



**THE
BAND**

IN 1977-78



MUSIC

After the Last Waltz The Band Plays On

By Robert Palmer

Woodstock

SNOW HAD been falling since early afternoon, and as midnight approached the countryside around Woodstock was quiet. Inside RCO, a huge, rambling barnlike structure which houses a recording studio, rehearsal hall, and bedrooms and sleeping lofts for resident musicians, the loudest sound was the sputtering of a fireplace. Levon Helm, the bearded, Arkansas-born drummer for the Band and a principal energizer behind RCO — the initials derive from "ouR Company," he explains with a laugh — sat behind his drum set swigging from a bottle of brandy, watching with his small, bright hawk's eyes as a group of musicians filtered back in from a rehearsal break.

Helm was working on a solo album. The Band, which has been performing together under one name or another since around 1960 and is probably the most distinguished and longest-lived of American rock groups, called it quits as a touring unit last Thanksgiving with the "Last Waltz," a star-studded all-night concert and party at Winterland in San Francisco. And since the five members of the Band — Helm, Robbie Robertson, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel, and Garth Hudson — got together to make records relatively infrequently during the present decade, the end to touring meant an end to the Band as anything other than an occasional all-star recording group. It was time to move on to individual projects, and Helm, who had refused to tour with the Band when they first began backing Bob Dylan and had always manifested a certain feisty independence, was the first to move. As soon as he had recuperated from the Band's festive demise, he was on his way back to Woodstock to begin work on his album.

Taking another swig of brandy, Helm surveyed the sturdy wooden beams of the hall ceiling. The other musicians began noodling at their instruments. Mac Rebennack, who used to perform and record as Dr. John the Night Tripper and was a rock and roll bandleader in New Orleans as early as 1958, was on keyboards. Fred Carter, an experienced Nashville studio musician who used to play with Levon in bands led by the rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins, was on guitar. Paul Butter-

field, a longtime Woodstock resident, played harmonica. This was the nucleus of the group working on Helm's solo album, a band he had taken to calling the RCO All-Stars.

Helm's solo album will probably be quite a departure from the Band's latest record, "Islands," but his RCO All-Stars and the Band have this in common: they are composed of seasoned professionals. As the Hawks, under the leadership of Ronnie Hawkins, the members of the present Band toured the South and Midwest throughout the early 60's, playing night after night in cavernous roadhouses for howling mobs of inebriated locals.

Because they were not able to take rock and roll for

the wherewithal to be "the Faulkner of rock and roll," but the demons of relevance had been unleashed and he was obliged to grapple with them. The result was a series of Band albums which sometimes rose to Olympian heights and sometimes strained for effect.

"Islands" is probably the Band's least pretentious, most off-the-cuff studio album. It was recorded in just a few weeks and finished the day before the musicians left for San Francisco and the Last Waltz.

People who enjoy sorting the Band's songs into categories — good, bad, indifferent — will have a field day with "Islands." At least two of the songs, "Right as Rain" and "Knockin' Lost John," are as touching and memorable as any Robertson has written. But while he can be cinematic and subtle, Robertson can also be obvious, and "Street Walker" (written with Rick Danko) and "Let the Night Fall" are among his baldest efforts.

Because it was recorded in a brief period of time, under tremendous pressure, "Islands" is rough in spots, but the Band's other studio albums were polished to a perfectionist's sheen, and the roughness makes this one all the more charming.



ROBBIE ROBERTSON

granted until they became established artists, the members of the Band became consummate rock and rollers. And when Robbie Robertson combined this rocker's spirit and determination with music and lyrics which celebrated the sweep of American history, the richness of the land, and the lives of common people, in songs like "King Harvest Has Surely Come" and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," he created some of rock's most imposing masterworks.

