

SHOWCASE on
Albums

Bootleg Albums: Bargain To Buyers, Rip-Off To Artists

By MIKE RAVASIO

For years, record industry has been plagued by a thorn in its side that is very difficult to remove. This thorn is the "bootleg" or underground album industry which is becoming larger every year.

Bootlegs offer several advantages to the serious record collector. These albums are usually live recordings which make them extremely popular with fans of groups that have no live recordings available. They also include songs that for some reason or another have never been recorded on a legitimate album by a group. Another plus is that prices are compatible with legitimate albums available on the market.

Unfortunately, there are many dis-

advantages. The quality of some bootleg recordings is very poor but most important is, these albums are illegal.

Bootlegs, whether recorded off of FM broadcasts, mixing boards at concerts, or tapes that have been discarded by groups (some albums have actually been made from tapes found in garbage cans) are infringements on copyrights, and rob the performers of deserved royalties. The only person who makes all money on a bootleg record is the bootlegger himself.

According to a recent article in Rolling Stone, Bruce Springsteen and CBS Incorporated have sued for approximately \$2 million damages against a California bootlegger.

Andrea Waters and 4 other defendants are being sued for infringement of copyright, unfair competition, unjust

enrichment and unauthorized use name and likeness.

CBS and Springsteen are seeking damages from the manufacture of unauthorized albums. "E-Ticket", "Piece de Resistance", "Fire", and "Live in the Promisedland".

"It's just out and out theft; somebody has stolen something and we want it back," said Jon Landau, Springsteen's manager-producer.

If anyone was interested in buying bootlegs, all he need do is thumb through the back pages of rock magazines like Rolling Stone or Creem and look for small one column ads headlined "Underground Albums", "Concert Recordings", or "Collector's LP's". Some of these companies include "Pied Piper Records" and "Disc Hysteria"

Catalogues from these companies have something for everyone. To give an idea how extensive the bootleg industry is, there are at least 18 Springsteen LP's, 40-50 Rolling Stones, and upwards of 50 Bob Dylan and the Beatles. Pricewise, mail order is cheapest. A recent catalogue for Pied Piper Records advertises single LP's at \$5.00, doubles at \$10.00, and triples as low as \$12.00.

Several stores in the Pittsburgh area sell bootlegs. Among these are Stedford's on East Ohio Street and Jim's Records in Bloomfield. Prices in the store are considerably higher however. The same triple album available from Pied Piper for \$12.00 was recently sold at Stedford's for \$18.00. Single LP's go for about \$6.99.

Joni Mitchell's Beautiful Jazz Tribute To Charles Mingus

Joni Mitchell
Mingus
Asylum

By PHIL CONTES

Although Joni Mitchell has shown jazz influences in her music since the album "Court and Spark," she has taken a quantum leap in that direction with her recent release, "Mingus."

The album is dedicated to the great bassist and composer Charles Mingus, who died earlier this year at the age of 57. Before his untimely death, Mingus had

become interested in Mitchell's work, and hoped to collaborate on a musical project with her. Finally he composed six melodies to which Mitchell wrote the lyrics. The result of the collaboration is a sometimes confusing, often moving, and at times amusing album that presents a picture of both the complex man and consummate artist that Charles Mingus was, and the bold courageous talent that Joni Mitchell is.

The musical score is sparse, almost skeletal. Mitchell's rich voice, which some have compared to Billie Holiday's,

serves to flesh out the score. High caliber musicians such as Jaco Pastorius, Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Phil Woods, Tony Williams offer background and embellishments but Mitchell's singing always takes the spotlight. Her mastery of complex jazz phrasings will simply amaze; and as always, Mitchell's voice is able to convey a tremendous range of emotion.

Tapes of Mingus in conversation serve to introduce or conclude songs, the best of which are "God Must Be a Bogie Man," about Mingus, "The Dry Cleaner

From Des Moines," about an unlikely gambler on a hot streak, and the very bluesy, "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," dedicated to the innovative sax genius, Lester "the Prez" Young

"Mingus" is not easy to listen to, because it demands attention. The album is radically different from anything Mitchell has done before. She has pushed herself beyond preconceived limitations, producing an album that is a fitting tribute to Charles Mingus, the musician and the man. In that sense the album is a success and a true work of art.

