

CUSTOM'S LAST STAND

The Lo-Rider displays almost make you feel religious.

by Albert Barrett

Rod and Custom Show. You can really flash on the scene. If you are older than twenty, it brings up images of what went on at the shows and on the streets in the earlier days of Custom. You remember the Berts creations, the sleek chopped and lowered '49 to '51 Mercs that looked like they had been dipped in oil and were accompanied by a proud owner showing the car's ground clearance with a pack of Luckies. Early model Fords: '34's and '32's (remember the Beach Boys' "Little Deuce Coupe"?). Even Model A's and Model T's were standard fare and always comprised the biggest part of the shows.

Therefore, when you're an older aficionado planning to attend a custom show, you anticipate returning to a backdrop of our culture, a real treat in a world with books like *Future Shock*. But hold on—the rod and custom shows have changed too. Certainly, if you take a serious look:

1. BIKES

Why all the interest in the bikes? Tom Wolfe theorized that the chopper has replaced the early model Ford as the favorite medium for the customizer. One look around the San Diego show last weekend confirmed this theory; bikes were everywhere. Once past the foyer, you had to really search to find the early model Fords, variations of which used to appear at shows over and



over. Two model T roadsters in the entrance way, two '32's and a five-window '34 coupe were

all that remained. It makes you a little sad when you recall that California with its new 1400-pound-no-fenders law was the birthplace of the street roadster. The big revival of the Ford roadsters that the car mags talk about was nowhere to be found at this show.

In many ways the bikes are as similar to each other as the Fords used to be. Maybe this is because most of the show bikes originally came out of the same factory in Milwaukee. In any case, the real individualism comes with the types of cylinder heads: the Pan Head, the Knuckle Head, the Shovel Head, the Flat Head. Most of the bikes have gone the standard chopper route, reducing the ponderous Electra-Glide to a trim street machine with awesome straight-line capabilities. Oversized rear tire on a 16-inch rim, "hardtail" solid rear suspension, little seat, molded fairs and tank, raked and extended forks, tiny front wheel way out front, and no front brake.

"You meet the nicest people on a Honda"

Every time you see a chopper you wonder if form is following function or function following form. Ask a biker and he'll tell you that all the modifications make the chopper "a real high-way performer." Well, you sure don't see them in the dirt. But the whole bike phenomenon is probably better explained in terms of role playing. Prior to the nineteen sixties, the motorcycle rider was a rough-tough-ribe-hell person with apparently no concern for safety. Then came the light-weight Japanese motorcycle and Honda's slick Madison Avenue-ish, "You meet the nicest people on the Honda." Overnight, Suzuki, Honda, Yamaha and Kawasaki sold millions of bikes to nice people. The motorcycle became a respectable mode of transportation. But who wanted to be a "nice" person? The 1950's biker didn't. And his answer was the chopper, with its extended forks, huge engine, and rakish seating posture.

At the show, the next stage seemed to be raising its head: the title. Take a VW or Porsche engine and transaxle and bolt on extended forks and you have—terror on those wheels. The signs at the bike exhibits explained that the vehicles are "smearable", can be "ordered in



photograph: Meyer/Schweizer

kit form or complete." How they perform is questionable, especially in light of all the handling problems of the VW transaxle. **"Ralph Nader would have to be bound and gagged..."**

mounted under something relatively stable like the Bug. It's a safe guess that Ralph Nader would have to be bound and gagged before he set foot on a truck.

2. LO-RIDERS

Another big change in the Rod and Custom scene is the coming of the Lo-Rider, seventies style. (Or, how come there are so many Rivarans in line?) The ideal Lo-Rider is a middle-aged Rivaran owned by a proud, young black or brown male. Typically, long, hard hours of work have transformed the vehicle into a rolling pleasure pulch. Multi-colored **"384 buttons/ All Folded/ No Stitching"**

ding carpets, televisiona, tiny steering wheel, tufted, buttoned and brocadeed upholstery ("384 buttons/ All Folded/ No Stitching"), three or four inches of clearance from the ground. And the wide or "ping" whitewalls are making a comeback, respectable, too; check this month's Car

None of the hully-gullying of ten or fifteen years ago.