Bar bands in the South played "all of America's music" long before doing so became fashionable among members of the intelligentsia, and one suspects that Levon Helm's solo album will return to this basic, unpretentious eclecticism. The Band itself was not so lucky. Robertson protested that he had neither the inclination nor

"Islands" marks the end of the Band's association with Capitol records. They have been negotiating a new recording agreement with an undisclosed company, and whoever gets them will be getting the tapes from the Last Waltz, with the Band performing on their own as if their lives depended on it and backing Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters, and other musicians who have been their friends over the years. It may be a while before the group records another studio album. Robertson is producing Neil Diamond and working on a solo album, but one wonders what some of the other musicians, who are perhaps less aggressively self-sufficient than Robertson and Levon Helm, will do in the meantime. Perhaps the release of the Last Waltz album and of the film which Dominic Scorsese made of the event will give the group's career a powerful new boost. In any event, "Islands" is here. It is not the Band's best album, but it is the real thing.

New York Times

S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle

SPIN OFF

New treat from The Band

To say that The Band's new record, 'Islands' (Capitol), is not as good as the previous 'Northern Lights Southern Cross,' is almost a foregone conclusion.

The latter is a rock masterpiece — as most of this group's carefully constructed recordings are — but 'Islands' is so close in quality that the point is rendered moot.

The new album by Bob Dylan's former backups band is a warm human statement, perhaps less imposing than 'Northern Lights' but probably more personal.

The resonance of The Band is a marvel in the electronic sterility and sameness of mainstream rock sound.

This is a group that believes in harmony among instruments, each one well defined and co-ordinated with the others. You can hear Robbie Robertson's tightrope guitar solos backed beautifully by Garth Hudson's mellifluous organ or accordion sorties, or Levon Helm's crackling drumming complementing Rick Danko's thudding bass lines.

On the surface, 'Islands' sounds little different from The Band's other albums: The density of harmony is constant and the standard of playing is high. However, The Band is a group that strives to do better each time out; it is nobody's fault that its musicianship is difficult to improve upon.

Like 'Northern Lights' the new album takes a few listenings to get acquainted with — but that's because there is so much to listen to; once one gets used to the sonorities, the songs take on the feeling of old friends.

There is a voluptuous love song, 'Right As Rain' (the most tender The Band has ever done), as well as a tough night-time on-the-make ode, 'Street Walker'. There's a wonderfully sentimental yuletide fiddle, 'Christmas Must Be Tonight' and a splendid Cajun fiddle assimilation, 'Islands.'

When The Band chooses oldies to interpret, it chooses the best: 'Georgia On My Mind,' a tribute to Hoagy Carmichael and Ray Charles and The Band itself, and the hard-driving 'Ain't That A Lot Like Love.'

Such is the quality of the music that it's hard to pick favorites among the disc's 10 songs. The music is letter-perfect, which means The Band has found a way to accentuate hillbilly, folksong voices within the structures of rock 'n' roll (mixed with a heady dose of rhythm 'n' blues) that has been fully developed as a musical art form, and not just a momentary buzz.

This is what distinguishes The Band from other rock groups and what makes the quintet such indispensable masters of the genre.

—JUAN RODRIGUEZ



Sounds '77

Ron Kroese

Islands

The Band, Capitol Records

The announcement by members of The Band that they would no longer be touring as a unit was certainly not good news to anyone who has seen them in concert.

But it could be worse. Even though they have retired from the road after 15 years they will continue to record, both individually and as The Band.

Furthermore, the group ended its years of touring with a flourish. Last Thanksgiving, with the help of rock impresario Bill Graham, The Band played its last gig in San Francisco with the help of Dylan (The Band served as Dylan's backup group off and on for the past decade), Van Morrison, Ringo, Eric Clapton and Joni Mitchell. The event, entitled "The Last Waltz" drew universally rave reviews and was carefully filmed by respected movie writer-director Martin Scorsese. It promises to be a great film and live album.

Basically, the group's decision to call it quits to the road probably will be good for all concerned. The members promise to continue recording both individually and as a group and the new arrangement is bound to give them all a shot in the arm.