The Knack's Beatle Facade Reveals A Vicious Attack

By FORREST BUFFENMYER

Get The Knack
The Knack
Capitol

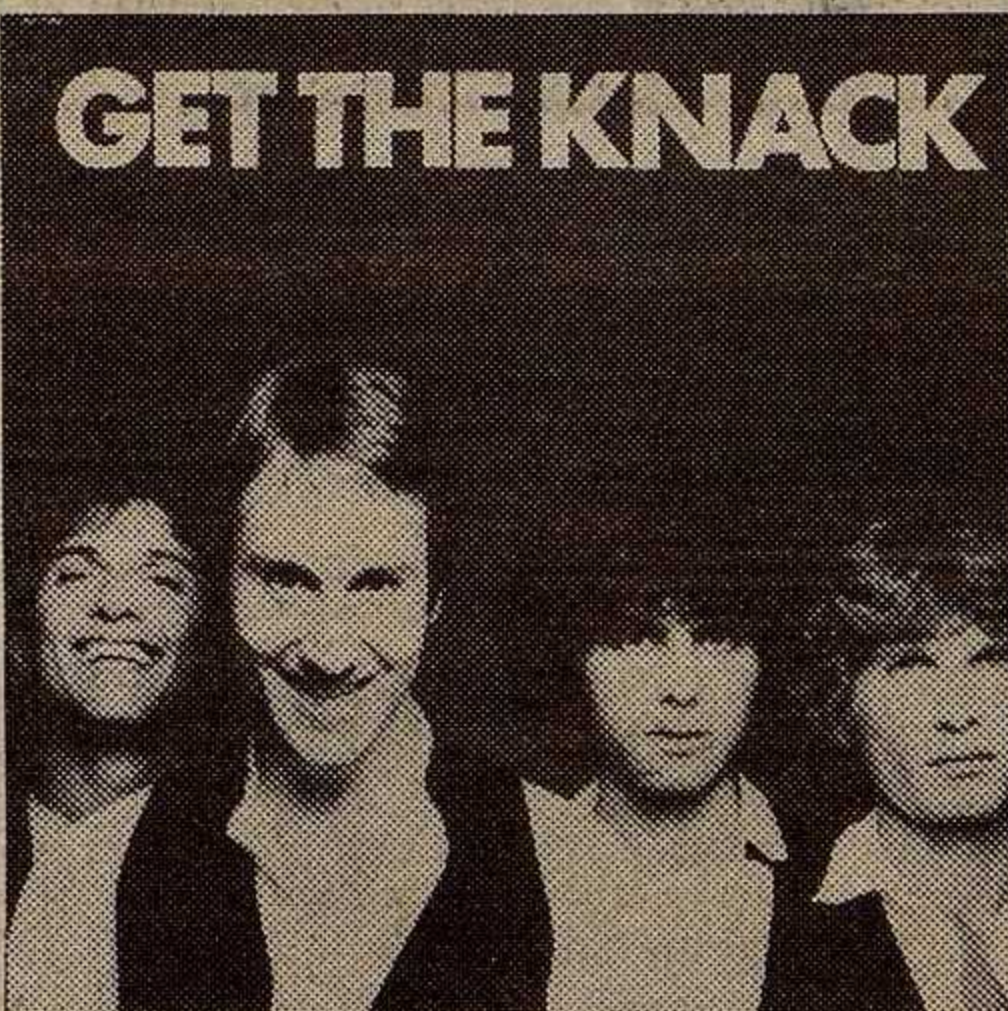
There are a lot of inaccuracies concerning this record, so let's dispel some of them.

To begin with, the Knack are not and will never be the Beatles. Period. Anyone who dislikes them for this reason is either still suffering from the post-Beatle breakup blues, or is not fully aware of the enormous amount of satire and sarcasm this record is wrapped in.

Every foursome with any amount of popularity in the past ten years have been hailed as the new Beatles—Cheap Trick, Klaatu, the Raspberries, you name it; and if the Who had started in 1970 instead of the early 60s, then they would have probably been hyped as the new Beatles. Just look at the way the first album by Klaatu sold several years ago, strictly on the rumor that it might, just might, be the Beatles. Same record label, a few obscure clues, and poof! The new (?) Beatles record. Face it, the Fab Four are gone, and they're not coming back.

Now as for the satire; it's just so blatant that you can't miss it. But don't mistake it for something it's not. The Knack are parodying the Beatles, not imitating them. This is apparent from their style of dress to the album's back cover to the same record label used on the Beatles' first release.

But the biggest fun is in the music. Some songs sound very close to the Beatles—like "Maybe Tonight," with its tape-reversed cymbals and flute/recorder backing (making it sound like a carbon copy of "Strawberry Fields Forever"). But the lyric undercuts this, like the best parody—set up the victim, make him feel comfortable, then knock him down. The words tell of a girl who gives her all (both physically and emotionally) to her guy, but can't understand why he doesn't tell her he loves her. He responds that "maybe tonight" he will, but we all know damned well he won't. The early Beatles were always the broken-hearted ones; the ones who could always be trusted because they were kind, understanding, etc. But the Knack have been tempered by heartbreak, and are now out to strike back and break some hearts of their own. The



Knack are graduates of the School of Hard Knocks, and are determined to hurt first and ask questions later. But there certainly is substance here, stuff behind the satire. The Knack sing even ballads with a chainsaw edge to them, and throughout there's an underlying viciousness here.

