

POP STOCK

NUMBER FOUR
SEPTEMBER 1993
IT'S FREE



POP STOCK MAKES MY POP STOCK

(a dozen apparitions)

1. Lilacs, tall as reindeer.
2. The Splendid Splinter rounding third.
3. The World Wide Wrestling Federation Heavyweight title match between deceased, Russian revolutionary poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky and anemic ultra-popster, Matthew Sweet.
4. Lullables.
5. The weasel, Niagara, christened at Wellford-on-Thames.
6. Marshall McLuhan!
7. Relieved of duty at Iriniml Canal, Sgt. Alford Harper, R.I.P, returns to the sight of his first commisslon: Chancellor Harbor, Antarctica.
8. Swarms of...swarms of bees.
9. The taxidermist on holiday.
10. The butcher, the baker, the candlestick-maker...
11. Mourn, sweet allowance--winsome though the dawn may be.
12. Cattails.

New Address:

POP STOCK
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Chicago, Illinois 60614

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A note to our readers:

Beginning next month (October, 1993) Pop Stock will be published monthly. Issues will be distributed on the 25th of the previous month (for instance, the October issue will be distributed on September 25.) Distribution will include (but not necessarily be limited to) the following locations: Lounge Ax, Phyllis' Musical Inn, The Rainbo Club, Quimby's Queer Store, and Leo's Lunchroom. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of each month.

Also beginning with the October issue, we will start accepting ads. For rates, call 248-6518.

I'VE RISEN AND I CAN'T GET DOWN!

i'm not going to edit this piece. i'm writing it and printing it--as is--so that it retains the feel of an informal note from one neighbor to another (which it is.) my editor doesn't like the idea; thinks we should "polish it up a bit." but that would contradict my message and I've grown a bit sick and tired of packaging lately.

i bought BILLBOARD last week--i felt i had to, for the same reasons i feel i have to buy the new smashing bumpkins and urge oversmell records, namely: if i'm gonna think and write about the chicago music scene, i should know what i'm thinking and writing about (both good and bad.) (BILLBOARD is bad.)

you'll all be happy to know that Chicago is "cutting edge's new capital." at first i thought this meant that Chicago was cutting edge's capital as Washington DC is the United Staes' capital. but when i read BILLBOARD, i realized it was concerned not with geopolitics, but only with cd, cassette, and record sales and, therefore, meant capital as in *das kapital*.

ladies and gentlemen, a spectre is haunting Chicagoland, the spectre of consumerism. and i don't think it is overly naive to be shocked by the roughshod BILLBOARD has run over every aspect of recorded music.

as background, i'll site an article from the "Artists & Music" column in the Chicago issue. the piece, headlined "Nurturing The Flame," concerns a Seattle band called Candlebox:

"There was feeling around the company that this was a very broad mainstream band," notes Warner Bros. VP and Sire Records managing director Howie Klein, "but we didn't want it to get too big for the alternative world right off the bat."

So, Klein reports, a three-song sampler went out to "street level" retail and college radio prior to the single's commercial release, to give that audience a chance to get on board early, and thus avert the risk of "turning off" the alternatives if the band breaks mainstream.



the blindness (and deafness) of BILLBOARD'S commodification is startling, and they're dragging its deficiencies into our frontyard. to accept their definitions is to allow ourselves to be classified as "consumers" rather than "listeners."



what's the fucking point? i don't buy cd's or go to shows to rid myself of 7, 10, or 15 dollars. BILLBOARD is a sterling and odious example of putting the proverbial cart before the proverbial horse. one crucial fact they've ignored: you can ride the horse unfettered, but without the horse, the cart is useless.

the BILLBOARD articles are useless too. they are superficial and implicitly (if not explicitly) wrong--no one concerned with the "cutting edge" shops for "their favorite sounds" at Rose Records. but, then again, Rose's 49 locations must generate more sales (the stock & trade of BILLBOARD) than other local stores. BILLBOARD has simply made a habit of (and a living at) peering into the wrong end of the consumer digestive tract.



i'm suspicious of what the coming year will bring. perhaps nothing--i'm dubious about BILLBOARD'S ability to instigate actual, discernible changes in our state of being. but, if change does indeed arrive, i fear it shan't be for the better. relocation of hungry "up-n-comer" bands with dollar signs for eyes to Chicago would not be welcome nor would an onslaught of agents and A'n'R wonks and scouts and moles and weasels and antfarm salesmen.



furthermore, i fear for the souls of many of our good friends who, in the relative darkness of the industry's ignorance, have plied their respective and respectable trades w/out concern for the judgements of men named Mr.

stay in your holes, friends, the storm shall pass. and when it's over perhaps some good will have come of all this. i still believe that somewhere between the barren, desolate tundra of complete indifference and the over-crowded, relentless metropolis of fadism there is a place where people with their hearts (and egos and wallets and brains) in the right place can peacefully hunker down and comfortably reside.

