



body maker

CHUCK STORMS OUT

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Clara Ward dies

1973

JANUARY - MARCH

LEONARD COHEN, BOB MARLEY, STATUS QUO, MILES DAVIS AND MORE

"Songs are so important"

MM MAR 3 LA's Eagles are in London, making album two.

IT'S A RARE trip. You hear a band and turn on to their music straight off. Warm and refreshing or hard-driving, straight-down-the-line rock 'n' roll. The music's biting hard and filters into the bloodstream.

First time I heard the Eagles it was like that. I popped their album on the turntable, listened to a couple of bars and was totally immersed in the songs. And it was the songs that caught me before their own unique, relaxed country-rock style brought a new awareness. The songs on the debut album are so strong, each one played and recorded with a feeling of love and care.

In the States, the Eagles are home and dry, their album's been a constant seller since it was released around the middle of last year and in the singles market it's had good mileage. Two Top 10 singles and another, "Peaceful Easy Feeling" just working its way into the Top 20.

Yet here they don't mean a light. The name got around to a few people, the buzz went through the music business when their first album was released, but there was little action.

But by the time they've played two concerts here next month at the Royal Festival Hall, London, and the Hard Rock in Manchester, there'll be enough of a buzz for their name to stick.

At the moment they're in Britain, living in a series of service flats just off the Kings Road while they record their second album at Island Studios.

The Eagles are LA people; it was the catalyst that drew them together. Musically, they ended up there after their own areas had run out of experiences; it's a dragnet that allowed some of the finest American musicians to get together and bounce off one another.

New York gave out driving rock 'n' roll and its current bizarre side effects, while in the sunshine, LA took away the tensions and gave us relaxed country-flavoured rock.

Linda Ronstadt brought the Eagles together. All the band had worked backing her at one time or another.

Drummer/vocalist Don Henley—who went to California from Texas with his band Shiloh, which included Al Perkins, now with Manassas—and vocalist/slide guitarist Glenn Frey worked with Linda two years ago. They talked about putting a band together and met bass player Randy Meisner, who was in the original Poco when he filled in for Linda's bass player, who couldn't make a gig in San Francisco. »

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March 10, 1973: the Eagles appear on Dutch TV concert Poppala in Voorburg, Netherlands - (l-r) Randy Meisner, Don Henley, Glenn Frey and Bernie Leadon

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Don and Glenn stayed with Linda a while, dreaming of getting a band together. Randy split Poco and joined up with Rick Nelson's Stone Canyon Band, a gig that made him quit music for eight months until the Eagles came along.

Circumstance threw the three of them together, they decided on forming a group, and at just the right time Bernie Leadon split from The Flying Burrito Brothers.

"We all knew each other simply because we'd all been playing in the LA music scene," said Glenn Frey. "There must be a pool of about 50 musicians in LA that gravitate between the pure bluegrass music and country pop rock. There's all kinds of people in LA that play music and we got to know one another's music through that scene."

"All of us had played with Linda as part of her band at one time or another. Bernie had played with her three-and-a-half years ago before he joined the Burrito Brothers. Don and I were playing with her when we got together with Randy, and when we heard Bernie was leaving the Burritos we called him up and asked him to have a play with us."

Randy: "It was real nice the way the band came together. It was like things just had to happen."

Glenn: "Putting a band together is real easy, because we were all doing other gigs and meeting people. But finding a band with all the right people who have the ability to shine is another matter. A real band is always growing together and getting each other to play better."

The Eagles have something really positive in their songs and in their sound, which is tight four-voice harmonies and constructive arrangements. Also, with four singers there are four lead voices, which add a whole new edge to their music. But it is the song consciousness, as Glenn puts it, that is so important with the band. That's why from the first album they were able to get three hit singles out of 10 songs.

"It wasn't a planned move that we would record an album full of singles. But we did set out to put 10 good songs on every album instead of having fillers, where one song is the single because it's so obviously a better song than any other on the album."

"Sure, you get song consciousness," added Glenn. "In LA, you cannot help but be influenced and affected on some level by the people you meet, like Jackson Browne. The people in The Byrds and Buffalo Springfield above all else were good songwriters."

"Songs are so important. It's like loud rock 'n' roll has been done at its best; anything else is a poor relation. It's like long guitar solos when I hear them are a poor excuse compared to the things that have gone down before from Clapton and Hendrix."

confine what they see going on to their own music style. The ultimate in theatre for me was watching Neil Young walk on stage at Carnegie Hall in work boots and denim and the audience just coming to a complete hush. Neil can make that magic work every night. To me that's the get off; that's not just getting real crazy."

Don: "Don't think we're opposed to theatrics, but when you can't play and have to rely on weird clothes, makeup and stuff then that's not valid to me. If you're a good musician, wear what you like, but it seems at the moment there's an awful lot of bands who need all the freakiness to get by."

"It seems that for bands like Alice Cooper and The Sweet the music is secondary to the theatre trip. They try to bash everybody with the body first."

For us the music comes first."

"Alice can do what he likes," says Randy "but don't he step on baby chickens? Is that rock 'n' roll?"

Don: "No, man, that's burlesque."

It sounds like sour grapes. In fact that couldn't be further from the truth. There's no malice as they talk about other bands. They can't figure it, but they maybe the other bands can't figure them.

The new album, unlike the first, has a concept running through it. The thread that ties the songs together being an outlaw gang in the Old West—the Doolin-Dalton Gang who cleaned up around Kansas in the 1890s. It draws parallels between outlaws and rock 'n' rollers. Both basically are the same is the conclusion. Both living outside the laws of normality. The basic story is that of an outlaw's life told in flashbacks. His discovery of a gun (or guitar) in a shop window, becoming a man, getting drunk for the first time, fighting over an unfair woman, making easy money and the final big job (or album), before the final burning. Nothing left.

But the Eagles have a lot left to do before the final job. Looking much like an outlaw himself and prime for a movie part, Glenn Frey says they'll be working a lot yet. "While the going's easy," he says, "you can't stop." Mark Plummer

"But then it's like, are people trying to get better at writing songs, or are they just copping a trip? All musicians tend to

EAGLES

Tequila sunrise