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SHE SHARES THE EXPERIENCE
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IN AN ARTICLE SHE CALLS
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This Is One of About 80 Pieces of Record Biz Hype Mailed to Rock Writer Loraine Alterman This Month. She Shares the Experience and Evaluates the Effects in an Article She Calls "Garbage."

My first exposure to the record industry was through a Detroit promotion man touting a now forgotten—and deservedly so—group of micro-boppers called The Bantams. As they say in the flicks, that contact would not be my last. For the past six years the music industry has been my constant correspondent. My neighbors, greedily clutching their two or three envelopes addressed "Occupant," envy me as I empty my mailbox into a laundry cart. My mailman hates me as he staggers under the burden of my letters filled with word of the hottest, the hippest, the hairiest and this year, the holiest.

Therefore, I was delighted when *Circular* invited me to survey mail from record companies and music biz publicity outfits. After all these years of being bored by the mail, I'd finally have a chance to bore the senders.

In six years I calculate that I have spent 780 hours combing through press releases searching for news more exciting than "John Smith has been promoted from 2nd vice-president to 1st vice-president of Dreck Records." Or, "The Blahs are appearing in Scroon, Kansas." One out of 103 music biz epistles actually contains a piece of news that might make a legitimate story. (This ratio pertains solely to me, for I know whole publications that are completely assembled from press releases without so much as a spelling mistake corrected). Real news these post-A. G. Bell days gets told over the telephone.

Admittedly, now that I am free-lancing I do not receive as much mail as *Billboard* or *Cashbox* or even Lisa Robinson. Also, in the summer mail slows down to a trickle as compared to the deluge in the winter, when on any given day the hot air from P.R. offices on West 57th Street alone could heat the Brill Building for the next 20 years. Still I decided to count my mail (excluding record albums) for *Circular*. From August 17 through September 11, I received 65 pieces of mail from 22 record companies and assorted flacks. That makes a three-inch pile.

Who wins the Ian Dove Gold Envelope Award for sending the most mail? In past years it would have been the Richard Gersh public relations office in New York. In fact, Mr. Dove, the eminent *Billboard* International Editor, originated the award as a tribute to Gersh, who was even being considered for a Platinum Envelope. But, according to my survey, the Gold Envelope this year goes to Warner/Reprise⁽¹⁾ with a grand total of 25 pieces of mail or 37.7% of the total. My Warner/Reprise favorites were the stacks of artists' itineraries sent in 9x12 envelopes. Not that I cared where Black Sabbath was playing—as long as they are not playing anywhere near my ears it's fine. But, the flip side of the schedules made great typing paper. I use the past tense here because the itineraries are now folded to fit into small business-sized envelopes and so are worthless except as book marks.

In the top five with Warner Bros. are Stax Records (9), Solters and Sabinson (8), Richard Gersh (7) and tied for fifth place with three each, A&M, RCA and something called Bow Wow Productions, which promotes concerts. Bow Wow may also be responsible for my receiving a mint-green pamphlet from the National Anti-Vivisection Society.

The record industry is fiercely competitive and unthinkably wealthy. Its avid pursuit of the national ear would seemingly generate inventive techniques for gaining the attention and support of media people—whether the medium is radio, television, the press or even the stereo systems of retail record stores. With this article by free-lance rock writer Loraine Alterman, Circular begins a to-be-continued investigation into the methods and madness of music biz hyperty. Further additions to this series will focus on the industry's assault of radio stations and sundry other seamy topics.



Certainly better illustrated than any record company press release—how often do you get a picture of a dog with an extra head grafted on to its neck?—the booklet enabled me to figure out where most of the new bands are coming from. Under the headline “They can be replaced by Robots” I read: “Not a gleam in some scientist’s eye, but a definite and existing part of medical research *right now* are sensitive, responsive and human acting robots . . . They have a heartbeat, they breathe, they can even cough and vomit.”

Solters & Sabinson, a big New York P.R. outfit, deserves a Papal blessing. Of their eight releases, five pertained to the legal suffering of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Because Robert Stigwood wants to drive the



money changers into his temple, Solters & Sabinson’s releases detail the injunctions preventing any but the Stigwood authorized *Jesus* from playing. I understand that Mr. Stigwood is training that camel he gave Eric Clapton several years back to squeeze through the eye of a needle in anticipation of the extra millions he’ll make as *Jesus* opens on Broadway.

