown)
8. *True Colors* Cyndi Lauper (Portrait)
9. *Raising Hell* Run-D.M.C. (Profile)
10. *True Blue* Madonna (Sire)
11. *The Bridge* Billy Joel (Columbia)
12. *Control* Janet Jackson (A&M)
13. *Graceland* Paul Simon (Warner Bros.)
14. *Invisible Touch* Genesis (Warner Bros.)
15. *Somewhere In Time* Iron Maiden (Capitol)
16. *Night Songs* Cinderella (Mercury)
17. *Eat 'Em and Smile* David Lee Roth (Warner Bros.)
18. *True Stories* Talking Heads (Sire)
19. *Rapture* Anita Baker (Elektra)
20. *Heartbeat* Don Johnson

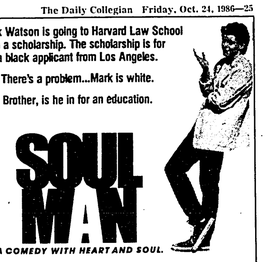
AP Laserphoto

Tina Turner accepts one of the many awards she received in 1985. Her welcome comeback in this decade continues with the current number two hit, "Typical Male."

Mark Watson is going to Harvard Law School on a scholarship. The scholarship is for a black applicant from Los Angeles.

There's a problem...Mark is white.

Brother, is he in for an education.



SOUL MAN

A COMEDY WITH HEART AND SOUL.

NEW WORLD PICTURES IN ASSOCIATION WITH BAKER FILM INVESTORS PRESENTS A STEVE TISCH PRODUCTION
A STEVE MINER FILM SOUL MAN STARRING C. THOMAS HOWELL · RAE DAWN CHONG · ARTE GROSS · JAMES B. SIKKING
LESLIE NIELSEN AND JAMES EARL JONES AS PROFESSOR BANKS · MUSIC SCORE BY TOM SCOTT · WRITTEN BY CAROL BLACK
CO-PRODUCERS CAROL BLACK AND NEAL MARLENS · PRODUCED BY STEVE TISCH · DIRECTED BY STEVE MINER

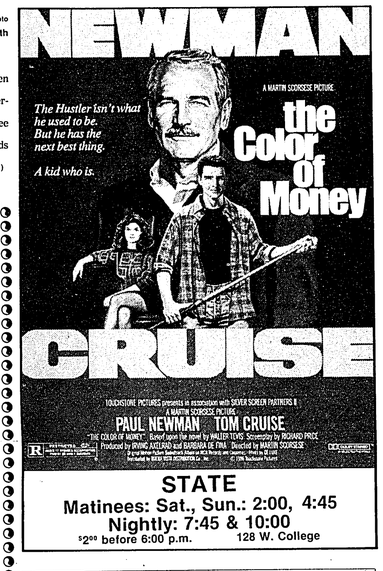
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK ON

CINEMA 5
Matinees: Sat., Sun.: 2:00, 4:00, 6:00
Nightly: 8:00 & 10:00
$2.00 before 6:15 p.m. 116 Heister

Sat., Oct. 25th 8 p.m.
Paul Robeson Cultural Center
* Free Admission *

The Penn State Science Fiction Society
presents

Time: Fri., Sat. 7:00, 9:00, 11:00
Sun 7:00, 9:00
Place: 111 Forum
Admission: $2.00



STATE
Matinees: Sat., Sun.: 2:00, 4:45
Nightly: 7:45 & 10:00
$2.00 before 6:00 p.m. 128 W. College

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8PM Schwab Auditorium
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2
Tickets on sale Eisenhower Auditorium Box Office weekdays 10 to 6. Schwab Theatre Series/Artists Series/Center for the Performing Arts/The Pennsylvania State University
Student $8, 4
TICKETS MC/VISA/AMEX (814) 863-0255 NonStudent $8, 6
*IMAGO at Penn State is supported by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

The TOKYO STRING QUARTET

"THE SOUND OF THE TOKYO STRING QUARTET IS LIKE FINE JAPANESE SILK, MADE AUDIBLE." NEWSWEEK

"THEY PLAYED LIKE MASTERS." NEW YORK TIMES

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"THEIR PLAYING HAD ALL THE MARKS OF GREATNESS." THE WASHINGTON POST

8PM Schwab Auditorium
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25
Student $8, 6
NonStudent $12, 10
Tickets on sale Eisenhower Auditorium Box Office weekdays 10 to 6. Schwab Concert Series/Artists Series/Center for the Performing Arts/The Pennsylvania State University.
TICKETS MC/VISA/AMEX (814) 863-0255
*The TOKYO STRING QUARTET at Penn State is supported by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

THE BREAKFAST CLUB

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Student Union Board

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Fri, Sat 7,8:45,10:30 — HUB ASSEMBLY ROOM — Sun 7,8:45