THE CHAP STICKS RECONSIDERED

or Welcome Back My Friends
To The Show That Never Stops
by *Warren Sentence*



The turntable will never die.

Don't get me wrong, I have no intention of lapsing into some extended nostalgic diatribe on the audiophilic merits of snaps and pops. Nor am I out to champion the physical gratification of holding an lp jacket in one's hands.

I'm talking about lust.

For a music lover there is no greater pleasure (other than that of consumption; purchasing; "the score") than that of manually placing the needle into the prefatory grooves of a new record. The moment quite literally *crackles* with excitement.

Certain records live up to that great and expectant moment, others do not. Still others transcend it. **Coma Cola** by The Chap Sticks is one of those rare records--a masterpiece. This seminal seventies classic, recently re-issued on CD by RycoDisc, confirms its genius by the conspicuous absence of three ingredients key to my experience of it as I listened to it over and over again in the weeks following its original release.

The first missing ingredient is, of course, drugs. And if not drugs, the drug culture. Even the straightest straight kid in Kansas was in a haze in '78. There was no getting out of it. America's youth was submerged in a murky, hypnotic, psycho-cerebral freakfest. No idea, no picture, no sound was free of the so-called sub-culture's influence. And we made no bones about the climate's effect on our music.

A guy named Jimmy Haffenblau and I once listened to **Coma Cola** seven times in a row while smoking a brick of hash a friend had mailed from Amsterdam. And every time we got to the end of "Commandant Christmas" and the organ swirled and swelled amidst the crashing (almost *hissing*) cymbals and the backwards guitar led directly into the backwards cannon blast that creates the segue into "Judy's Husband Charlie," Jimmy and I grabbed our heads and gasped: "Did you hear *that*?!" Making sure it was on the vinyl and not a symptom of the hash.

The second thing missing was teen angst. When I first heard **Coma Cola** I knew what it meant. It wasn't anything explicit in the lyrics (although lines like "Mama's gonna hate herself/ For givin' birth to me/Got my finger halfway down my throat/I'm as sick as I can be" were part of it.) The real meaning

cont'd p. 5

was this record pissed people off. It was the only record my father ever outlawed in his house. All others were lumped together under the title "that garbage" without being singled-out for punishment. But in excommunicating The Chap Sticks, my father took the trouble of coming to my room and explaining that "your mother and I simply cannot allow the sounds of animals being tortured by machines to play in our home." When he left the room I'm sure my father was unaware that he had bestowed the combined equivalent of a Nobel Prize and a Grammy on my new favorite record. With a single, swift, simple denouncement, my father had unwittingly made *Coma Cola* immortal.

The third and final missing puzzle piece (and the crux of my biscuit) is vinyl--everybody's favorite petroleum product. Most CD re-issues make the transition to digital without a hitch. I like the new Ray Charles box. And the Stax/Volt set sounds better than ever. But *Coma Cola*, like a very few others (*Raw Power*, perhaps, or *Sometimes Good Guys Don't Wear White* by the Standells) is not whole if it's not on vinyl. *Coma Cola* is not forty-one minutes and eight seconds of music, it is forty-one minutes and eight seconds of viscera extracted from the abdomen of the late seventies and preserved. To be complete it had to be preserved on the medium that reflected, in fact *emplified*, its moment in history. And vinyl was the zeitgeist of the seventies.

Listening to it in Summer, 1993, everything has soured. Roland Kirk's soaring bass pennywhistle trills seem cheap and deflated. The defiant angst of songs like "Ego Bomb" and "Take A Spin In My Sin" seem filtered through a layer of gauze, protecting us from the spit in lyrics like "Jesus played a trick on me/He said the world was outta sight/He handed me a candy apple/And then I took a bite."

We were never supposed to know what percentage of the static hiss that closes side two of the record was produced by The Chap Sticks and what was imperfections in our vinyl. In this respect the record was a living, evolving thing--with each listen the ratio changed. Digitally encoded, the album is dead.

Again, I am not advocating analog over digital, universally. But in that rare instance when a work of art is captured in its perfect medium, as with Michelangelo's brushstrokes on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, an ineluctable harmony is created between process and product. The result is a miracle: the bottling of time; the framing of a state of mind; the enunciation of the single, sacred word that cabbalistically evokes the name of God.

