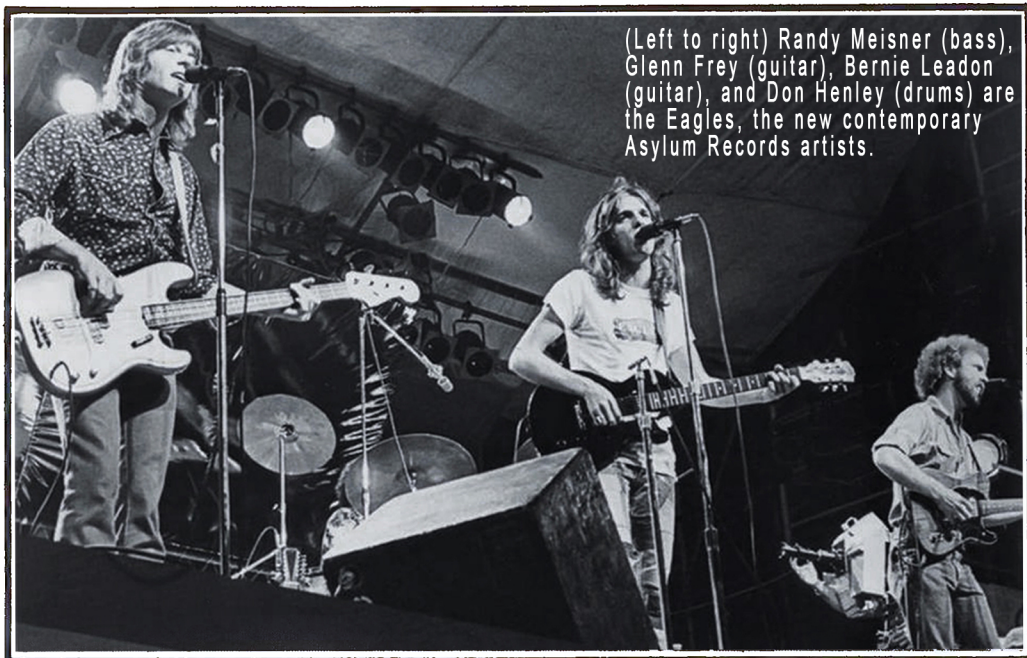


Flying High With THE EAGLES

By Bobbie G. Jackson



(Left to right) Randy Meisner (bass), Glenn Frey (guitar), Bernie Leadon (guitar), and Don Henley (drums) are the Eagles, the new contemporary Asylum Records artists.

They're the comers of the year — new kings of the country - rock movements — and refugees all from some of the best rock and country bands around. The releases of their latest elpee, "Desperado," last summer won them raves and established them as the best in the biz — better than anything Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young or the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band or the Byrds had ever done, said most of the critics. With their appearance on ABC-TV's "Good Vibrations from Central Park," seen nationally, the whole country got to see the boys behind the record, and they loved what they saw.

And to think that little more than a year ago, the Eagles was only a dream. But the music's real and so well coordinated, you know that this group's a tightly interlocking unit of individual talents all headed in the same direction.

Their musical roots are deep in "blue grass," they say, by way of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Linda Ronstadt, the Flying Burrito Brothers, the Scotsville Squirrel Barkers, the Hearts and Flowers, Dillards, the Byrds, Poco, Rick Nelson, and lots of other folks you've heard of — and some you haven't.

They'd gotten together originally as a back-up group for Linda Ronstadt. But after a few sessions together, they liked the new sound they'd created too much to use it just for back-up, and decided to crack the star barrier by themselves.

Between them, they certainly had had a lot of musical education behind them and they'd paid their dues with the best. Glen Frey, lead guitar, worked with Bo Diddley among others, and was working with Linda Ronstadt, and became the boy who pulled it all together at

first. That was in Los Angeles, where just about everyone's trying to make it in the music business.

Says Bernie Leadon, rhythm guitar and banjo and once a leading figure in the Flying Burrito Brothers, "There are so many musicians around out here, it's almost ludicrous. That's one of the reasons we're lucky to have found each other, really. There are about fifty little cliques in this town, and we just happen to be part of the same musical family."

"Sometimes," laughs Glen, "I forget there are people in this world who don't play an instrument. Living in this place is like living in a recording studio. Everyone, it seems, is signed to a record company, or planning to get signed, or they own a record company."

"Whoever you are," says Don Frey, on drums, "if you play and you're a decent musician, you'll get a record contract in Los Angeles."

The Eagles got more than a contract — they found each other. Randy Meisner on bass guitar made it a fourth.

It was Bernie, once an Indian mythology freak, who named them.

"Certain Spiritual powers are attributed to Eagles," he explains. "It's high soaring, flying closer to the sun than any other bird, and it's spiritually the richest of them all."

Like their namesake, the Eagles are certainly flying high these days, and deservedly delighted with themselves. Their decision to move out from behind the stars and try for the gold ring themselves has certainly paid off. But more important, they seem to have found, in each other, some kind of musical understanding that just could go on forever.

Nobody — and everybody — in the group

is a star. They all sing lead, all write, all do back-up work. Yet it's far more satisfying than the lonely business of trying to go it solo. And it's definitely a bigger high than doing back-up.

In a way, the Eagles are a miracle, four boys from different places coming together. Glen's from Detroit, Bernie from San Diego, Randy from Nebraska and Don from Texas. And their talents are very diverse. Aside from guitar and vocals, Glen plays a pretty mean piano and harp. Bernie's rhythm guitar is often exchanged for a banjo, mandolin and dobro. Randy's bass and guitar get put down sometimes for the guitarron. Don's good enough — and necessary enough on percussions to stick with that for the band's sake.

All together, they're better than any band they've played for individually — a definite case of the whole being bigger than the sum of its parts, at least that's what the boys will tell you. And "Desperado" seems to prove that. It's a record with a kind of theme — almost like a musical comedy — and it gives it a cohesiveness that every artist in the business is looking for.

As everybody must know by now, the album is loosely based on the Doolin-Dalton shootout of days of yore — Wild West yore, that is. But it's not strictly narrative in the story sense. The Eagles depend more on a feeling, a musical mood, to hold it together rather than some forced kind of lyrics strung together. But as a whole entity, it really works, and we do wonder if they'll ever top this effort. No, we're not casting aspersions on their talent, which is admittedly big. It's just that this elpee would be hard to top by anybody, and we're just waiting to see if the Eagles can top themselves. **GD**