by Kevin Malvey

Well, Tom Wolfe compared it to 19th Century European architecture. I think to myself. It just seems so ironic to have the Custom Car and Bike Show here at the Community Concourse. The surface of the Concourse itself looks newly waxed, but that must have been for the Symphony's opening night with Van Cliburn next door. As we walk under the door sign "Admission \$3.50," I notice these people looking our way. They're standing next to two customized bicycles on display, anxiously hoping for a few people to be distracted from the more popular car and motorcycle sections. Yeah, Wolfe was right, look at that blue angel hair around the base of the bicycle. I stare intently, trying to figure out what the means would be for bicycle customizing. The chrome's pretty shiny, the metallic paint looks nice...

"That's pure rabbit fur. No synthetics."

"I'm gonna win," a dark kid named Dwayne Warner confides in my ear. "It's D-W-A-Y-N-E, and uh would you send me copies of the paper with my name in it?" Before I have a chance to equivocate, a short, fat man with glasses and a gray handlebar mustache assaults me: "Look at that, mister. Would you believe it my eleven-year-old kid did it." The man drags me over to the display next to Dwayne's. "Look at that; every part is a Sebastian part, every part." He kept repeating that.



What interested me was the furry gray banana seat "Rabbit fur!" I ventured a guess. "That's pure rabbit fur. No synthetics. This here's my kid." He put his ample hand on a tassled-haired kid's head. The kid, who looked like any kid, looked away disinterestedly, maybe embarrassed. I wondered to myself what his electric train set looked like.

and Drive. The paint is usually some type of pearlescent or metal flake. With the colored lights set at different angles shining on the car and with the haze of angel hair, the Lo-Rider displays almost make you feel religious.

3. FORD F-100 TRUCKS FROM 1953-1956

The auto magazines have been claiming a revival in the 1953-1956 Ford pick-up, and the San Diego show was confirmation of the claim. There must have been at least twenty on the floor. Why the interest in these trucks?

"just take them for what they are, trucks and good lookin'."

The magazines can't explain it clearly. Owners give you answers like, "It's gotta real good car," or "... the last year pick-ups looked like trucks," or "Don't ask me, just take them for what they are, trucks and good lookin'."

4. BACK-TO-NATURE

There were even traces of today's return to the outdoors movement laid in the fabric of the show. First there was a representation of the Desert Race—Sand Rail element. A single-seat Desert Race with a Honda engine was probably one of the most innovative creations in the show. A lack of

FILM

Anger — Longest stars and sub-actors in not only the longest but also the most moving and intense political album. The film's clarity and confidence and political commitment make it a must-see. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

The Androses Strain — Microscopic invasion from outer space. This is a science-fiction thriller that is a subtle take on the classic alien invasion. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

Battersea Five — Generation gap arguments are played off as a series of heated arguments. The film's clarity and confidence and political commitment make it a must-see. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

Apocalypse — New South African anti-apartheid film. Directed by Roy Bence. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.



Bed Company — David Newman and Robert Bartlett. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

The Candidate — Robert Redford's political thriller. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

Shoreline — A short film about the French coast. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

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The Godfather — Although it finds more in the three hours for the first time, it is a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

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The New Centurion — An A.L.A. co's "mash" series. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

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Ray It Again, Sam — Conservative. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie — A powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc. A 1971 award-winning film with a powerful and thought-provoking message. (C) 1971. Interscope, Inc.

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THEATER

A REVIEW BY KATHLEEN WOODWARD

Wanda Jane — The name is preposterous and points the best of Kurt Vonnegut's humor. He is a faithful, inventive, skilled at caricature, and has a good, and crude, sense of the ridiculous. All of this we find in *Elydie Phoenix's* outstanding and remarkably competent production of Vonnegut's first play *Wanda Jane* at the tiny Mission Playhouse in Old Town. It is Vonnegut's success in turning the homecoming of a POW of sorts in his now-engaged wife into a comic, although somewhat shaky, forum for his ideas about sex and war and American heroes and their daily carping when Ryan left eight years ago, and although somewhat excessively well-out together (thanks to the attractive and properly arched ironic Polly Patridge), she has outgrown her taste for Hemingway. She has wit and an M.A. in English Literature, both of which durney her husband: "Educating a beautiful woman is like pointing a laser into a fine Swiss watch. Every-thing stops."

