

# CIRCUS

THE LEADING ROCK &amp; ROLL BI-WEEKLY

ISSUE NUMBER 167

OCTOBER 27, 1977 UK45p \$1.00

How To  
Make Your TV  
Sound Like A Hi-Fi  
**HARDWARE**

## LINDA RONSTADT

Unravelling 'Simple  
Dreams'—The Queen  
Of Rock & Roll Tells  
Tantalizing Tales!

## CHEAP TRICK

Next Year's Hottest  
Act Today!  
'Cheap Trick In Color'

## SHAUN CASSIDY

The Hardy Boy  
Heartthrob Hits The Top  
Of the Pop Charts

## DENNIS WILSON

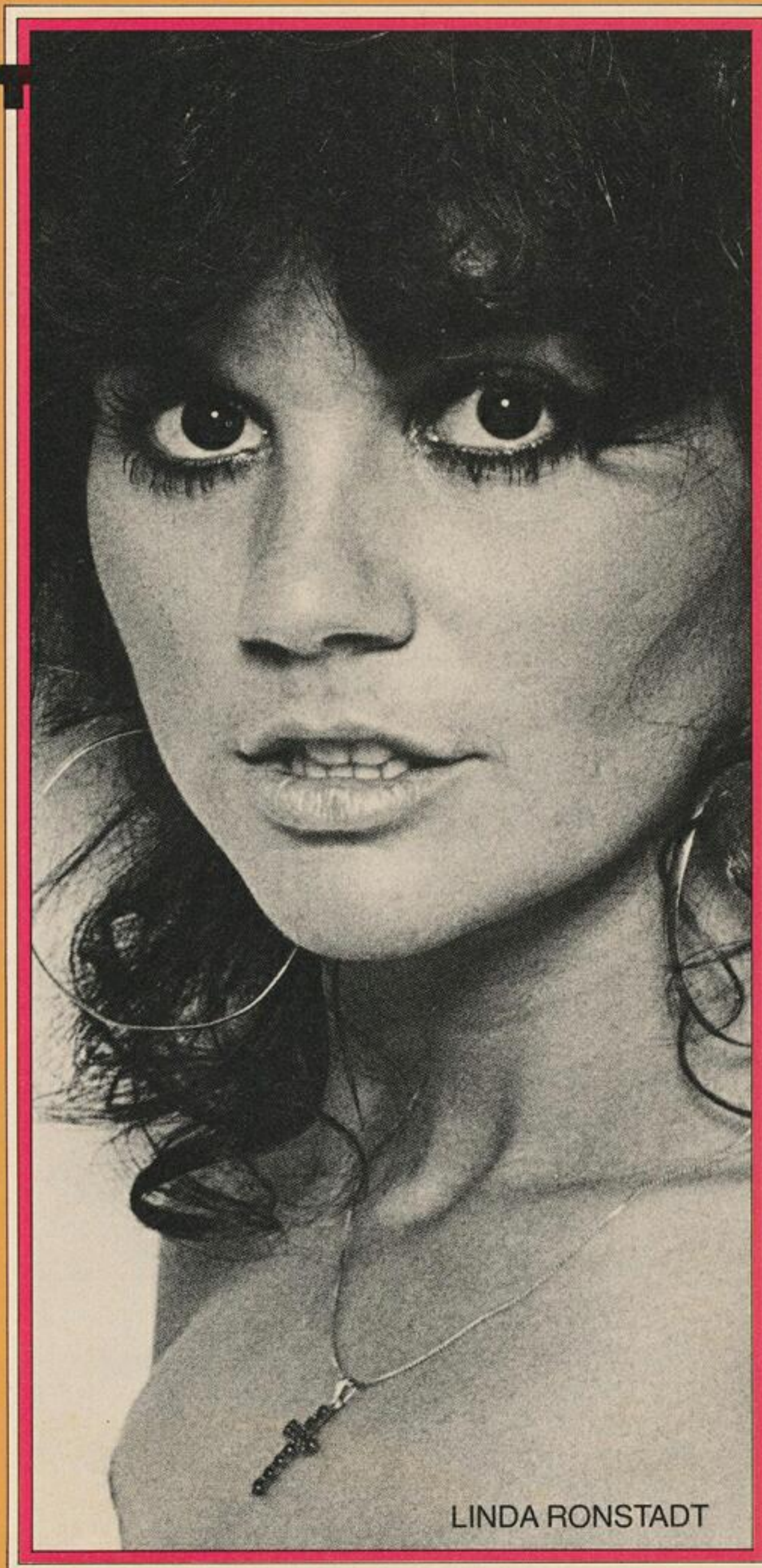
First Beach Boy  
Solo Ever—'Pacific  
Ocean Blue'

## RUSH TAPES 2

Geddy Lee On The  
Secret Workings Of Rush

## STYX

What's The Mystery  
Behind 'The  
Grand Illusion'?



