



It's always pleasant when you can begin a column with a positive comment like this: She lived up to all my expectations and more. I'm referring, of course, to Dory Previn who played to four sold-out houses at the Troubadour last weekend. Dory performed songs from her standard repertoire (with a few notable exceptions excised for lack of time) plus four new songs — "Coldwater Canyon" and "Brando" being exceptional standouts and a song called "The Empress of China" being the only weak piece (in the sense that the idea seems incomplete, the song unfinished) of the entire set. Peter Jameson and Bob Wachtel on guitars provided the musical accompaniment (Dory's guitar was unamplified and unmiked). Todd Everett's more detailed review of what is probably the most memorable show I have seen all year at the Troubadour appears elsewhere in this issue.

Gris-Gris Goes Ga-Ga

Speaking of the Troubadour, I stopped by last Friday night to catch Dr. John's set one more time, and I (and the rest of the audience) received an unexpected treat. For both the second and third shows that evening, a few of Dr. John's friends stopped by to jam. The results were far from together, but the energy and excitement made for one of the most fun rock and roll parties I have ever stumbled upon. The "friends" who played during the second set were John Lennon, Elton John and Bobby Womack. Those dropping in for the third set were Cher, Joni Mitchell and Bonnie Bramlett. And for those of you who are into gossip, five of the six "friends" are more or less single these days (you figure it out).

Little Caesar Lives

One of the most delightfully unpretentious autobiographies ever to come out of Hollywood (especially during the current rash of gossip expose books) is Edward G. Robinson's *All My Yesterdays*. Together with writer Leonard Spigelgass (who completed the book after the author's death), Robinson has created a most remarkable portrait of a human being who coincidentally happened to be a legend. Perhaps the secret to this book (both in the writing and the enjoyment of it) was that its author found the legend just as fascinating as the rest of the world did and the book is a convincingly honest explanation of what that legend was all about. Nor does Robinson neglect the man — one Emanuel Goldenberg (Robinson's real name) — who was behind the legend. From his constant conflict of art vs. the dollar to his maniacal penchant for art collecting (perhaps the art on his walls was the artistry he denied in himself) to his painfully protracted marriage, the author engages in the kind of self-examination that made him special both as a man and as a legend.

Although I may have made *All My Yesterdays* seem like pretty heavy reading, it is not; it is a thoroughly entertaining book. If it has any flaws, it is only because Robinson was a bit too defensive (no, "apologetic") about some of his alleged political activities. Aside from a few heavy-handed pages towards the end, the reader can get almost as much enjoyment out of Edward G. Robinson's life as he apparently had living it.

One note of caution: if you're looking for any Hollywood "dirt" you won't find it here. In fact, Robinson — with the greatest gentlemanly discretion — has avoided any such cheap sensationalism. *All My Yesterdays* is a book for all fans of the legend who would like to know the man, and it is also a book for anyone who could enjoy reading about a fascinating human being.

Guru Goes Ga-Ga

As promised, I will keep my readers up to date on the activities of the 15-year-old sham and *wunderkind*, Guru Maharaj Ji. The following release from Zodiac News Service came across my desk this past week. Enjoy; I did.

The Guru Maharaj Ji, the 15-year-old self-proclaimed "perfect master," lost a legal battle in India this week.

The Indian government has announced that it has permanently confiscated \$46,000 in cash and jewelry which customs officials claim the Guru was attempting to smuggle into India last year.

The alleged smuggling incident occurred last year when the Guru and a number of his followers returned to India and attempted to pass through customs. One of his followers, Bihari Singh, was apprehended while trying to carry in an undeclared suitcase packed with watches, jewelry and foreign currency. At the time of the incident, Guru Maharaj Ji explained that the suitcase was a "divine bank."

When the Guru left India for the United States earlier this year, he was required to post a \$13,000 cash bond, since the investigation had not been completed.

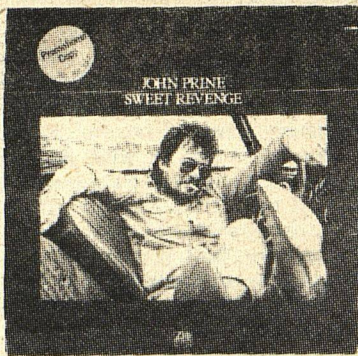
This week the Indian government announced that the "contraband articles" were seized after a prolonged investigation had evoked "unsatisfactory replies" from the Guru.

Reader's Poll

And a reminder: The *Free Press* readers' poll to select the top ten albums of 1973 is still going on.

All you have to do is submit your list of your ten favorite albums, numbered in order from one to ten. The only stipulation is that any album appearing on your list must have been released in the United States during the year 1973.

All lists must be received by Jan. 4, 1974, and the results of the poll will be announced in our Jan. 11 issue. Mail (preferably on a postcard) your ten favorite albums to: Top Ten Albums of 1973, c/o The Los Angeles *Free Press*, 6013 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90028.