Not that they really need it. The group's final album for Capitol, entitled "Islands," is superb — the strongest since their classics "Music From Big Pink" and "The Band."

As usual, lead guitarist Robbie Robertson wrote most of the songs on the album. Best among the current offerings are: 'The Saga of Pepote Rouge,' the most typically Band song on the album which deals with yet another of the curious assortment of American characters that have appeared throughout the Band's decade of recordings; 'Knockin' Lost John' is a rollicking rocker that features Robertson's characteristic mandolin-style lead riffs and an irresistible concert-

tina solo by the versatile Garth Hudson; and 'Christmas Must Be Tonight,' a wonderful Christmas song with the trademark Band three-part harmonies.

As usual, Garth Hudson is amazing on all the songs, playing an assortment of keyboard, reed and horn instruments, including the title cut, a lilting, almost disco tune and the first totally instrumental song The Band has recorded.

The Band also recognizes its rock 'n' roll roots with a catchy version of 'Ain't That a Lot of Love,' which gives Robertson a chance to shine on guitar, something he could have done more of on his album.

'Islands' is further embellished by a superb version of 'Georgia On My Mind.' Richard Manuel puts in a soulful vocal performance reminiscent of Ray Charles over Hudson's spacey organ accompaniment. The Band apparently recorded the song as a tribute to Jimmy Carter and released it as a single. For some reason the song received virtually no airplay.

Despite the fact that The Band will not tour together again, their future looks bright. The overall tone of 'Islands' is lighter and less serious than previous albums and the members apparently had a good time making the music. Each of the five band members is good enough to front a band of his own, so, together or not, we can expect a lot of good music from them in the next year. In fact, lead singer and drummer, Levon Helm's, first solo album is due out next month.

ROBERT HILBURN

Uneven Entry by the Band

The Band's new "Islands" album has much of the craft, but too little of the provocative edge normally associated with the work of America's most respected rock group.

Like Jackson Browne's "The Pretender," the album is the product of talented artists, but suffers from occasional routineness and miscalculation that sap its strength.

If the group's five members hadn't vowed to continue recording together, their recent decision to stop touring would make it easy to think of the LP as part of a last-minute studio housecleaning.

Despite the excellence of six new Robbie Robertson songs, "Islands" lacks focus and identity. Missing is the interaction between songs that made the Band's earlier studio collections such richly rewarding portraits.

Even when there was no stringent concept involved, the tunes on the early albums complemented each other, providing extra shading and dimension. It was productive to consider the songs on a particular LP in a body. That's why the Band's albums have always been more important than its singles.

Collection of Tracks

But "Islands" is mostly a collection of individual tracks. Levon Helm's spicy revival of the rollicking "Ain't That a Lot of Love" could just as easily have been slipped onto the "Moondog Matinee" oldies album or saved for Helm's solo venture. Though well designed, Robertson's "Christmas Must Be Tonight" shares no bond with the remake of "Georgia on My Mind."

However nice a toast to the campaign of President Carter last fall when released as a single, "Georgia . . ." seems like a cobweb here. The randomness of these selections is compounded by the presence of "Street Walker," probably the least interesting song The Band has recorded.

But the richness of the remaining songs and the usual high quality of the performances (particularly Richard Manuel's vocals) give the Band a viable album. As when discussing the Rolling Stones' live shows, the only real competition for the Band continues to be its own history of achievement.

Robertson's writing—always the group's cornerstone—is as stylish and, in some ways, more accessible than ever. From the elegant romanticism of "Right as Rain" to the earthy playfulness of "Livin' in a Dream" to the twined storytelling of "The Saga of Pepote Rouge," the lyrics are both thoughtful and well plotted, and the melodies are graceful and inviting. It's just too bad the best material couldn't have been part of a more fully satisfying package.

The Band: Islands in the Mainstream

The Band: *Islands*. The Band, producers. Capitol SO 11602, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 4XO 11602, ●● 8XO 11602, \$7.98.

