



rock talk by paul jones

York, England - In this week's column, I'd like to look over some of the albums of last year that I found were better than the majority.

In my mind, the artists who can be easily recalled are Paul Simon, Hudson and Ford, Stealers Wheel, Harry Chapin, Joe Cocker, Gallagher and Lyle and Elton John. All of these recorded exceptional albums last year.

Paul Simon's 'Live Rhymin' Simon' - album was, in my opinion, the finest live album of the year. Simon seldom misses with his recordings because he is, without a doubt, one of the greatest writers in pop music today.

When you add this to the fact his 'L.R.S.' album was a flawless production, you get artistic success in the highest degree. Maybe this year's Grammy Awards won't, so dimly, forgive Simon, as they did last year.

'Nickelodeon', Hudson and Ford's album, was also a superbly recorded piece of work. Bordering between folk-rock and pop-rock (or easy rock), 'Nickelodeon' had few low spots throughout the entire recording. Unfortunately, Hudson and Ford are not that well known, and thus can expect little appreciation for their effort.

Stealers Wheel's album - 'Stealers Wheel' contained some of the nicest vocal arrangements possible. It actually wasn't a stand-out production, but then again, it was far from the other.

In some ways it reminded me so much of the Beatles in the mid-sixties, that I couldn't help but include it in the best from last year. Their outstanding characteristics were the clean vocals of Joe Egan and Gerry Rafferty and the tight, though hardly intricate, keyboard and guitar work.

Harry Chapin is definitely a performer for special tastes. His songs, mainly short stories, seem very personal and very easy to relate to. Most of the situations are far from what most people experience, yet they seem that much closer. Such was with his album - 'Verities And Balderdash'.

The most touching song on it is 'Cat's In The Cradle'. It's all about a father describing how he has ignored,

The best of '74 (Part three)

and given little time to his son. Throughout the story, his son keeps boasting how someday he'll grow up and be just like his father. Eventually he does grow up and when his father asks to see him, his son now has no time to see him.

A simple story that's very moving, Harry's another artist that will probably be ignored when the Grammy Awards come along.

'I Can Stand A Little Rain', Joe Cocker's effort in 1974, is the finest album he has ever recorded. Not as raunchy as his past efforts, but much more versatile in style. I never was a Cocker fan, though I thought his cover version of 'With A Little Help From My Friends' was smashing.

But when he brought out, on his 'I.C.S.A.L.R.' album, those soft ballads - 'I Can Stand A Little Rain', 'The Moon's A Harsh Mistress', 'Guilty' and 'You Are So Beautiful', Joe showed us that he was truly an interpretive singer.

Gallagher and Lyle are relatively unknown to music followers in both Canada and United States. Considering the immense talent they possess, this is a very

disturbing thing. Never has a group, since the Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel, impressed me so much with so little.

After listening to only two albums - 'Willie And The Lapdog' and 'Seeds' - I am firmly convinced that they are the finest folk-rock, or folk-pop, group to emerge in the last seven years. As a duo, they've only been in existence for a little over two years, and although I fancied 'Willie and The Lapdog' more, Gallagher and Lyle's album - 'Seeds' - of 1974 was nothing short of brilliant.

It was all pretty much folk-pop yet it never seemed repetitious in content. Every now and then, it threw in a bit of blue-grass to give it variety. 'Seeds' is the best folk-pop album to emerge out of 1974. The only thing close to it, and it's actually in another category - folk-rock, is 'Nickelodeon', by Hudson and Ford.

The last album worth mentioning in the major selections for the best of 1974 is 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road'. No introduction is needed about its creator - Elton John who has been mentioned, I believe, three

times in the last six columns. The album is a two-piece set containing at least eight, maybe nine, strong numbers.

The song - 'Funeral For A Friend' is the finest piece of music Elton has ever written, and its follow-up - 'Love Lies Bleeding' is also quite good, though nothing in comparison to the former. To bore you no further, I'll mention only one other song from the album. That is 'Saturday Night's All Right For Fighting'.

Written in a manner similar to Alice Cooper and the Rolling Stones, it comes across as a simple, but strong, rock number. Not too heavy and not too soft. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if it was written as a mockery of Cooper and Stones, much like 'Benny And The Jets' (yeech!) was written as a joke towards glitter-rock and David Bowie.


In next week's column - The Best Of 1974 (Part Four) Canadian music will be the topic. And those snow-weary Richmond Hillers wondering, I have yet to see a flake of snow. Even in York, 200 miles north of London, the temperatures have been averaging approximately 42 degrees. Anyone for golf?

Home sales booming

January was a "boom month" for house sales, listings and prices, Gloria Cruse, executive secretary of the York Regional Real Estate Board has announced.

She said the average price for a house sold under the multiple listing service in the region last month was \$60,567.

This was about \$14,000 higher than prices in January of 1974 and about \$2,500 more than the average price of \$58,008 for the entire year. Prices in 1974 average \$11,000 higher than in 1973.



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Council prayer continued



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**3:00 P.M. MONDAY
FEBRUARY 24, 1975**

Richmond Hill Council will continue to have an opening prayer but it will not be given by Mayor David Schiller.

Regional Councillor Gordon Rowe raised the question at the January 13 council meeting and received strong backing from Councillors William Corcoran and Andy Chateaubert.

The mayor said his preference was for a minute of silence in which each member of council who wished to, could ask divine guidance. He expressed the fear a prayer to a particular divinity could prove offensive to some members of council or of the public in attendance at the meetings.

"I believe that asking upon guidance is a personal matter, I'm not prepared to follow the practice of a spoken prayer. I would prefer a minute of silence. But if councillors feel strongly and want a prayer I suggest they name a councillor to say it," he said.



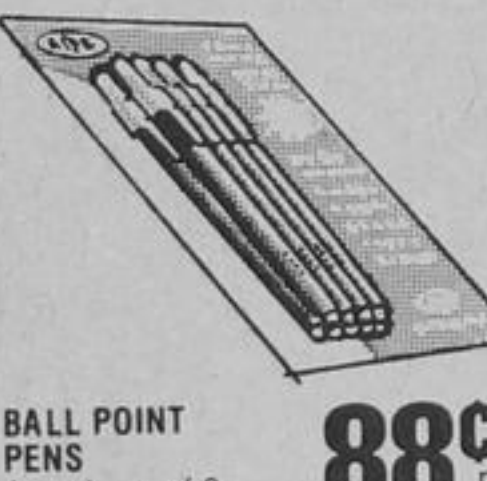



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