LINDA RONSTADT

## RICHARD PRYOR

The Wildest Comic In  
Hollywood Takes On TV,  
Movies, Money And You!

## JOHN BOY

Richard Thomas And  
The James Dean  
Legacy Alive In '9/30/55'

## SHA NA NA

Finally, A TV Show For  
Fifties Funny Bones

## UNSAFE SCHOOLS

Don't Let Violence In The  
Schools Get You—How  
You Can Stay Safe

## ROCK VOTE

Your Vote Counts!  
Music Makers  
Awards Poll

## UFO

Behind The Air Force  
Coverup—Who Or What  
Is Out There?

## CITY MURALS

New York Youth Go  
Color Crazy





# Linda Ronstadt Listens to Your Sleep

'Simple Dreams' Is the Rock Queen's Latest Treasure

by Barbara Charone

**B**efore Linda Ronstadt completed her latest album, *Simple Dreams* (Asylum), she used to strut around her Malibu kitchen singing an amusing little ditty that humorously summarized her increasingly successful career rise.

She'd hum a parody of the Buddy Holly infectious classic, "It's So Easy," dressed in tight jeans and a loose fitting print blouse. Wearing a large grin, she'd sing "It's so easy to have a hit, all you have to do is recycle it." Although Linda recorded the original Holly lyrics for the new album, she picked a less obvious single choice this time out, "Blue Bayou," an old Roy Orbison favorite.

Since the release of *Heart Like A Wheel*, Ronstadt has scored consecutive top ten hits with a string of enormously successful singles, all of them standards like "You're No Good," "When Will I Be Loved," or "That'll Be The Day," to name but three. But times have changed. And so has Linda Ronstadt.

She kicked off her recent concert

tour in Texas, choosing onstage apparel from an assortment of "specially designed" dresses. But Linda Ronstadt didn't feel quite comfortable decked out in little girlish frocks, and now she's replacing them with more durable short satin gym shorts and brightly colored Hawaiian shirts. The clothes perfectly match the more uptempo sentiments she belts out on the new album.

The convincing but overwhelming sense of depression which surrounded *Hasten Down The Wind* has now been superseded by an optimistic groove brightened by funky songs. *Simple Dreams* does not contain painful hints of pessimism—what she previously dubbed "the quaalude trilogy."

"With this new album people will either think I have a sense of humor or that I'm real sick," she says, laughing strategically in her New York City hotel suite, surrounded by bouquets of flowers and boxes of Oreo cookies presented by faithful fans. "I was definitely laughing a lot on this album. After all, I *do* have a

sense of humor.

"That's why the feeling on this new album is different. It's completely different. *Hasten Down The Wind* was so DOWN," she yells to prove the point. "I was very depressed then. But this new album is kinda like oh yeah, OH YEAH, what else are ya gonna hit me with? This new album is a real two fisted record."

No longer the hurt little girl, Linda Ronstadt has channelled impressive career accomplishments into genuine confidences. Part of this recent personal strength revolves around the total discovery of the bizarre but

*Torch ballads and lost-love songs are Ronstadt's most theatrical resources.*

*Peter Asher, Linda Ronstadt's manager and producer of 'Simple Dreams,' accompanies his silver-throated star to a Led Zeppelin fete.*



Globe/Schatzberg

Ken Kaminsky





1974's 'Heart Like a Wheel' propelled Ronstadt to the top of the list of female vocalists.

brilliant songwriter Warren Zevon, who authored "Hasten Down the Wind."

Ronstadt has chosen two more Zevon compositions for the new album, presenting even more colorful slices of that sick humor, "Poor Poor Pitiful Me" and "Carmelita."

She met Zevon several years ago, backstage at one of her LA concerts, in a dressing room stuffed with hangers-on and well wishers—where the room temperature gradually reached an uncomfortable 114 degrees.

"He looked like a psychopath," she giggles innocently, "Just like Richard Speck. I thought he was a maniac and bound to do something weird. I was positive he was completely deranged. He scratched his head and kept opening his mouth but no sound would come out. My manager Peter Asher knew it was a misunderstanding and wanted to intervene but I wouldn't stop quacking."