They are out of place—men in their late twenties singing about the problems of adolescence. But the guise just adds to the satire, tired old men moaning about lost teenage loves. The difference is the ten years between their actual ages and what they sing about has given them their tough-as-nails stance—experience has been a painful thing. They're out for a good time now, no matter what it takes.

Some songs are very blatant in their apparent use-and-abuse view of women: "My Sharona," "Good Girls Don't" and "(She's So) Selfish," for instance.

These three songs in particular and the whole album in general bring to mind the thin veneer of the Beatles appearance that the Knack use to get across their point, twisted though it might be. When the Beatles sang that they wanted to hold your hand, it was understood that sexual acts of some nature would eventually follow. But the Knack leave no stone unturned; they want to make SURE you understand the situation and what's happening in it. In this fashion the Knack bring to mind both punk rock and the Rolling Stones, at both the Stones' best and worst. Mick Jagger doesn't leave a lot to your imagination when he growls, "I'm trying to make some girl, but she says, 'Baby come back, maybe next week.'"

The sound here is more London or New

York than L.A.—can you imagine Jackson Browne or Fleetwood Mac making an album like this? Maybe that's why the Knack do it, to attract attention to themselves.

They like to do that, too. How can you not be caught up in the powerful backbeat, beautifully constructed and organized, of "My Sharona"? The lyrics are deliberately muddled and unclear, making it the perfect AM hit. But a listen will reveal the same style and wit that permeates the entire record. In this song in particular Bruce Gary's drums and Prescott Niles' bass drive the song along, never relenting. With the addition of Doug Fieger's rhythm guitarwork, the song snaps alive, like monstrous Rice Krispies upon the addition of milk.

But the Knack fails in its attempts to fuel the old Buddy Holly song, "Heartbeat," with some of the viciousness, mistrust and downright hatred that powers many of the other songs. Warren Zevon energizes his music with violence and pure insanity, as in the song "Excitable Boy." But the Knack rely on the darker emotions to give their music life.

And speaking of Holly—he is the real influence here, not the famed John, Paul, George and Ringo, who themselves admit and acknowledge their debt to Holly's music (as well as Elvis Presley's) in forming their own. At times, lead vocalist Fieger sounds like an arised Holly, at other times he makes us believe he never left.

It's almost as if Holly grew up, got smarter and more experienced, maybe had a few bad moments at the hands of the female characters that populate this record, and made this album himself. Those who saw "The Buddy Holly Story," if you believe its accuracy, could easily see Holly eventually rebelling against such women in a fashion very similar to, if not identical to, the way Fieger and company behave. Holly, like the Knack, could be determined to be the survivor in a world where only the strong live to see the next sunrise.

Nearly all of these songs are good, and some are better than others. The Knack waste no time in rocking, and kick the record in with "Let Me Out," one of the songs describing the feelings just identified. There then follows "Your Number or Your Name," a tune featuring very crafted vocals by Fieger with very

complimentary bass/guitarwork.

The song "(She's So) Selfish" is very bitter and nasty, with an edge that threatens any female in its immediate vicinity. All men have experienced or have at least known of such a girl ("I think you know this girl, I know you do," sings Fieger at the song's end), and these kind of women generally stir such hate, contempt and bitterness in men and sometimes even women.

"Good Girls Don't" makes the girl the villain, as she is pictured as someone who teases but doesn't deliver (the common theme). Therefore upon relenting at last Fieger makes her appear to get what she deserves.

"Lucinda" is the closest to a serious, unoffensive ballad the Knack have to offer. In short, Fieger is in a somewhat compassionate, if very guarded, mood—caught between the traditional rock and a hard place, Fieger warns others of his fate to stop it from befalling them.

But he strikes back in "Frustrated," about guess what? Lines like, "She's a teaser tonight, but you know she'll turn it off when you turn down the light," set the stage for the Knack's final attack on womenkind, particularly those who don't "put out" on command. And that brings us to the record's biggest failing—their attitude and how it perpetrates itself.

It's about time someone put down on record what really happens: that some women attack when hurt, and are (as judged by Fieger) the worthy recipients of his wrath. Men also tend to attack when hurt, to be cold, but in our society that's okay, the men are heroes for that. And this is the Knack's most objectionable quality, the double standard. A vicious cycle can only be ended by one side finally softening up, and that's the sad part, because Fieger will never do that, and will therefore always have his mistrust reinforced. After all, if you are convinced that the whole world is against you, then it will be. It's that simple.

So, the music here is good, far above just average. Don't condemn it for its content, but rather be empathetic, because Fieger and company cannot love. They can only hurt and hurt and hurt some more, as they search for love that will never come to them. And that's a very sad fate indeed.