"Islands" is a maverick triumph, a relaxed and deceptively informal collection of songs used by The Band to sidestep the sense of occasion the record's release suggests. Their last album for Capitol, the group's label since making the transition from accompanists to self-contained performers, was completed in the wake of their formal retirement from live performing and in advance of several solo records that will inhibit, if not preclude, frequent studio reunions. More significantly, their most influential records have grappled with the very idea of history, especially in terms of those events and observations signaling the end of epochs: Given the epochal character of their own work, which has sustained both personal style and thematic coherence throughout, we might well expect an attempt at a stern, ambitious summary of their music in

line with that same identity.

Instead, "Islands" is arguably their least ambitious record. Its ten songs neither memorializing nor advancing the group's style. In contrast to their previous studio album, the generally solemn and musically subdued "Northern Lights/Southern Cross," the current set minimizes both interior thematic connections and links to the prevailing concerns of its predecessors. While there are ample references, both instrumental and lyric, to their earlier songs, the overall looseness of the collection seeks to shift emphasis away from grand designs, and instead utilizes individual tunes as armatures for The Band's richly detailed ensemble playing and passionate singing. Where "Cahoots" and "Northern Lights . . ." placed a premium on narratives laced with social observation, "Islands" restricts that approach considerably while affording uncharacteristic space to love songs and classic upbeat rock performances.

The ebullient feel that emerges most

closely resembles their third album, "Stage Fright" (1970), one of their most critically maligned yet ultimately durable records. Greil Marcus shrewdly described that LP as the perfect anticlimax because of its refusal to extend or elaborate on its carefully organized, perceptually consistent predecessor, "The Band." That was their most popular effort, achieving its impact through a singularity of theme and diction; "Stage Fright" violated that process, providing multiple viewpoints and styles. High seriousness was mitigated by the free-wheeling spirit of the playing.

That change disappointed some of their admirers and "Islands" will likewise disappoint anyone still hoping for another conceptually unified masterpiece. Yet the new record's lack of pretension and consistent spirit prove far more satisfying and attractive than the forced moralism of "Northern Lights . . ." or "Cahoots" often labored observations on the emotional and moral consequences of modern life.

In lieu of an outwardly buoyant but essentially dour sermon like *Forbidden Fruit* ("Northern Lights . . ."), their opening cut is a gentle love song, *Right as Rain*. Robbie Robertson's tendency to transform clichés into more serious conclusions seems far better served in this context than in his more abstracted social commentaries; the net effect is genuinely engaging, as is Richard Manuel's warm baritone. *Street Walker*, which follows, has its share of pointed lines aimed at evoking the toughness of city life. Yet Robertson's lyric is more restrained than much of his recent work, and the limber syncopation of the rhythm section and sly contrapuntal piano style make the track a delight.

Less obvious but equally important to that song is the use of horn charts that simply but effectively accent the melody. Recent albums had employed a more elaborate use of overdubbing, with horn player Garth Hudson attempting to singlehandedly graft the intricacy of dixieland solos onto the band's subtle, variegated ensemble style. On "Islands" he turns in smoother, more melodic saxophone solos and limits overdubs to simple, rhythmic chord changes. That leaves more room for Robertson to display his wiry, sharp-edged guitar play-

ing—more prominent here than on most recent outings—while Hudson himself is more extroverted on organ and piano. Where his keyboard work on "Northern Lights . . ." was often restricted to textural effects rather than solos, the stripped-down arrangements here enable him to play in a freer style.

If there is a shift toward an instrumental focus and a corresponding move away from weightier thematic underpinnings, the album still offers several Robertson songs that dovetail with more cerebral predecessors. *The Saga* is a somewhat muddled parable with sci-fi overtones that is saved by a romping chorus; *Knockin' Lost John* is a more successful fable for the Depression that could have appeared on "The Band."