A VONNEGUT PARTY
These are the three main characters, but Vonnegut doesn't stop here. As a filler he tosses in an ingenious vacuum cleaner salesman who carefully guards his experimental model (an XKE), a sappy, defensive twelve-year-old (there's nothing funny about him), and a Colonel Lonsdale who comes right out of *Grav-22*. And there are also three ghosts—the sweet and saccharine Wanda Jane, the WW II Beast of Yugoslavia who killed prisoners with gaseous joy, and Ryan's third wife—who occasionally talk to the audience or to each other in their cotton candy heaven.

Opposing Ryan in Vonnegut's allegory is Peter-lop's fiancée, Dr. Woolly, a pacifist who still lives with his mother and whose only form of exercise is making the peace sign. He is the New-Style Hero who vanquishes Ryan by verbal assault and battery, charging him with being not only cynical, but obsolete as well.

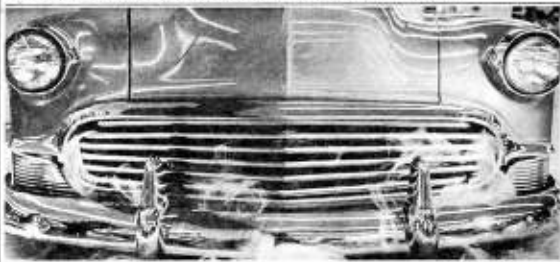
Vonnegut preaches about heroes, but it is really a heretic, the New Woman, who emerges unscathed from the play. *Penelope* was a sexy,

Continued on page 2

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1972 SAN DIEGO ROD AND CUSTOM CAR SHOW (continued from page 1)



The Lo-Rider displays almost make you feel religious.

Worshippers continued from page 1: explanatory signs, however, kept the knowledge of the power plant a secret to the casual observer. As you'd expect, all the desert stuff was VW-powered except for the Mazda and an interesting Renault Saabral. Secondly, a number of exhibitors had chosen not to use the customary argal hair or white sand on the floor covering around their exhibits. Instead, they had spread out a two-inch layer of redwood chips, the kind you can see surrounding the trees and bushes of every Southern California apartment complex.

"I made my dream my goal, and my goal a reality."

There are some things at the Rod and Custom shows that will never change. Like the immense amount of work in man-hours it takes to prepare each car. It's almost as if man-hours were the real measure of a customized car, each exhibitor very willing to tell you about the long hours he has put into his car. One 1941 Willys Gasser had a sign on the windshield, "I made my dream my goal, and my goal a reality." (A look at the engine through the wheel well, however, revealed only the bare block on the chassis.) Maybe not quite "a reality" in this case, but a nice show car and an indication that the value-system of customizing, the emphasis on individual work, has not changed completely.

"In the 1950's it was strictly low-riders."

Now is the increase of motorcycle customizing. "When we have our shows in the L. A. Sports Arena, the whole upper level is bikes. One-third of the people just come to see the upper level." An organization girl, Dee gave me a capsule history of the business. "We've been putting on shows for twenty years. In the 1950's it was strictly low-riders. Then we added dragsters, funny cars, then boats, then bikes and then three-wheelers. This year we've got bicycles and model cars."

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with the vehicles. One of the first was a display surrounded by gold and white imitation "...cascading plastic red roses."

Ancient Greek sculpture, Greek maidens holding flat bouqs of cascading plastic red roses. As I looked away from this one, my attention was caught by a yellow truck with metallic gold flames called "Heropitris." Well, it is set in a bed of yellow argal hair. I missed. Next down a bike on a tin foil pedestal was rotating above

a pleated foil sheet with rotating colored lights. And next to it was a three-wheeler on a fake grass pedestal: the real, natural look;



member owners. My friend asked them around downtown.

"Yeah, we've seen it. We're still trying to contact the owner. You know him?"

For some reason I sensed an atmosphere of businness hanging over the show that night. People walking from attraction

to attraction were neither very bored nor especially gung-ho about what they saw, just slightly antipathetic.