The high-powered Gibson & Stromberg office in Los Angeles gets U for neatness. Written with as

“Not a gleam in some scientist’s eye, but a definite and existing part of medical research *right now* are sensitive, responsive and human acting robots . . . They have a heartbeat, they breathe, they can even cough and vomit.”

much flair as a death notice, each of their hot scoops arrives palely Xeroxed on bits and pieces of paper that must have been scrounged from Rogers, Cowan & Brenner’s trash cans. Of course, you can get twice as many Gibson & Stromberg releases as any other brand into your own wastebasket and so cut down on your trips to the incinerator.

Out of the 65 pieces of mail, 10 were biographies. Biographies can be helpful. My favorite used to come from Paramount when Rick Bolsom was head P.R. man because they were enclosed in manila file folders. I never have enough of those. Otherwise publicity chiefs use bios as writing exercises for new staff members who like to show off their skill with Roget. The result—lots of words, no information.

The recession had definitely cut into record biz mail. Time was when companies automatically shipped every new album release to reviewers, but these days some forget the grand gesture. Buddah Records sends out a five-page release describing their nine new albums and then at the end says if you want them, call or write. How do you know if you want records by Exuma

or Dust unless you’ve heard them? There sure isn’t any music in those names.

The Loraine Alterman Bite-the-Hand-That-Feeds-You-Last-of-the-Big-Time-Spenders Award goes to Grunt Records for their invitation to a party in San Francisco. Let me point out that talented Grunt P.R. lady Diane Gardiner, did not write these invites. Another Grunter is the heavy. After stating in capital letters, “You are cordially invited,” the invitation not so cordially instructs

us to arrive prior to 6 p.m. Saturday and check out Sunday by 5 p.m. On this if-this-is-Saturday-it-must-be-San Francisco trip one barely has time to check out the TV in the motel room before being shipped back to New York. “All incidental



expenses will be your responsibility" says Grunt. Now really, I've been on record company junkets where the publicity man accompanies you into the ladies room in case you need a dime for the toilet.

Finally, the invitation says "We have prepared a sumptuous (*sic*) feast of soul food and other labeled⁽²⁾ delicacies which will be served from around 6:30 til 8:30 p.m., it will probably all be gone by then." Perhaps Grunt out to check p. 237 in the paperback edition of Leo Rosten's *The Joys Of Yiddish* to find out what is a *mensh*. I do admit that I, as well as several other writers horrified by this invitation, went on the trip. If there's one thing the rock press lacks, it's principles when there's a free round trip ticket to the West Coast held under their noses.

At least 96% of record biz publicity isn't even worth talking about. It's too damn dull. For a business supposed to be so hip, it continues to use the same old techniques that Ford Motors or AT&T use for churning out press releases. One performer comes across in black and white just as boring or just as phony as the next guy. The philosophy seems to be that the amount of paper, not what's written on it, pushes records.

Only 4% of the mail shows some sparkle. Billie Wallington's publicity department at Warner/Reprise⁽³⁾ sends out lively letters. Pat Luce and Diane Gardiner do breathe life into their work. And Stax Records P.R. department led by Deannie Parker shows genuine enthusiasm for their product.

But, the next time a neighbor lusts after my full mailbox, I'll trade keys with him. I'm sure that his mail addressed to "Occupant" is far more fascinating than the music biz correspondence sent to me. ■

(1) "Say anything you want about us," I was told by the sponsor.

(2) Is this *pareveh*?

(3) Refer to footnote #1.

WB TRAFFICS IN "SESAME STREET"

Sesame Street 2, the second original cast recording from the award-winning children's educational series, will be distributed by Warner Bros. Records in November.

The stars of "Sesame Street" featured on the WB album include Matt Robinson as Gordon, Loretta Long as Susan, Will Lee as Mr. Hooper and Jim Henson's Muppets—Carroll Spinney as Big Bird and Oscar; Frank Oz as Bert, Cookie Monster and Grover; Jerry Nelson as Herbert Birdsfoot, Farley, Herry Monster, Marty and Little Jerry, and Henson as Ernie.