Vocally, Levon Helm and Rick Danko continue to display compelling, personalized styles, but Richard Manuel's solos prove particularly moving. Onstage, Manuel has become more subdued on recent tours, and here *Georgia on My Mind* approximates that same ragged, weary tone that implied his powers were failing. But his vocal work on *Right as Rain* is relaxed and confident, while *Let the Night Fall*, one of the album's best songs, features a stunning balance between his controlled singing on the verses and the more desperate, pleading rasp he affects on the choruses.

Production values are generally excellent, striking a nice balance between the more polished, studio-slick sound of recent albums, and the stark, unvarnished feel of "The Band" whose past tense advantage point was underscored by eschewing equalization, echo, and other effects. Robertson's more aggressive guitar work is enhanced by a slightly gritty feel appropriate to his style, and Helm's drumming is captured with a clarity that doesn't sacrifice punch for polish.

SAM SUTHERLAND
HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE
MAY 1977



The Band: Helm, Hudson, Robertson, Danko, Manuel

I can hear music The Band's new — maybe last — album

By Ken Marks



The Band (left to right): Garth Hudson, Levon Helm, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson and Rick Danko.

The Band has already played its "Last Waltz." It happened last Thanksgiving at the Winterland in San Francisco. Apart from the five main men, the concert included guest shots by Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Van Morrison, Joni Mitchell, Ronnie Hawkins, Dr. John, Paul Butterfield, Muddy Waters and Eric Clapton. A recording of those proceedings should be available in the next few months.

"The Last Waltz" was an extravagant farewell to over 15 years of touring, first as the Hawks, then The Band. Now that several members of the group are pursuing individual recording careers, it is not clear whether The Band has retired as a studio unit as well as a performing group. After "The Last Waltz" they went into the studio and produced *Islands* in three days, thus fulfilling their contractual commitment to Capitol, The Band's label since the beginning — *Music From Big Pink*, 1968.

Islands may not be brimming over with classics the way *Big Pink* or *The Band*

(1969) were, but there are at least a few tracks that should survive as vintage Band. Given the nature of the recording schedule, *Islands* comes across as considerably less polished than the previous studio effort, *Northern Lights - Southern Cross*. But it succeeds in being a bit less pretentious as well. That slight edge of rawness always enhanced the Band's best work. In spirit, *Islands* lies somewhere between *Moondog Matinee*, '73's collection of rock and r&b tunes that were early influences on The Band, and *Stage Fright*, a naked rock album recorded in 1970 with little or no overdubbing.

As usual, guitarist Robbie Robertson is the primary composer in this collection. But if there's one man principally responsible for the overall sounds of *Islands*, it's Garth Hudson. His piano, organ and synthesizer parts are seamlessly infused into the texture of every track. His horn parts, those that he plays and those that he's arranged for others, work equally well as leads, fills, rhythm and atmosphere.

And his accordion playing is nothing short of delightful.

I haven't been able to decipher many of Robertson's lyrics yet. They're either so straightforward that they report a deceptively simple memory or emotion, or they're so abstract that analysis is pointless. But they're all couched in singable melodies, and the vocalists do a fine job throughout.

"Right As Rain" opens the set, a lush, gently rolling piece with Richard Manuel singing in a clear, higher range than he's attempted recently. "Street Walker" supposedly grew out of Robertson's involvement with the movement for the legalization of prostitution on the West Coast. It's a bouncy rocker. Rick Danko is the lead with lyrics about "no pity in the city." In "Let the Night Fall," Manuel convincingly plays the part of an old owl. Hudson's organ recaptures the breezy feel of "Acadian Driftwood."

"Ain't That a Lot of Love," written by H. Banks and W. Parker, sounds like an old rock standard, but I'm not familiar with the original. Levon

Helm leads the way on drums and vocals. This is the song he did on the "Saturday Night" show a few weeks ago with Butterfield and Dr. John as part of the RCO All Stars, a group currently working on an album in Woodstock. An absolutely irresistible rocker.