The people with their displays weren't overly friendly, just sort of haughty, like office receptionists, friendly enough to answer questions with a smile but no more. I was really fascinated with a pinkish-violet Lo-Rider with a three by five-foot Mexican flag behind it and a sign "Brown Inaps" in the rear window. The dash was overgrown with deep purple yam-hair and there were champagne bottles and glasses perfectly positioned

"sequinned styrofoam hearts and cupid's."

between the seats. At the base of the car was the proverbial argal hair, punctuated with little dolls and sequined styrofoam hearts and cupid's. I got enough nerve up to ask the man of the obvious family-owners what his name was. "Sonny Valdivia," he said. These seemed to be some doubt as to whether they were from "Lagan Heights" or "San Diego." Broken Inaps is only about five or six months old; there are about six other all-Chicago car clubs in the area. There's Nosotras in National City, a couple in San Ysidro. ... Not a lot more talkative were the Novaders, a club brought together by a kind of Chevy station wagon. I originally sensed a real stony, seeing the man and wife team at the table. "Did you happen to meet because each of you owned a Novader?"

"Nup, he had one. We got married and then I got one." The pleasant, plump girl with wire rims told me. "There's about twenty of us in San Diego." And they even knew the man-



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"Horny Tonk Woman." Note of the hully-gullying of ten or fifteen years ago. I wondered if the man from El Cajon had already forgotten about the near fight from the night before. And I wondered if the Mavericks and Novaders everywhere had as much fun as hot-oddies years ago.



Whither the San Diego Peace Movement?

"Norman was standing guard duty. Excuse me if I keep looking around while I'm talking to you, but you've heard of the Yakopec bombing haven't you?"

Deflating coming down from Berkeley, he's going to demand to visit the ship. We'll get the military people themselves involved in the anti-war movement. Five or six months later, all the national media were translating this Constellation Project into an outbreak of anti-war feeling in military San Diego.

This week, October 1972, I went around to see if I could find out what's been happening to the local peace movement, especially in light of Krusinger's announcement about the ceasefire. Nobody I knew is still around. One of the Concerned Officers leaders I know is back in Washington, D.C. getting a large salary to run an anti-war G.I. office. John Cartmell is around but it's "going to get his head together." I was told, "Couldn't be reached." The person who told me this was speaking from the office of Concerned Military and was very unfriendly: "You can't write a story about the movement unless you're at the movement. Besides, you're stepping on it. Like the students who come here to do research for term papers do. They get A's from our work and we never get copies of the papers. . . . Why write about it? Why not write about the great Indochinese victory over President Nixon yesterday?"

It was back in 1970 at the mostly long-haired White Whale in La Jolla when I got my first peace hand shake. My thumb caught him on the palm and he squeezed the tips of my fingers. Our faces both flushed. A quick acknowledgment in the conventional shake. "Kern, this is John Cartmell. He's the head of Concerned Officers."

"Hi."

I had heard a few things about anti-war G.I.s but mostly that they were trying to get out of the Navy because they had orders to Vietnam. Highly suspect. I'd graduated from college in 1968 at what I thought was the height of anti-war feeling. We students went right under the thumb of the draft. Lots of anti-war demonstrations my senior year. But even two years later there was Kent State. Students again. An undergraduate up at UCSD burned himself to death on Hesville Plaza that spring. Last in 1970 and in 1971, however, with the advent of the lottery system and the general drop in draft calls, the peace movement in San Diego began to drift, away from the college campus and toward the military bases.

"I have a stack of membership cards that thick," asserted John Cartmell, showing me at least a few inches with his thumb and right finger. "A lot of enlisted men too."