Already a Zevon convert (stunned by his debut album produced by Jackson Browne), on their first meeting Linda was her typically verbose self. More than once she'd unintentionally put her foot in her mouth.

"I felt like such a fool," she bellows in embarrassment. "I was positive he'd think I was completely demented and he'd never take anything I said seriously. Then I couldn't apologize enough. That was even worse. Then, when I got to know him he was such a shy, sensitive person."

Despite her vivacious, outgoing personality, Ronstadt is equally shy and sensitive, a fact constantly apparent in all of her ballads. But vulnerable sensitivity has now become personal strength.

"I'd always wanted to record "Carmelita" and "Poor Poor Pitiful Me," but I'd felt the lyrics were too strong. Now I sorta feel like I've grown into the lyrics. I don't know why but they're not too strong anymore," she giggles. "It's like not liking hot chili when you're a kid and all of a sudden you can't find the chili hot enough."

One verse of "Poor Poor Pitiful Me" was too potent even for Ronstadt's powerful tastebuds. The lady passed on the verse, "I met her at the Rainbow Bar, she asked me if I'd beat her," a deranged slice of desperado living.

"I've never been into sado-masochism," she laughed. "I've never gotten that far out ever. To me that song seemed like the purest expression of male vanity. Step on you, be insensi-

David Alexander



tive, be unkind and give you a hard time, saying, 'can't ya take it, can't ya take it,' she says animatedly, speaking from a wounded past.

"Then, if you tease men in the slightest bit, they'll just walk off with their feelings hurt, stomp off in a corner and pout. I mean that's the way men are. I swear," she whines just slightly. "I thought the verse turned around to a female point of view was just *perfect*. The gender change worked perfectly."

Onstage the song works as well as on record with Ronstadt's newest band undoubtedly her best. Drummer Ric Marrota and longtime Ronstadt bassist Kenny Edwards supply a throbbing foundation that guitarist Waddy Wachtel pummels into the ground. Meanwhile, pianist Don Grolick and pedal steel guitarist Dan Dougmore add sensitive moving sentiments that compliment Ronstadt's diverse range.

What impresses Linda most about Zevon's compositions are his intuitive perceptions of LA living. "Carmelita," the best song *anyone* has written about heroin, reminds Ronstadt more of Sunset Boulevard escapades.

"To me, that song is just a narrative. I don't even think of it in terms of drugs. To me it's LA nostalgia, just a classic LA song. Ya know that LA boys club?" she asks quizzically like a high school cheerleader. "Jackson Browne, J.D. Souther and Glenn Frey—the ones who stomp around in their cowboy boots—I call them the Pioneer Chicken Stand Brigade," paraphrasing a Zevon verse.

Some of the "Pioneer Chicken Stand Brigade" were also involved with the production of Ronstadt's latest vinyl outing. Orbison's "Blue Bayou" was initially suggested by Souther and Frey.

"JD and Glenn simultaneously suggested 'Blue Bayou' to me sorta like Twiddle Dee and Twiddle Dum," says Ronstadt, imitating dual voices. "We sat up all night talking like mice at incredible speeds, playing and singing half the songs we knew, all of us singing in different keys. I've got a tape of it and it's the fastest tape I've ever heard. It sounds like R2D2."

One of the tunes they sang that night was Souther's "Simple Man, Simple Dream" which Ronstadt eventually recorded. She was going to record another Souther tune, "Songs of Love," but the author decided to save it for his own album. Besides, Linda thinks it's better suited for Bonnie Raitt. As for "Simple Man, Simple Dream," it's pure Ronstadt at her heartfelt best.

"I feel very close to that song," she says of a religious priority for choosing material. "I really love that line 'Maybe I'll kill you, maybe I'll be true,' because these days you never know what will happen if you get involved with somebody.



Bob Noble

A laughing Linda, with entertainment world sportsman, Paul Williams, accepting yet another Grammy. 'Heart Like a Wheel' had three gold singles on it.



Paul Canty/LFI

The wistful look disguises the layers of fatigue that strike every hard-working, touring artist. Ronstadt's stage vitality takes its toll, and the hours spent waiting and travelling aren't reinvigorating.

"I mean a relationship could be the worst thing that's ever happened, ya know?" she demands in passionate tones. "It could be the worst thing that happened to their career. Or my career. It's so weird, since we all live in fishbowls it's so difficult to have successful relationships."