Robertson's acoustic guitar on "Christmas Must Be Tonight" creates a different sound for The Band, as Danko takes the role of a simple man who witnesses the Nativity.

The title cut is an instrumental that begins Side 2. It is distinguished by the sounds of interplaying horns, violin and flute, and a rhythm that incorporates Cajun and reggae. The easy-going atmosphere has been matched recently only by Britisher Ronnie Lane and his Slim Chance band. "Islands" will be a perfect summer song as soon as it becomes summer.

"The Saga of Pepote Rouge" is a story about a mystical Indian woman (I think), marked by a cleverly Dylan-esque turn

of phrase and an aura of legend that has characterized Robertson's most magnetic compositions.

Manuel's voice is at its emotional, growling best in Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia On My Mind." It was released as a single to provide some subliminal support for Jimmy Carter's campaign late last summer. The Band works as a mellow jazz combo here.

"Knockin' Lost John" does for the struggling man of the Great Depression what "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" did for the poor post-bellum Southern farmer. That is, it celebrates his dignity. The last track, "Livin' In A Dream," resurrects the great, chunky beat of "The Shape I'm In," and whoever whistles that last chorus has provided as happy-sad a goodbye as The Band could possibly offer us.

Islands is in no way a throw-away effort. If the Band has ever affected you in any measure before, this album will be indispensable to you.



Cash Box/March 19, 1977

ISLANDS — The Band — Capitol SO-11602 — Producer: The Band — List: 6.98

The combination of various and diverse musical elements has always been a trademark of The Band who can manage to sound fresh without losing their particular sound identity. Once again surprises are in store, especially on their new arrangement of "Ain't That A Lot Of Love," and on what amounts to a Ray Charles tribute on "Georgia On My Mind." Distinctive and representative music from the always exemplary Band. For top 40 and AOR playlists.



RECORD WORLD MARCH 19, 1977

THE BAND, "ISLANDS." Probably the group's last set of new material (another live set is reportedly scheduled) with glistening performances of "Islands," "Right As Rain," "Let the Night Fall" and "Georgia On My Mind." Ever the masters of multi-textured records, The Band will never fade from view completely. "Islands" is as timeless as ever. Capitol SO-11602 (7.98).



shortcuts

By LYNN SHORT
ISLANDS
The Band
Capitol SO11602

Right As Rain / Street Walker / Let The Night Fall / Ain't That A Lot Of Love / Christmas Must Be Tonight / Islands / The Saga Of Pepote Rouge / Georgia On My Mind / Knockin' Lost John / Livin' In A Dream

So this is how it ends: not with The Band, but with a whisper.

Saying goodbye is never easy. The longer you know people, and the more comfortable you feel with them as friends, the harder it gets.

Still, as Bill Anderson once wrote, "...We called it magic / Then we called it tragic / We ran out of anything to call it / So we called it quits..."

The Band has been a good friend for 10 years now. Even when the critics abandoned them (after their magnificent second album, *The Band*), they kept making splendid music, painting complex pictures in simple frames, leaving music that gets better as years roll by.

Now they're gone. The 'Last Waltz' in San Francisco marked the end of their stage career, the Saturday Night Live show ended their broadcast career and *Islands* is, in all probability, their last recording together.

It's easy to understand: after 20 years, they need a break. That's clear from *Islands*, the work of a group which realizes it is playing itself out and drying itself up.

They're making the right move. It hurts to say so, but they are.

In and of itself, *Islands* has a lot to recommend it. Songs like "Right As Rain" and "This Must Be Christmas." Or the title track, their first instrumental since "Chest Fever," wistful, sentimental, string-laden, a perfect signature to an epic career.

Still, you can't listen to *Islands* without being drawn to earlier Band albums, and little that's here compares with what's there. Even the lesser albums of recent years had "The River Hymn," "When I Paint My Masterpiece," "Hobo Jungle," "It Makes No Difference." On the earlier albums, like *Stage Fright*,



They've played their 'Last Waltz'

...say goodbye to The Band

every song was as good as the best here.