Sometimes a rally in the spring of 1971, a friend invited me visit another friend, Will Watford, a UCSD history professor who was big in the peace movement. Watford was busy talking on the phone when we walked into the kitchen of his Del Mar home. His wife, who had gone to private girls' schools the woods

"Boys Maw" dropped out of her mouth like an accidental piece of salad, served us to paint Easter eggs with her. Will got off the phone and rushed into the kitchen. This project of his was going to be really big. I was a little cynical, having seen the drop-off in anti-war feeling on the campus. "No, this is going to be against the Constellation, against the use of aircraft carriers for counteremergency. We've got Congressman Ronald

It was kind of like the reception line at a wedding. I told the people in the lobby of Ross Auditorium. Six different people handed me six different pieces of political literature as I walked up the steps to the building. The people from the Servicemen's Center, sitting at a table piled high with bumper stickers and leaflets pointed across the lobby to a student member of the local movement. The student, an oriental with longish hair and glasses, explained that his group used to be called Stop the San Diego State Railroad, and that it originated around the Peter Bodner firing controversy at State. ("San Diego State is like a railroad, throwing people off the track.") The Railroad group has about thirty hard-core members, but it should get bigger as the school year goes on. The McGovern people will be looking for something to do.

Whatever happened to the NVA (Nonviolent Activists) group?

"They must be wiped out. . . . I think the members have decided that non-violence is a false issue and either joined another group or became apolitical. . . . the people in the peace movement have become more sophisticated than they used to be."

What about Railroad when and if the ceasefire goes into effect?

"It won't affect us that much; we've decided, regardless of what happens, we're going to concentrate on reform of the university structure."

Two down, one to go. I sighed in relief. Now, if I can only find someone from the Indochina Peace Campaign. The people behind their table in the lobby seemed reluctant to speak for the group and motioned me over to the left side of the auditorium. "Open the door and ask for Norman."

Norman was standing guard duty. "Excuse me if I keep looking around while I'm talking to you, but you've heard of the Yakopec bombing haven't you? Well, we aren't taking any chances. And there's a lot of stuff that's not reported to the police, the studios, (interviews), the Peace House being shot at. What good would it do to report it to the police?" He kept walking around nervously, looking around the auditorium. It turned out that he had been a naval officer on the *Ticonderoga*, decided "we were on the side of imperialism," and then, he says, the Navy transferred him to Kodiak, Alaska. Norman, through obtaining the claim to being a leader in the Indochina Peace Campaign, said "It's an emergency situation; we're trying to make the war the main issue of the campaign. . . . Vaccination is just an attempt to hide the war." Before I had a chance to question him further, the first speaker of the rally began to talk. I quickly found a chair in the sea of empty seats.

For some reason the program's two and a half hours went very slowly. In spite of the fact that I was curious what the reaction to last week's events would be, and the evening was theatrical enough (Holly Near of *Slaughterhouse Five* sang those or four moving ballads and Jane Fonda is always dramatic), it all seemed so old to me. Eight or ten years is a long time to hold your attention, I pass. George Smith, an ex-Green Beret, ex-POW, who claims he's not recognized by *TIME* ("rather than buy a POW bracelet, do something worthwhile"), started off in a melancholy tone: "Small crowd tonight. I don't mean to chide you people here, but a lot of people must believe the war is over." He was probably comparing the crowd to last year's

I don't want to move of the name. No more possible in my name. and another, referring to the travelling Pina the New show: Oh America, I now can say your name without feeling bitter and without feeling ashamed. Cause I've travelled across your countryside, your cities and your towns, and saw the friendly people come and gather around.



Stop the Constellation show, also at Ross Auditorium, which filled the place up. He told about his experiences in Vietnam, as a prisoner, which was pretty moving if you had never heard it before. I wondered how many of the 200 or so hard-core there had. Holly Near followed George Smith on stage, read some anti-life poetry, juxtaposing quotations from Laotian children against those of American bomber pilots, and finished with several of the most gut-busting songs I'd ever heard, including one that went:

I don't want to move of the name. No more possible in my name. and another, referring to the travelling Pina the New show: Oh America, I now can say your name without feeling bitter and without feeling ashamed. Cause I've travelled across your countryside, your cities and your towns, and saw the friendly people come and gather around.

(continued column three page 7)

JANE FONDA, San Diego, October 1972



photo by John Meyer/Schleifer

Contemporary music is frequently divided into two categories: underground and straight, young-old, longhair-darthair, liberal-conservative, progressive rock and easy listening...Kinks or Carpenters.