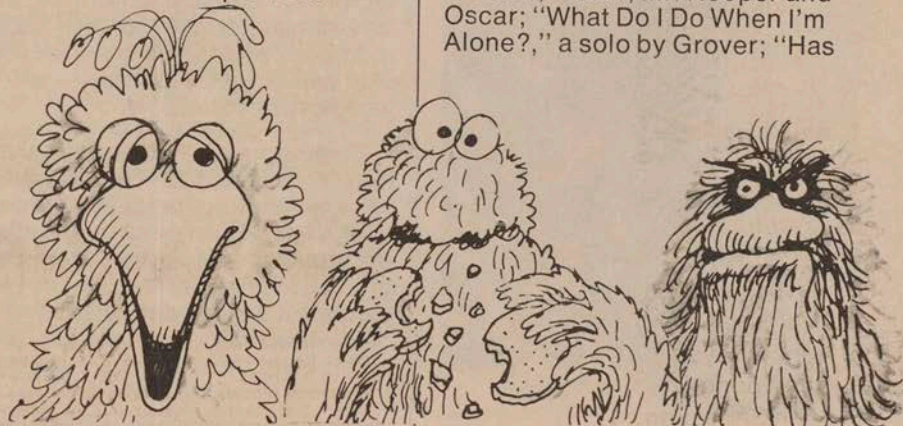
The album is to be complemented by a package featuring a 24-page full-color book, which includes lyrics to every song on the album, pressure-sensitive labels based on concepts from



the songs and pop-out die-cuts of the Sesame Street sign.

The 17 songs on the album were created by Children's Television Workshop musical director Joe Raposo and Sesame Street head writer Jeffery Moss, both of whom produced the LP. Ole Risom is the art director for the project with Mike Smollin contributing the cover design.

The songs and the characters who perform them on *Sesame Street 2* are: "Sesame Street," sung by The Kids; "Play Along," featuring Gordon, Susan, Oscar, Big Bird, Mr. Hooper, Bert and Ernie; "Everyone Makes Mistakes," a Big Bird solo; "The Garden," by Oscar and Susan; "High Middle Low," sung by Herbert Birdsfoot, Bert and Ernie; "Word Family Song," by Gordon, Susan, Mr. Hooper and Oscar; "What Do I Do When I'm Alone?," a solo by Grover; "Has



Anyone Seen My Dog?," sung by Marty and Grover; "Sing," by The Kids; "Mad!," sung by Little Jerry and the Monotones alias The Muppets; "Picture A World," by Susan and Gordon; "The Grouch Song," by Oscar (The Grouch); "I'm Pretty," sung by a baby seal (Joe Raposo); "Circles," by the Monsters Cookie and Herry; "Over Under Around and Through," by Grover; and "Someday, Little Children," sung by Susan and The Kids. ■



Who Made the Most Money?

As it does each month, *Circular* this month peeks into the paychecks of its loveliest artists. September, 1971, was no mean month for Warner/Reprise's mightiest. How they worked out, comparatively, is listed below, in customary Top Ten fashion, with the previous month's (August's, it seems) rankings shown in parentheses.

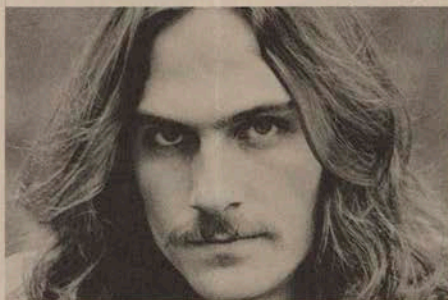
1. Black Sabbath (1)
2. James Taylor (2)
3. Jimi Hendrix (10)
4. Grateful Dead (-)
5. Jethro Tull (3)
6. Deep Purple (6)
7. Paul Stookey (4)
8. Beach Boys (-)
9. Neil Young (7)
10. John Sebastian (-)

September Greenery

Herewith the uncensored run-down on Warner/Reprise's Top 20 albums for the month of September, a list of long players whose sales have brought smiles to the crustiest of WB's execs. The parenthetical number following each entry indicates its standing in the August Sales Sweepstakes.