As for all the previously reported romances between Mick Jagger and Linda Ronstadt, they're really *just* good friends. She did, however, prove her rockability by recording "Tumbling Dice." Before entering the studio she had Jagger recite the difficult to decipher lyrics as the Stones originally recorded them. The tune works onstage and on record because the vocal is well-suited to Ronstadt's incredible range and to Wachtel's rhythmic Stones consciousness.

*Simple Dreams* is the first album Linda Ronstadt has recorded without Andrew Gold since her initial rise to public prominence. Yet change of personnel on stage and in the studio keeps things fresh, guarantees artistic longevity and makes chances of musical sterilization an impossibility.

"I missed Andrew a lot," Linda says with true conviction. "He came down to the studio a lot and stood around like a piece of furniture just so we wouldn't feel weird. We were so used to having Andrew's face around even though he wasn't playing."

Gold did make an incognito appearance, however, singing harmonies on "Poor Poor Pitiful Me" under the pseudonym of one mysterious "Larry Hagler." As usual there is method in Ronstadt's madness. And humor too.





*Ronstadt during the early 'Silk Purse' days. She began her career with the Stone Ponies, dropped Country, and entered the pre-Eagles California chapter.*



*Surrounded by Led Zep's Robert Plant and the Stones' Ron Wood, Linda looks the role of celebrated (or cornered) rock queen. Despite continued rumors to the contrary, she and Mick Jagger are now just friends.*

"This is the funniest thing in the whole world," Linda says with authority, already laughing. "Years ago when we were in Lubbock, Texas there was this guy standing outside the hotel who wanted to see me. I was getting on the bus because we had to go, and for some reason he threw his college ID on the bus. It turned up in *my* pocket.

"His name was Larry Hagler and his name became the tour slogan. Everything was 'Larry Hagler.' We'd go into a restaurant and page him," she says in between fits of laughter. "If anyone mentioned Larry Hagler we'd all crack up and die laughing. I carried this ID around in my pocket for a year of this strange person I'd never met. Larry Hagler where are you?"

He could be one of the thousands who eagerly flock to her concerts, screaming shouts of approval and presenting her with an endless supply of Oreo cookies and bouquets of roses. Half the men in attendance feel possessed to scream such words of love as "Let's play ball together," "Take it off," "Look at that ass," or "Oooh, gawd, I can't take it."

She's mentioned her fondness for Oreo cookies frequently in interviews. Boxes of the stuff turn up regularly at concerts. In New York she graciously received yet another box, mumbling, "How unusual, a box of Oreos from Lord and Taylor."

Although presents from fans remain the same, her popularity keeps growing and so does her talent. The new band pull a funky side out of the



Richard E. Aaron

*Ronstadt's performances have changed since the early 70s—she's less sultry, and more soulful.*

vocalist that has never been so impressively displayed. Andrew Gold's architecturally precise solos have been replaced by a more rhythmic approach which compliments her lusty phrasing.

"Obviously, the new band is an adjustment," she says quite pleased with the change. "And it is a real band. Ric has my favorite groove of any drummer. He plays way back behind the beat and I have the bad habit of rushing like a fire engine," she begins to laugh. "So when I sing with Ric I have to concentrate on not rushing three songs ahead.

"If I sang at my normal speed, I'd leave them all behind in a cloud of dust. I feel I'm having to come up to their level in some way or the other and it's very difficult. God, when I listen to the tapes of the first concert . . ."

But the concerts are excellent and so is the record—even if Linda Ronstadt sheepishly prefers hiding behind another voice as a harmony singer. For years she's been talking about recording an album with friends Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton. Although they're still just talking about the project, it is a legitimate possibility. Dolly even sings a duet with Linda on "I Never Will Marry" in a voice Ronstadt admirably calls "angelic."

"I'd really rather sing harmony than anything else," she sincerely sighs. "I really hate being a single artist. I don't like singing alone. If I can't get in a group I think I'm gonna get another job."

If Linda Ronstadt doesn't receive any other job offers, there's always Nabisco.



Simple Dreams—Linda Ronstadt (Asylum)

by Paul Nelson

# LONGPLAYERS

Edited by Paul Nelson

Linda Ronstadt's 'Simple Dreams' Is OK

'Twilley Don't Mind' And Neither Do We



Bonnie Lippel

Linda Ronstadt is one of those artists who seem to defy any meaningful critical analysis—and perhaps it's just as well. Beyond rhapsodizing about the wonders of her extraordinary voice and her equally remarkable good looks, what more can one say? That she chooses her highly interesting and eclectic repertoire with a greater degree of intelligence than she sings it is either damning with faint praise or praising with faint damnation. Which ever, her artistic range is apparently wide enough to spur mass adulation, yet narrow enough to be spurned by many rock & roll and country music purists. Is she our most underrated overrated pop star or the most overrated underrated?