As their pal Bob Dylan wrote, this isn't said out of spite or anger, but simply 'cause it's true. What it means is that The Band of the late 60s and early 70s was a towering group, a giant astride the world of rock music.

Possibly the most talented group that ever played rock. Yeah, that's a superlative. I didn't say they were the best rock group ever, although they've got to be near the top. I just can't think of any that had more pure talent or used it more tastefully.

There are a lot of funny things about The Band. One is that their music always grows on you. None of their albums sounds special on first hearing, not even *The Band*. You appreciate them a little at a time: a phrase or a chord or a verse will catch you and then you're drawn into the whole song.

That's probably a large part of the reason they never got a wide popular following. They never toured to packed houses (which was good, because they played a lot of smaller halls where they sounded better anyway) or caused teen hearts to pound. They never had a chance with the Grand Funk/Led Zeppelin crowd, and even among rock fans with more refined taste, they were often admired and respected rather than liked.

But for those with patience, The Band offered rich rewards. Like the way they worked together, vocally and instrumentally: Robbie Robertson on guitar, Levon Helm on drums, Rick Danko on guitar, Richard Manuel and Garth Hudson on organs and most everything else. They could play within or without, and when they were at their best, you just sit back and listen in awe.

Like other great rock bands, they

were interlocking pieces. Helm provided the raucous levity, Manuel the tortured falsetto, Danko the pace and the main vocals, Robertson the direction and drive. Hudson was the blanket on which everyone else set up the picnic.

The music they produced was too complex for AM radio success, but as you listen, you realize it was really very simple ("basic," if you must). What made it sound complex was the fact they did things other bands wouldn't even try: a guitar weaving in and out, a wailing harmony, a velvet organ. It can be difficult to sort out — at first.

There was, however, a genuine complexity to their lyrics, 90 per cent written by Robertson. He made each song into a story (complete with beginning and end), but like Dylan, he often seemed more concerned with words, phrases and images than narration.

The result was some very strange songs: "King Harvest," "Daniel and the Sacred Harp," even "The Weight." Biblical images are scattered everywhere. The South comes up time and again. Ominous warnings abound: "You don't know what you've won / Til you find out what you've lost...Save your neck or save your brother / Looks like it's one or the other."

The difference between Robertson's strange songs and the strange songs which abound on FM radio today is that it's worth taking the time to figure out what, if anything, Robertson is saying. But that's not something I can tell you: if you don't want to bother, it's unlikely I or anyone else can convince you.

I won't even say it's your loss, although it is. If you like The Band's music, you understand that it's not important if other people know how good it is. You feel so comfortable with it that even if no one else in the

whole world likes it, you do.

No, The Band will now fade quietly into history, remembered by only a small portion of the rock audience. So be it.

It would have been nice if The Band could have left a last blockbuster album, an *Abbey Road* or a *Blood On The Tracks*. They didn't. After *Stage Fright*, it became clear their best was done. *Cahoots*, *Moondog Matinee*, *Northern Lights*, *Southern Cross* and *Islands* are all slightly strained, as if they had to work harder to do it, as if they had to consciously craft things which until then had come naturally.

(Yes, I know it's all hard work. But it sounded natural.)

On stage, ironically, it was different. On their own later tours and especially during the Dylan tour, The Band was never better. Imagine yourself having to play for 19,000 fanatics gathered to see the legendary recluse Dylan. The Band did it, with such style they actually drew encore calls. They were probably better in their own way than Dylan was in his.

But of course, what they played on stage was music they had already thought out, written and done. Where they had trouble was not in executing the old music, but in creating the new.

So The Band split. Rick Danko did some solo work (well) on the Rolling Thunder tour and has a solo album coming out. Levon showed up on a Saturday Night telecast playing with Dr. John. He did one nice vocal, but you had to wonder why he was there at all. That isn't where he belongs.