The trip from his lonely youth as a shy street-tough in Brooklyn, through four years of pre-med at N.Y.U., into the tin pan alley swarthydays where he paid his songwriting dues (like Carole King and others) and out again to superstardom was a

In the Fall of 1971, the Stones album was released. A collection of songs by some of our very best contemporary composers—including Newman, Mitchell, and Leonard Cohen—it also includes three of his own. The title song, "Stones,"



Neil Diamond

Diamonds Are Forever

BY S.L. RAY

NEIL DIAMOND: A MAN IN THE MIDDLEGROUND

Linking these extremes, however, is an area of music we could call "Middleground." The middle-ground public values the work of artists who are creative, honest, and willing to gamble occasionally with their success. Yet it is sophisticated enough to accept the fact that an artist may need to compromise commercially sometimes in order to sustain his serious work. Middleground listeners are the constituency of "soft rock." Neil Young, Rod Stewart, Moody Blues, Dylan, Lennon, Simon, Russell, Jackson Browne, Procol Harum, Carole King, Van Morrison, Joy of Cook and so on: these are their artists.

ough one. Although he found a successful money-making formula, the chemistry did not work for him personally. So he kept on moving, artistically and geographically. When his contract with New York-based Bang Records expired, he left for California and the greater artistic freedom of a contract with Universal City Records. In his words, "Uni and I grew up together," and in fact each album for Uni was better than the one before.

No single singer/songwriter is more representative of this music than Neil Diamond. He stands at the epicenter of middle-ground. By his count, he has sold more records and has had more hits than anyone else in the world, including the Beatles. His current album, *Moonlight*, has been on the national top ten from its release in June until just last week. On any given day, some Diamond cut-old or new—will almost surely be played by every soft rock station broadcasting in San Diego. He has earned all this by working hard to improve his songwriting and by taking chances with his career in order to move into more challenging areas of music.

Then, late in 1970, he produced an album of genuine artistic significance: *Tapestray*. For Diamond, it marked the end of his apprenticeship. For his increasingly middle-ground audience, it was the consummate example of an artist gambling in order to explore a new direction. The first half of the album is virtuosic production rock. The second half is a result of the artist's first venture into concept writing. Titled *The African Trilogy (A Folk Ballet)* it explores the stages of a man's life using native rhythms (the roots of Gospel music) as medium. "Soularion" is one of rock's most powerful and joyous songs:

God of my want/and of my need/
leading me on/on to my wants,
the dance for the sun.

The amazing "I Am the Lion," is followed by an instrumental "Madrigal," then "Soularion," the beautiful "Mama"—a song for clowns, the haunting "African Suite" and, last, a reprise of "Child-song" which also begins the *Wayport* trilogy. Musically, *African Trilogy* is stunning. He has not matched it yet. Lyrically, the words themselves are less important than the various social effects he uses to dramatize his statement.

though another big hit is a single, suffers from comparison with such exquisite compositions as Newman's "Satanstoe." "I Am...I Said," however, is one of Diamond's very best. It is quite personal (it conveys a portrait of the lonely seagull) yet generally relevant to everyone else:

I've got an emptiness deep inside/
and I've tried/and it won't let me go.

(He said at the time it was the hardest song he had ever written because it was so personal.) *Stones* is a satisfying album, creative in that the singer/songwriter's interpretations explore every nuance of his colleagues' lyrics, making another direction for his work. It was integrated immediately into the core of middle-ground rock.

Diamond spent last winter writing material for the *Moonlight* album. It does not quite equal *The African Trilogy* but it is an excellent group of original songs tied together loosely by the theme of the title and summarizing most of what the artist has learned about music and life in his 31 years. Confident, matured, he can control his vision and intelligence to his writing without going moribund emotionally.

"Captain Samhain" describes a hero:
He do me Gaelic make the words rhyme/when he knows the time is old.

It could be someone Diamond has admired; it could be the songwriter's self-image. In "Moonlight" he speaks movingly of the pain of growing old and forgotten. "Walk on Water," a song out of the African rhythm genre with a fine dramatic structure, poses mothers everywhere:

She walks on water/ah, an't it like her/like leads the children/an't it tight!