If you're expecting any answers here, forget it. To me, her records usually sound better six months after they've been released than they do when I first play them (a good sign), but I like them without ever loving them (a bad sign). Others may complain about her incessant reliance on torch songs and material so melancholy that it makes Leonard Cohen sound cheerful, but I find her infinitely more convincing wearing a broken heart than sporting a snappy smile. While Ronstadt is at her absolute worst trying to interpret ironical lyrics (e.g., her treatment of songs by Randy Newman and Warren Zevon), she generally makes her greatest music by playing to the hilt the incredible irony inherent in material which would have us believe that one of the prettiest women in rock & roll is always bemoaning the fact that she doesn't have a man. Perhaps she is simply building up our hopes, but I don't think so. It sounds more universal than that.

*Simple Dreams* is a relatively unadorned and sparsely produced Ronstadt album—certainly not her best and probably not her worst. Like most of her recent LPs, it's slightly formulaic, but with a few surprises. Of the latter, Ronstadt's cover version of the Rolling Stones' "Tumbling Dice" probably seemed like a good idea on paper, actually works well as a novelty number onstage, but sounds just plain silly on record, particularly since the song's climactic ending is all but thrown away. The album's other oldies, Buddy Holly's "It's So Easy" and Roy Orbison's "Blue Bayou," are pleasant (the former) but uninspired (the latter).

To say that I have greatly mixed feelings about Linda Ronstadt's popularizing the songs of Warren Zevon is certainly an understatement. Personally, I wouldn't trade a single track from Zevon's brilliant 1976 debut al-

**Linda Ronstadt's 'Simple Dreams' has its moments, but not enough.**



bum for the whole of Ronstadt's *oeuvre*, but Zevon needs money and exposure, and Ronstadt is giving him both. In that light, perhaps one shouldn't mind that she totally fails to understand either the tough tenderness or the brutal comedy of "Carmelita" and "Poor Poor Pitiful Me." (On *Hasten Down the Wind*, she similarly mauled the title song, also by Zevon.) Indeed, about the only thing that Zevon aficionados can gain from Ronstadt's misguided rendering of "Carmelita" is the restoration of one line that was inexplicably altered on *Warren Zevon*: "I pawned my Smith-Corona" now reads "I pawned my Smith & Wesson."

*Simple Dreams* is not without its triumphs, however. Ronstadt's performance of J.D. Souther's excellent "Simple Man, Simple Dreams" is both passionate and moving, and so is her treatment of rock & roll guitarist Waddy Wachtel's surprisingly touching and introspective "Maybe I'm Right." Give her a good melody and a sob in her voice and she's fine. Best of all is "I Never Will Marry," one of those archetypally beautiful American folk songs that further refine simplicity into pure good, here lovingly sung by Ronstadt and Dolly Parton to the accompaniment of just two guitars and a dobro. (Strangely enough, the LP's other folk song, the equally mythic "Old Paint," is a complete botch, as is Ronstadt's spare rendition of Eric Kaz's dull "Sorrow Lives Here.")

Where Ronstadt will go from *Simple Dreams* makes for interesting speculation. With Andrew Gold, formerly a strong influence, now out of the picture, and Peter Asher apparently relinquishing his insistence upon elaborately produced albums, the move would seem to be one toward spontaneity and unembellishment. Whether or not Linda Ronstadt can carry the ball by herself remains in doubt. *Simple Dreams*, a half-step in that direction, is at least—but only—half-successful.

## Twilley Don't Mind—The Dwight Twilley Band

by Wesley Strick

It's tempting to believe that the Tulsa-based Dwight Twilley Band *must* do it with mirrors. The strong element of hocus-pocus in their sound—plus their apparent reluctance to leave the studio womb—make me wonder: Is this magic for real?

*Sincerely*, a truly dazzling debut album, proved that Twilley could invest the conventions of the second phase of the first British invasion with naive Southwestern *savoir-faire*. While *Twilley Don't Mind* makes the same case nearly as credibly, my delight is just slightly dissipated the second time around. Huge talents like Dwight Twilley have to start taking big chances sometime because it's too easy to substitute

perfection for inspiration, too easy to play unacknowledged superstar instead of honest rock & roll.

