

TOMORROW

By ED OCHS

Peddling records old and new—like swapping country cures and good books—is a bit of quackery practiced openly by every self-appointed doctor of rock. Which means everybody. Here, try this one, they say. It will make you feel better. Remember once upon a time when records were a luxury? We played them until we knew them. So turning on to a new album was a ceremony performed in private, learning the words, the voice and where the song breaks till the grooves in the record were leveled by the bore of the needle. The experience of discovery is still a celebration, so here are a few words said in behalf of those albums already buried in the rock pile, those expecting and the lucky ones that will have their fling, thanks to promotion. You might discover something new. They may even make you feel better.

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CHAD AND JEREMY, "Cabbages and Kings" (Columbia). Chad and Jeremy have come a long way since "A Summer Song," a very pretty piece of sentiment. "Cabbages and Kings," less celebrated than the Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper," is similarly rich in concept; more urbane, suburban and satiric than declarative and consciously constructed in acts, scenes and theatrical forms. Chad Stuart "arranged and scored" this curiously British museum of middle-class hypocrisy, romance, slapstick and sensitivity. A billion miles from the blues (which is to say, the people) Chad and Jeremy still perform their symphonic metaphors with wit and integrity, creating new dimension by overlapping concepts. Stuart orchestrates Jeremy Clyde's clever and intelligent lyrics, politely pointed and blunted on contact by the duo's soft Simon and Garfunkel-like projection. The Moody Blues probably listened hard to this one, for Gary Usher's production is luxurious with effect, matching sound and sense to double the dimension. Other highlights: "The Progress Suite," another pioneer in the side-long cut, is a classic editorial, while James William Guernico's (producer for Chicago, BS&T, Illinois Speed Press) "I'll Get Around to It When and If I Can" is a strange and sensitive ballad, updating Chad and Jeremy's special way with a pretty song.

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ERIC BURDON and the **ANIMALS**, "Love Is" (MGM). Punky Eric Burdon, who has perfected the fit and tantrum to evoke his very own blues, turns loose his psychedelic kindergarten on this last romp with the Animals. "Love Is" is rock's silliest, most positive and preoccupying trip. Beautifully predictable and obvious, "Love Is" (a mystical statement without a question mark to corrupt it with doubt) is loaded with generous gobs of psychedelic guitar repetitions to trap the senses and old production gimmicks to tickle them. Like a brat who loves to embarrass people with naive questions about their personal life, Burdon groans and grovels his hoody lyrics, while the Animals compound the spoof with weird metallic shadings and mesmerizing vocal variations. Burdon's unique feeling for blues and psychedelics and exhaustive, treading instrumentals has created a nutty classic with no real comparison—by both default and excellence. The double album is funny, yet moving with a depth to be experienced. The group's versions of "To Love Somebody," "Ring of Fire" and "River Deep Mountain High" are just about the best in all rock. Excellent production by the whole group, and music as bright as a light show, makes "Love Is" a beautiful farewell by rock's bad boy, Eric Burdon, who is one of the greatest of the white funkmen.

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BLIND FAITH (A&O). The new combine of Winwood, Clapton and Baker squashes all rumors that somewhere in Blind Faith is a skinny Cream trying to get out. The group's first disk is Cream's tombstone, for Blind Faith is sugared by the dreamy Winwood, whose tripping, syncopated melodies and hollow calls put the breaks on Cream's hard-driving, rapid rock. Their sound is conspicuously relieved and easier, cruising along like a racing car with no race to run. When Winwood calms the explosive situation with his acoustic guitar, Blind Faith gets on and Cream gets off—with an assist from Traffic. Clapton mixed with Baker is still highly combustible, but the heat thrown off is only lukewarm and lazy with the absent-mindedness of blushing contentment. Blind Faith is more English than Cream, who cherished ego above the Queen; they are no more competitive than a semi-slick trio of violinists working the tables at a French restaurant. They are younger, more romantic, as Ginger Baker turns from the tension of Afro drums to the sultry ceremonial rhythms of Arabia. Clapton is Clapton, although he too is grooving rather than jamming for the advantage. Bass Rick Grech will be called everything from brilliant to nowhere, but whatever the ruling, he is certainly no Jack Bruce. Then again, Blind Faith does not pretend or even try to be Cream. Blind Faith spreads you out, while Cream stimulates, and both are the best at what they do.

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TOMMY JAMES and the **SHONDELLS**, "Crimson and Clover" (Roulette). I couldn't resist. (Liner notes by Hubert H. Humphrey:) Tommy James as grooving along, selling a zillion 45's and bombing on albums, when sometime after "Do Something to Me" he freaked out on "Crimson and Clover" (over and over and over) and who knows what else. Suddenly Tommy James was not only selling little records all over the place, but big ones too. "Crystal Blue Persuasion," on the same album, has also skyed high on the charts. Playing straight guitar like the local rock 'n' roll band that never grew up, Tommy James and the Shondells have, at last, psychedelized rock for Italians. The result—outrageously successful since nobody really know what it is—can even curl an eyebrow in near-taut at times:

*Strolling down smokey roads.
I came back to take a look at my childhood
But all I found was a big stack of firewood
And a whole bunch of people
I didn't even know*

"Smokey Roads" (T. James)

AUGUST 23, 1969, BILLBOARD