For some, that word is the bible or the koran. For others, myself included, it is *Coma Cola* by The Chap Sticks or a piece of writing by Lester Bangs.

Good-bye baby and amen.



I. the cannanes-frightening thing b/w monsieur hot and let's pretend
(international pop underground voi. xxxvii)

frightening thing is one of those songs that the nanosecond you hear it, you know that it's a gem. this is one of those simple strummy songs that follows you around everywhere, it's perfectly sloppy with frances gibson's beautiful voice just slightly obscured by a wonderfully spilly trumpet melody. oh yeah! very nice snare drum work too. side b features two songs recorded at yo-yo studios with all its lo-fi splendor.

II. unrest-cath carroll b/w so so sick and capezio b
(teen beat)

unrest is probably one of my favorite bands because I'm never really sure what to expect when I let the tonearm go, except that it will be decidedly "unrest." I have to admit that at first I didn't really like **cath carroll**. it's pretty rock. but the song snuck up on me. maybe it's the really catchy chorus. actually it's gotta be the super-cool drum fills. phil krauth beats the pants off pete thomas, stan lynch, and bun e. carlos! I can't wait for the album. (** 7" contains two non-LP tracks.)

III. television personalities-goodnight mr. spaceman b/w
if i was your girlfriend

(fire records)

i think i played the b side (*if i was your girlfriend*) at least 6 or 7 times in a row when I got home from the record store. and i've decided that this is my favorite song all summer. there's not much happening in this song, mostly guitar noodlings with an occasional lyric--"and I know you're a witch, but at least you're a good witch" wow. wow.

don't delay:

- I. ☺ box 7154 olympia wa 98507
- II. teen beat po box 50373 washington dc 20091
- III. fire records 219 maury rd london n16 7bp UK

or, if you're impatient like me, just go to blackout records-- they always have something nice to say.



ALERT! 7" Wonders of the World is looking for submissions from Chicago bands. Send 7" singles to: 1928 N Sheffield Chicago 60614. (Cassettes are ok if you're planning on making them into a 7"--or if you're willing to lie about planning on making them into a 7".)

POP STOCK'S CHICAGO ROCK CRITIC TIPSHEET, SUMMER '93 EDITION

	FORUM	SLANT	GOODS	EFFECT ON CHICAGO SCENE
Bill Wyman	Hitsville in The Reader--Chicago's foremost "alternative" weekly & advertising floralia	Decidedly national. Bored by "harsh constraint" of local scene, more motivated by the not quite traveled (on GNR & Mike Jackson (and the accom-panying blindness); this may change with Chicago's ascension to the pinnacle of the under ground	Smart & smarmy wisaguy patois-patier, more like man know, uncanny knack for modifiers; impressive ability to construct words & verbal skeletons (sarc meat, muscle, viscera)	Negative Participation in Billboard scam suits own needs, not scene's
Greg Kot	The Chicago Tribune--big city daily	Views of the word as it passes through Chicago, tells the kids in the suburbs which shows are worth borrowing daddy's car for	Balladeer record reviews with occasionally adventurous selections hints for those not yet "in-the-know" concert (pirate) reviews-kind of a spon's writer's approach to rock criticism	Little, if any, good-intentioned, though he may be, his job description calls for lots of lowest common denominator tora
Ben Kim	Raw Material in New City--Chicago's News & Arts Weekly The Reader's little brother replete with requisite complexes & neuroses	Local Tackles the products (good & bad) of Chicago & environs with enthusiastic aplomb, turns readers on like a friend with a subscription to Oplon	Brainy, self-conscious, hyper-justifying lectures on indie-rock from its neck up with little attention paid to its flabby torso; all pronouncements prefaced by self-deprecating self-rationalizing don't-get-me-wrongisms, not much fun, but plenty rewarding for the "smartians" (sic) among us	Perhaps not as significant as it oughta be the only dissenter in the Liz Phair canonization proceedings--calling a spade a spade in denouncing her live performances continuous & enthusiastic coverage of local scene alien championing unknowns (Mini Aundry, Brown Betty Elliot) amidst the overwhelming tide of indifference
Jae-Ha Kim	The Chicago Sun-Times--does anybody actually read this rag?	?	?	?
Don	7 th Wonders of the World In Pop Stock	The sling in David's hand no CD's, no cassettes, no LP's--just 7" singles by bands we've never heard of; obscurism is dead long live obscurism	Earnest charm & boyish good looks; a heart on his (record) sleeve; genteel & well-mannered, trousers pressed; the writings of a man whose privy is appointed with 50's record jackets	Modest (review of Coctails' Working holiday split single w/Coctails) but it's still next month's all Chicago version of 7 th Wonders



HENRY V.