Sweet Revenge. (John Prine) Produced by Arif Mardin. Atlantic SD 7274.

Attempted Mustache. (Loudon Wainwright, III) Produced by Bob Johnston. Columbia KC 32710.

Funny Coincidences of the Week: John Prine and Loudon Wainwright, III have each released a new album within two weeks of one another.

Each deals in social and moral issues.

Each writer often uses the "story" as a device.

Each writer/singer has been hailed as "the next Dylan."

Each has a high, reedy, nasal voice (see above item).

Each has recorded his current album, for the most part, in Nashville, and several of the same musicians play on both albums.

Each album includes one "live" cut, recorded in concert, of a "comedy" song.

Each includes one song the artist didn't write.

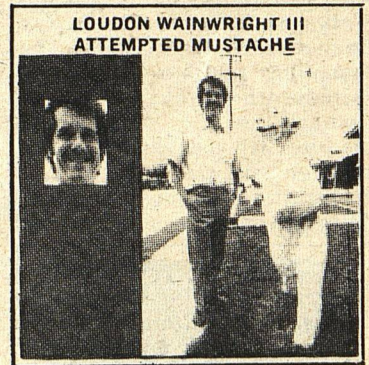
There are some differences, though. Wainwright is taller than Prine. Wainwright is from New York; Prine from Kentucky. Wainwright was born rich; Prine wasn't.

Wainwright's album was produced by a man whose experience is largely in country music. Prine's is a jazz and pop man. Both producers, though, have worked with the *last* Dylan.

While both Prine and Wainwright write "serious" songs as well as "funny" ones, neither's are that easy to categorize. Both have a way of drawing comedy from tragedy (witness Prine's "Things Could Be Worse," about an auto accident, and Wainwright's "Clockwork Chartreuse," about a couple of droogs).

My favorite song on Prine's album is "Please Don't Bury Me," about a fellow who wants to donate parts of his body to

science ("... Sell my heart to the junkman, and give my love to Rose.") with the tart "Christmas in Prison" currently running a close second ("The search light in the big yard swings round with the gun and spotlights the snowflakes like dust in the sun...").



Wainwright, on the other hand, has written a Liza Minnelli song that's even more bitter than Peter Allen's Liza Minnelli song, and a lullaby to end all lullabies ("Shut up and count some sheep and do me a favor — don't bitch in your sleep...")

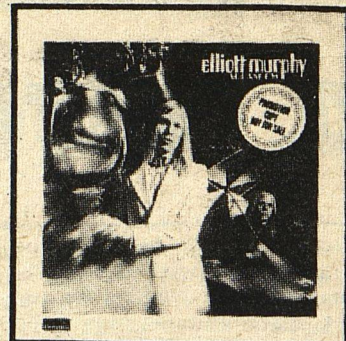
Both gentlemen are articulate, amusing and entertaining. Prine's got the reputation, if not the record sales; Wainwright's got "Dead Skunk" (not on this album, though) but not the publicity. I enjoy them both, but like 'em both *more* "live," without all the extra instruments, and wish they'd record that way.

— Del Porter

Aquashow (Elliott Murphy). Produced by Peter K. Siegel. Polydor PD-5061.

When the opening cut on a debut album neatly summarizes *Ziggy Stardust* and "American Pie" and transcends them both, you know you're listening to someone substantially more than ordinary. The rest of *Aquashow* confirms the suspicion: Elliott Murphy is someone to be reckoned with.

The first couple of times through, you hear mainly the influences — Dylan in the rifts and



harmonica style, late Velvet Underground in the general sound and clean, almost polite, lead guitar, Bowie in the voice and show-biz savvy. Then the words start coming through and you realize that Murphy could just as easily be you or me as some big-headed kid from suburban Long Island. The surprising thing is that his being, in his own words, "so low down middle class," works so well for him.

In contrast to Alice Cooper, whose appeal stems largely from his outrageous teenage fantasies and freak-outs, Murphy's persona is direct and based in a reality common to many of us. He's grown up, moved away from home and is into new scenes; but he's still hung up on rock and roll and his roots to his hometown and family are closer than he'd like them to be.

And he knows it, so his perceptions turn out to be acute and true to life. "Last of the Rock Stars," for instance, depicts the life of a high school rock and roller while hinting that the music is existing on little more than momentum these days. "Like a Great Gatsby" and "White Middle Class Blues" are also tied to the suburbs, the latter in such an overplayed manner that it becomes an amusing self-parody.

The album's class, though, takes place in the city: "Hangin' Out," complete with speeded up "Sweet Jane" chord progression, Murphy's most convincing vocal and lyrics that tell it all. When he sings, *You can laugh or you can stab but we're all in the same damn show*, it hits right

(please turn to page 10)

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