On the strength of Side One, Twilley's trying. Each track is a model of harmonic vitality and ingenious production, particularly in the use of the rhythm guitar. The passionate fills on "Looking



Dwight Twilley Band—they're still America's favorite Oklahoma sons.

for the Magic," the *Revolver*-era raga on "Here She Comes," the fuzz-tone punctuation on "Trying to Find My Baby"—all are pulled off with incredible finesse. I love the way that the electronic delay advances from cliché to full-blown eccentricity on the "Looking for the Magic" vocal, and I love the animal urgency of the "Hurt, hurt" chant at the fade. Finally, one unexpected image of loss—"Because a photograph is like an hourglass sometime"—makes me shiver.

On "That I Remember," the circular refrain, "I remember that I remember,"—subtly conveys the ache of erotic obsession. And the lines, "Six o'clock in the morning/Finished recording," startle because they smack of Seventies careerism in the midst of reinvented Sixties pop.

Commemorative steals are everywhere: ooh's that surge to the front of the mix like every 1967 band from Moby Grape to the Monkees; the "break my heart" bit from "Rock and Roll 47" that quotes "Back in the U.S.S.R.," itself a parody of rock plagiarism—even the word "know" is Anglicized into a coquettish meow. Of course, Dwight and Phil (Seymour) keep coming off the seventh in parallel thirds all the way, like Don and Phil, or John and Paul.

Melodically, the first five songs on *Twilley Don't Mind* are more forthright than anything on *Sincerely*, which means that there's nothing so vaporous as "Baby Let's Cruise." Conversely, no song crawls under your skin like "You Were So Warm," and none approaches the languid mystery of "Sincerely." Still, Side One of *Twilley Don't Mind* ranks among the best album halves that I've heard in ages. Unhappily, Side Two—only four songs long—is irksomely incomplete.

It opens very strongly with "Twilley Don't Mind," a cheeky turn at making Twilley a household word. This is

classic, even reductive, rock that reminds us that Dwight Twilley is, in fact, a great American oddball name. Definitely a neat (mark my word) conceit.

"Sleeping" is all double-tracked choirboy vocals floating over multi-layered acoustic guitar—perhaps the boys were thinking of Pete Townshend's "Sensation." Anyhow, the bridge is unconvincing, and the "sleeping" motif seems detached. Where John Lennon created sensual fun ("I'm Only Sleeping") and masterly angst ("I'm So Tired") from neurotic fatigue, Dwight Twilley comes off narcissistic, even complacent. At a suspicious 6:06, "Sleeping" sounds like two songs grafted together. Somewhere in the middle of this track, Side Two starts sagging.

With the last two songs, *Twilley Don't Mind* falls off alarmingly. "Chance to Get Away" is passable *Beatles VI*, a formal exercise in wringing yet another song out of the I-relative minor-IV-V chord progression. This miss underscores the danger in Twilley's *oeuvre*: flip it over, and it comes up cutesy. The sci-fi "Invasion," which simmers but won't boil, could be a warm-up for 1975's "I'm on Fire." Then suddenly this delicious platter is spun out, just like that. Breaks my heart.

Lately, I've been using the Dwight Twilley records to seduce a bunch of sweet young things. Simply because it's 25 percent bigger, I'm recommending *Sincerely* for Twilley virgins.

Oh, fuck. Buy 'em both, and meet me on the rock & roll freeway.

## Terrapin Station—The Grateful Dead (Arista)

by John Swenson

Arista boss Clive Davis has wanted the Grateful Dead in his stable ever since the former's Columbia days. Now that he's finally got them, he also has a pretty good idea of what he wants them to do: slick things up and modernize the hippie stuff for today's sophisticated radio playlists. The Dead themselves have been trying to go commercial for a few years now, but thus far it's been a slow trot through quicksand. The band has always been an end in itself, fairly impervious to outside tampering.

*Terrapin Station* changes all of that. It is a commercial record in all of the ways that the Dead have never before managed. In fact, it's so commercial that it hardly even sounds like the Grateful Dead. The first side is composed of five controlled cuts, each very carefully produced with the nation's deejays in mind. "Estimated Prophet" hooks just a hint of the band's boogie trademark circa "The Other One," but otherwise is a thoroughly modern fusion, right down to the Tom Scott reed-blowing at the end. "Dancin' in the Streets," one of the songs that