

The Lightning Flight Of The Eagles

by Ed Naha

Two months ago, no one had ever heard of the Eagles. This month, no one can ignore them. Their lightning flight to the heart of the music-lover-in-the-street has occurred at an almost unparalleled speed. Before they had even brought out their first LP, the Eagles creamy country single "Take It Easy" was rapidly outstripping songs by the likes of Steven Stills, Humble Pie, and Alice Cooper in the race to the Top Forty. Meanwhile, progressive FM DJ's who normally hate singles were playing the new 45 with all the delirious abandon of a bubblegum addict lapping up the latest from Donny Osmond. When the Eagles album (on Asylum Records) finally emerged, it only added fuel to the fire of what promised to be an unusually blistering career. Yet many must have wondered as they carried their cellophane-wrapped Eagles LP's home from the record stores who the hell the Eagles were.

Poco, Burritos and Ronstadt: "We like to do country songs with a Chuck Berry beat," explains Eagles guitarist Glenn Frey smiling. "That's what makes us different . . . we hope." Eagles Frey, along with drummer Don Henley, powerful picker Bernie Leadon and bassist Randy Meisner, is no stranger to the folk-oriented sound. While Bernie and Randy were feverishly playing with the Flying Burrito Brothers and Poco respectively, Glenn and Don were backing down-home songstress Linda Ronstadt on her gigs. "As a matter of fact," reveals Glenn, "we Eagles owe a lot to Linda. We all sort of flocked around the sound that Linda was putting out. Don and I were regulars with her and Randy sat in every once in a while on bass. Bernie had backed Linda a couple of years ago and he used to show up and jam. So we all kind of wound up on the same stage together; and



it was so much fun, we decided to become a group."

But before Eagles could take their first solo flight, it was necessary that Bernie part company with the well-known Burritos. Remembers Frey, "We actually began as a band with

rehearsals and stuff about a year ago when Bernie finally decided to split from his group. It wasn't that he was unhappy with what he was doing, it was just that he felt he could do more with us."

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result of the musical union is the high-flying sound of Eagles. As Captured on their first Asylum album, Eagles-music has all the trappings of a country free-for-all. While not exactly blazing new trails in the pop wilderness, the Eagles do manage to

instill a lot of life into the tried-and-true formula of country-rock.

In the ten taloned tunes on their debut disk—some of which were penned by the group and others by close comrades Jackson Browne and ex-Byrd Gene Clarke—the Eagles bring back muted memories of The Burritos, Poco, The Byrds and any other folkish group you remember with fondness. Guitarist Glenn realizes that the band is running the risk of being pigeon-holed into the "safe country band—isn't that nice" category and being dismissed lightly. "This particular band is more of a challenge to us than any of our past groups," he states. "We really enjoy what we're doing and we look forward to expanding our sound. We're always looking for songs. We're open to anybody's material. We're just looking for good material, things that have lyrics you can sink your teeth into. So if the lyrics are trashy, they'll be well written trash . . . if the lyrics are poetry, they'll be good poetry. That's one good thing about being a new group on this label (Asylum). They give you a chance to develop. With Jackson and J. D. South and everybody, it's like one big family."

The melancholia meter: Musically, the Eagles present a mixture of fast and funky tunes with a handful of moving ballads. Lyrically down to earth, the group deals with feelings on both sides of the emotional spectrum. In "Most Of Us Are Sad" (a tear-jerker comparable to Poco's classic "First Love") the feathered quartet harmonizes:

*Most of us are sad
No one lets it show.*

On the opposite end of the melancholia meter is Glenn and Jackson's plea for listeners to . . .

*Take it easy
Take it easy
Don't let the sound of your
own wheels
Drive you crazy*

Devoid of politics, neurosis, introspection and erotica, the lighter-than-air sound of the Eagles is uncomplicated and kind of fun to listen to. "If we sound like we're having a good time playing on the album," says Glenn, "it's because it was a ball. Now we're going to tour all over the country to give everyone who picked up on the fun a chance to come and see us." From the looks of things, there may be a lot more people coming to see them than Glenn could possibly have anticipated. •