Top Ten

1. *Mudslide Slim*/James Taylor (1)

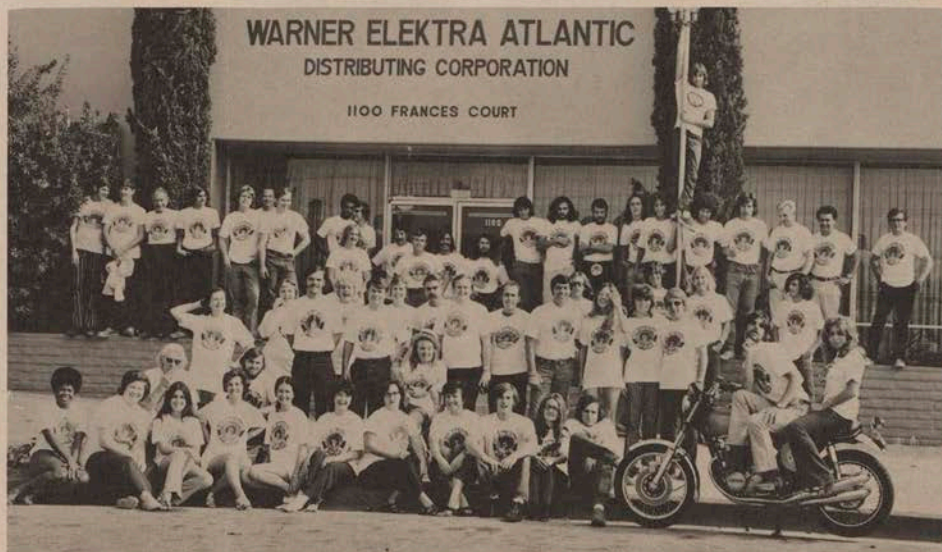


2. *Aqualung*/Jethro Tull (2)
3. *Sweet Baby James*/James Taylor (3)

4. *Paul and*/Paul Stookey (-)
5. *Paranoid*/Black Sabbath (4)
6. *After the Gold Rush*/Neil Young (6)
7. *Blue*/Joni Mitchell (5)
8. *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*/Neil Young (8)
9. *Black Sabbath*/Black Sabbath (7)
10. *Mary*/Mary Travers (11)

Runners

11. *It Ain't Easy*/John Baldry (-)
12. *"Summer of '42"*/Original Sound Track (-)
13. *Love It to Death*/Alice Cooper (10)
14. *Best of PP&M*/Peter, Paul & Mary (12)
15. *Greatest Hits*/Kenny Rogers & First Edition (-)
16. *Benefit*/Jethro Tull (13)
17. *Neil Young*/Neil Young (17)
18. *"Billy Jack"*/Original Sound Track (-)
19. *Smash Hits*/Jimi Hendrix (15)
20. *Deep Purple in Rock*/Deep Purple (-)



Rising for the Dead—Fifty-eight Grateful Dead T-shirts were used to clothe the personnel of Warner Bros. Order Service Department and the W-E-A Distributing Corps for this stunning photo, exclusive to *Circular*. The Order Service Department, under the T-shirted wing of Gene Benson, has the Herculean chore of mailing all of WB's promotional records, *Circulars* and other hype materials, which accounts for how easily they stole that many T-shirts. The operation is housed in the building shared by the record distributing limb Warners cohabits with its Kinney-owned cousins, Atlantic and Elektra, on whose Glendale, Calif., steps the mob assembled.