In a less serious vein, "Precipice Pie" and "Gitchy Goony" (written for his two-year-old son) are delightful. Regrettably, the two singles taken from this album—"Song Sung Blue" and "Play Me"—are by far the least noteworthy. "Casta Libre,"

(continued columns one page 7)

Neil Diamond continued from page 6

though not the best song, comes closer in its lyrics to the essence of this album than the title theme:

I got music running in my head/
makes me feel like a young bird flying/cross my mind and layin' in my bed/keeps me away from my thoughts of crying.

The man clearly loves his music; it is his whole life. Other artists like Leon Russell can walk away from their songs and look back to see themselves as carnival stars—can see the humor in it, the phronesis and tragedy, the satisfaction and rewards, in perspective. This degree of detachment is not possible for Diamond. Consequently, his judgment occasionally fails him. The excesses of some arrangements, and the liberties he takes with grammar and lyric continuity belie his real achievements (and open him up to the painful criticism of the underground media).

That he cares intensely about his work is reflected in the decision to stop performing for a year or more following his stroke stand last month at the Schubert Winter Garden Theater on Broadway with a one-man show. He plans to spend his time studying music theory and composition—with the intention of writing symphonies, musical comedy, and perhaps a dramatic piece for the stage. He will also move on to Columbia Records early next year where he will concentrate on concept albums. That his music will continue to grow in quality and sophistication seems likely based on his career to date. Neil Diamond is one of those intelligent, hard-working, and sensitive artists who make the middle-ground an exciting area of contemporary music.



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Vonnegut Party continued from page 31

its zeal. Here Vonnegut allows his people to preach. At the same time he asks them to stop being caricatures and become characters who can change and grow and learn. Since this is an impossible demand, Ryan's "conversion" is hollow and unconvincing.

This is a serious weakness in the play, but there is another which is worse. Vonnegut is fuzzy-headed. He has no clear notion of how he stands on the battle lines he has drawn. Percepsio opens the play by saying that "this is a simple-minded play about men who enjoy killing—and those who don't," but Vonnegut can't follow through. He sets up a bad guy and then is too tender-hearted to shoot him down. Instead he takes pity on him and ridicules the good guy for good measure. As Vonnegut says elsewhere, he wants everyone to be right, no matter what they say and do.

John Siroi, something of a folk hero, I learned during intermission, at Mission Playhouse regulars (the woman next to us comes to see him in everything) played Ryan with tremendous energy and authority, but of the entire cast he alone furnished more than a few of his lines. As the pacifist, Gene Wrench gave a solid performance, although his diction was over-affectuated. Especially good were two of the giants—Wanda Lutz (Diane Kruger) and the Mayor (Bill Goydard). John Michael's set with weapons and animal skins everywhere is wonderfully authentic.

For those who have never been there, Mission Playhouse is very small—it seats about 90 in a room which seems not much larger than a good-sized swimming pool—and the management is very friendly. This seems to be infectious, for the evening we were there the audience was responsive and enthusiastic, and everyone—the actors and the audience—enjoyed the Vonnegut party.

Peace Movement—continued from page 31

Between Holly Near and Tom Hayden a girl came up to the stage and said that we here to let Nixon know that he can't sign the peace proposal; we've got to each people, so buckets will be going around to collect money to pay for more literature to go out this week. I remembered what Norman had said about this being an emergency. Of the three segments of the San Diego movement, the Indiana Peace Campaign (of which the speakers were national members) seemed to be the most desperate. Although he splashed his talk with some humor ("I just was in an airplane over Okinawa when the pilot announced the war was over; everyone stood up and applauded, but no one had said who won.") Tom Hayden evoked the same urgency. We've got to tell the American public who the Thieu regime is; we've got to tell them about the bloodbaths that have started in the prisons in South Vietnam. We just found that out this morning. You've got to raise your hands in class and stop people on the streets.

In her speech, Jane Fonda chimed in, suggesting people apply for visas to South Vietnam to see the prisons and asking for a show of hands of those voting for McGovern and those working for the military. She was preceded by a graphic description of her experiences in North Vietnam. She told about the beauty of Vietnamese women, hyperbolically describing how tens of thousands of them would march on district headquarters in South Vietnam, and with police shooting at them, the

READER LETTERS

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Robert Hovestock
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