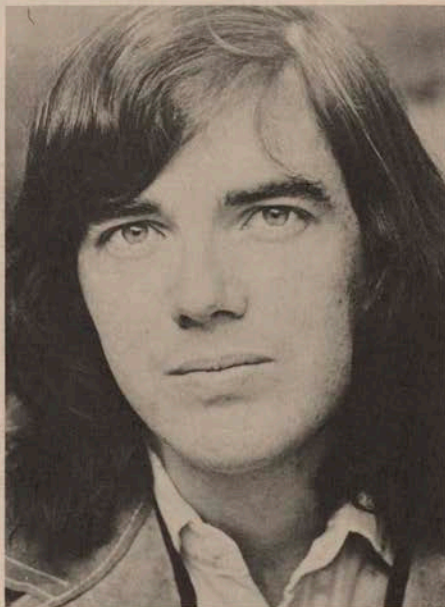
Items

The Kinney Komplex

★ Over in the United Kingdom (that's Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England) there's a publication called *Record and Tape Retailer Magazine*, which magazine recently published the success story of the Kinney Group of Companies: the highest percentage of album sales from May to August, 1971. Kinney being Warner/Reprise, Elektra, Atlantic/Cotillion and Rolling Stones; Kinney having 28% of the entire album market over there.

Hitting the High Spots

★ Joining the long list of folks who are Back on the Highway is Jimmy Webb, currently wending his way through several college concerts in Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Michigan, Oklahoma, Kansas, North Carolina and Utah.



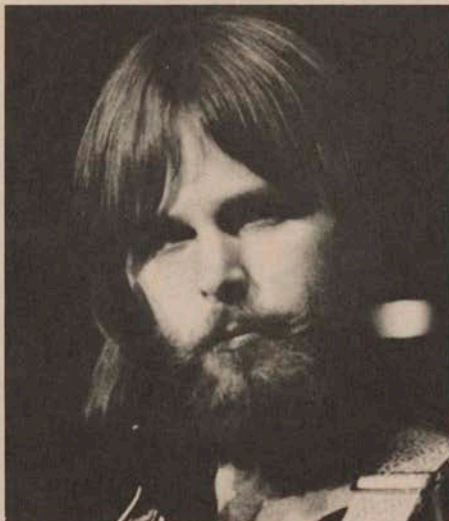
Jimmy Webb

Not Bad

★ A mysterious Mr. Harding from WB London sent this telegram: "New T. Rex L.P. Electric Warrior Number Two in Record Retailer Chart Four Days After Release."

BBB

★ Carl Wilson, guitarist-singer-writer-younger brother of the Beach Boys, is a father for the second time. Wife Annie Wilson gave birth to a Baby Beach Boy at 11:35 a.m., October 18. The new boy (second boy, actually) wasn't named at press time (as they say in newspaper jargon).



Carl Wilson

See Them Now

★ Crazy Horse, that band of rock and roll prowess, has regrouped and hit the road. The group now consists of Ralph Molina, drums, and Billy Talbot, bass, (the only original members) plus newcomers George Whitsell, guitar; Greg Lercy, guitar, and John Blanton, piano. The latter three are the writers, all five are the singers. The second Crazy Horse album, *Loose*, will be out in January, produced by Fred Catero and Crazy Horse.

Who Is Les Crane?

★ The Les Crane who has the hit single "Desiderata" is the same Les Crane who had a late night television show in 1964. He just looks different. Since Les' single was so successful, he's making an album—also called *Desiderata*. 'Twill be out very soon, 'ere Christmas.

But Will Raquel Be There?

★ This Friday, folks, is October 29, which despite its proximity to Halloween (or because of it) is the date of the world premiere (preem, as it's called in the biz) in Beverly Hills of *200 Motels*. Here's what a trade paper said: "Fantasy rock opera written and score composed by Frank Zappa features Ringo Starr, Theodore Bikel and Zappa and the Mothers of Invention." Theodore Bikel?

Two Tin Soldiers

★ A few startled Warner Bros. employees noticed a full-page ad in *Billboard* that read, "Coven is now on MGM Records. Their new hit is 'One Tin Soldier' (The Legend of Billy Jack)." It just so happens that there is a Warner Bros. single called "One Tin Soldier" by the same Coven, currently gliding up those charts you hear so much about. But there was no perfidy after all (surprise); WB's version is from the *Billy Jack* soundtrack album, MGM's version is direct from Coven—Coven being signed to MGM, not WB. Clear? Good.

Holland Toppers

★ The early October chart listing in Holland shows none other than Rod McKuen in the all-highest spot with his single, "Soldiers Who Want to Be Heroes," just released in this country. The Number Two slot is occupied by "Mamy Blue," a Joel Daydé effort that was also just released in this country (on a different label—Warners. It's on Barclay in Holland). Down in the Number 46 spot is "You've Got a Friend" by Mr. Taylor.



Rod McKuen

Hoax Revealed

★ Not since the Teapot Dome Scandal has *Circular* felt like such a fool—a single reviewed straight and true some weeks back, credited to Junior Mintz, has turned out to be by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, as revealed by its re-release this week. "Tears Began to Fall" is its title, REP 1052 is its new catalog *nom de nombre*. Suspicions were raised when the song turned up in the Mothers' current best-selling album, *Live at the Fillmore East*, and were reinforced by a casual allusion in Frank Zappa's recent instructional *Circular* article. But no one had put these elements into a Big Picture until the moment the new single skidded across *Circular's* Review Desk. It's still a poignant sounding record, though.

Most Gold

★ The RIAA, that wondrous organization that officially certifies gold records, released some year-end information that shows just where the gold is buried. Broken down by record company, it looks like this for the year October 1, 1970, to September 30, 1971:

	Albums	Singles	Total
Reprise	10		10
Warner Bros.	7	1	8
Atlantic	9	8	17
Cotillion	3		3
Chimneyville		1	1
Elektra	3		3
Columbia	17	1	18
A&M	9	4	13
Fantasy	6	4	10
RCA	8	2	10
Capitol	6	1	7
Apple	5	1	6

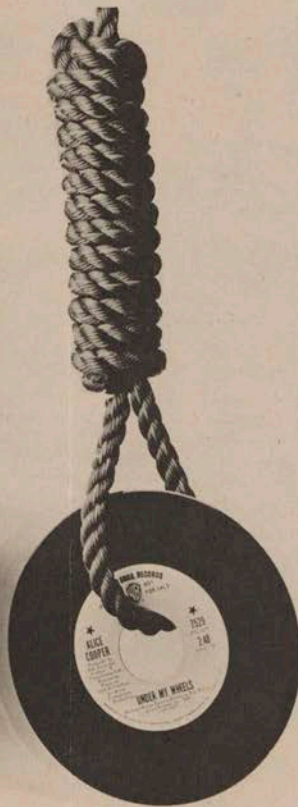
Add that all up and notice how Warner/Reprise tied with Columbia (the traditional giant). Also notice how the Kinney Group (the first six listed) ran away with more gold than anybody else.

New Singles

Under My Wheels

Alice Cooper
WB 7529

Alice has revved up in his singles mode again, and the result is a predictably powerhouse side dominated by largish guitar chords and a hoarsely forceful vocal. The instrumental track hums with energy derived from a flotilla of guitars, drums, saxes and the works. All of this sound is matched by fury in the form of the record's lyrics, which explore the metaphor of a gent who has his ladyfriend under his wheels. It's a number from the group's November-bound *Killer* album and it certainly sounds like as apt an introduction as "I'm Eighteen" was to Alice's last monster LP, *Love It to Death*.



You Must Be One of Us

Stoneground
WB 7535

Sal Valentino's vocal drives this show of strength from Stoneground, who back him with a chuffing combination of guitars, piano, bass and drums, not to mention a suitably stirring chorus line. The guitar work is particularly penetrating and delicious and no one should need to be told at this point how good a singer Sal is. Ron Nagle, he of the fine but underheard *Bad Rice* album on Warner Bros., wrote this stellar piece of rock and roll, which was produced by Ron Elliott (another ace artist) and Tom Donahue.

Sensuous Woman

The Mystic Moods Orchestra
WB 7534

An unnamed, apparently ecstatic, lady contributes voluble gasps to what otherwise might be shrugged off as just another pretty instrumental track in the tradition of "Stranger on the Shore." The voluble gasps, naturally, make this quite a timely biscuit, what with the currently spiralling National Sensuous



Quotient and the undeniable coins which are being tossed at anything that smacks of libidinous import (or even unimport). So hurl your coins and shrug off your clothes and join this dance. The Mystic Moods Ork were a hot ticket at Mercury and they show no signs of cooling at this critical juncture, besides which it really is a proper-sounding sort of record. Can they press pink records?

Artist Itineraries

OCTOBER 25-31, 1971

Arizona

James Taylor

10/29, Arizona State Univ., Tempe

California

Donovan

10/25, The Forum, Inglewood

Lamb

10/26-31, Boarding House, San Francisco

Seals & Crofts

10/26-31, Troubadour, Los Angeles

Flemming Rasmussen

10/27, New Orleans House, Berkeley

10/30, Los Lomas High School, Los Lomas

Doug Kershaw

10/28-31, Lion's Share, San Anselmo

Jeffrey Cain

10/29, Bodega Club, San Jose

James Taylor

10/30, Sports Arena, San Diego

Colorado

Ides of March

10/28, Ft. Lewis College, Durango

Connecticut

Jethro Tull

10/28, New Haven Arena, New Haven

Florida

Rod McKuen

10/25, Civic Auditorium, Jacksonville

Georgia

Rod McKuen

10/28, Civic Auditorium, Atlanta

10/29, Three Arts Theatre, Columbus

Idaho

Gordon Lightfoot

10/29, Boise State College, Boise

Illinois

Jethro Tull

10/26, Chicago Amphitheatre, Chicago

10/27, Univ. of Illinois, Champaign

Brownsville Station

10/27, Robert Morris College, Carthage

Iowa

The Association

10/27, Univ. of No. Iowa, Cedar Falls

Maine

Jethro Tull

10/29, Exposition Center, Portland

New York

Grateful Dead

10/26, The Palestra, Univ. of Rochester, Rochester

10/27, Memorial Auditorium, Syracuse

Jackie Lomas

10/29, Hunter College, New York City

Jethro Tull

10/30, War Memorial, Rochester

10/31, Harper College, Binghamton

Ides of March

10/31, Broome Tech., Binghamton

North Carolina

John Stewart

10/30, East Carolina Univ., Greenville

Ohio

Jethro Tull

10/25, Toledo Sports Arena, Toledo

The Association

10/29, Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Columbus

Grateful Dead

10/29, Allen Theatre, Cleveland

10/30, Taft Theatre, Cincinnati

10/31, Ohio State Theatre, Columbus

Daddy Cool

10/30, Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Columbus

Deep Purple

10/30, Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Columbus

Fleetwood Mac

10/30, Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Columbus

Oregon

Donovan

10/28, Portland

10/30, Corvallis

Pennsylvania

Crazy Horse

10/29, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

10/30, Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh

10/31, Kutzdom, Pittsburgh

Bonnie Raitt

10/30, Villanova Univ., Philadelphia

Fanny

10/31, WBIG, Philadelphia

South Carolina

Dionne Warwick

10/29, Coliseum, Columbia

Texas

James Taylor

10/26, Municipal Auditorium, San Antonio

10/27, Tarrant County Convention Center, Ft. Worth

10/28, Texas Tech., Lubbock

The Association

10/30, Lubbock Auditorium, Lubbock

Utah

Jimmy Webb

10/25, Weber State College, Ogden

Virginia

Ides of March

10/29, Ferrum Jr. College, Ferrum

Brownsville Station

10/30, Falls Church Community Center, Falls Church

Washington

Donovan

10/29, Seattle



Donovan

Washington, D.C.

Rod McKuen

10/30-31, Concert Hall, Kennedy Center

Wisconsin

Brownsville Station

10/25, Snoopy's, Madison

10/26, Wisconsin State Univ., Plattville

Canada

Daddy Cool

10/25, Forum, Hamilton, Ontario

10/27, St. Lawrence Market, Toronto, Ontario

10/28, Coliseum, Quebec City, Quebec

10/29, Forum, Montreal, Quebec

10/31, National Arts Center, Ottawa, Ontario

Deep Purple

10/25, Forum, Hamilton, Ontario

10/28, Coliseum, Quebec City, Quebec

10/29, Forum, Montreal, Quebec

10/31, National Arts Center, Ottawa, Ontario

Fleetwood Mac

10/25, Forum, Hamilton, Ontario

10/28, Coliseum, Quebec City, Quebec

10/29, Forum, Montreal, Quebec

Lazarus

10/28-31, Razor's Edge, Kingston, Ontario

Gordon Lightfoot

10/30-31, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver, B.C.