He belongs with Rick, Richard, Garth and Robbie and in my record cabinet, that's where he will always be. I guess in a way it's lucky: would that it were so easy to relive the good times with all departed old friends.

LANGE & JOTUL
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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 1978

“The Last Waltz” stars a rock group called The Band, whose members include Rick Danko — possibly a Ukrainian name. But the New York office of United Artists has no bio on Danko and Alexander Danko of the Ukrainian Community Center in Jersey City doesn’t know him, so this singer-musician-actor is still a question mark.

There’s no doubt about George Dzundza, of course. He’s Ukrainian and he stars in “The Deer Hunter,” scheduled for release in a few months. Watch for announcements in your local papers.



Soundstage



Passaic, New Jersey, December 17, 1977 – available on [YouTube](#)



SEPTEMBER 30, 1978, BILLBOARD

TV REVIEW

Clark NBC Bow A Hodgepodge

LOS ANGELES—If there was ever such a thing as Top 40 television, "Dick Clark's Live Wednesday" which bowed on NBC Wednesday (20) would be it. The show is an entertainment smorgasbord geared to the tastes of middle America.

The highlight was the second Super Jam, first presented on Clark's American Bandstand 25th anniversary show last year.

Led by Chuck Berry, the all-star line-up gracing the stage (give Clark credit for this) consisted of Nigel Olsen, Pete Best, Rick Danko, James Guercio, Billy Preston, Charlie Daniels, Doug Kershaw, Jimmy Seals, Dash Crofts, Eddie Money, Frankie Avalon, Donald Byrd, Bo Diddley, Johnny Rivers, Elvin Bishop, Mongo Santamaria, Charlie Rich, Marvin Hamlisch (seeming extremely out of place), Walter Murphy, Hoyt Axton and Hot.

Paul Williams and Doc Severinsen conducted the band through a rousing rendition of Berry's classic "Roll Over Beethoven." Each musician had a few seconds to solo before unifying into a super jam.

Friday, February 10, 1978

1 a.m. (8) The Midnight Special. Natalie Cole hosts the show tonight, singing "This Will Be" and "Our Love" and introducing her performing guests: The Bee Gees ("Saturday Night Fever"); KC and the Sunshine Band ("Boogie Shoes"); Rick Danko ("Sweet Romance"); Yvonne Elliman ("If I Can't Have You"); Ronnie Laws ("Friends and Strangers").

Dick Clark's Live Wednesday (WRC-4 at 8). If you saw the two-hour preview, you know what to expect, songs from the guest headliners (Diana Ross, Kristy McNichol and brother Jimmy) a feature of sorts (saluting teen idols through the years), an all-star musical group led by Doc Severinsen and Paul Williams, with Marvin Hamlisch, Rick Danko, Frankie Avalon, Bo Diddley and many others, performing Chuck Berry's "Roll Over Beethoven," a live trampoline stunt from a helicopter by daredevil Dar Robinson, and in the Ed Sullivan tradition, a chat with Muhammad Ali and a look at the Los Angeles Rams cheerleaders.



RECORD WORLD—JANUARY 28, 1978

■ **POST-AWARDS AWARDS:** Now that the Dick Clark American Music Awards have been presented to the people we pretty much knew would win anyway, we figure that a few special citations that weren't included in the ceremonies should be handed out. Most genuinely goofy presenter was no contest whatsoever: **Rick Danko** provided enough spontaneous weirdness to more than balance out the predictable aspects of much of the rest of the show. The most inspired yet planned moment came when **Captain Kangaroo** shuffled out to join **Toni Tennille** as a presenter. Even without **Mr. Greenjeans** to lend support, the good Cap'n was remarkably good-natured. Kudos to whoever thought that one up, as well as to Dick Clark's usual professionalism.



Chris Charlesworth reports from New York

WITH the possible exception of Robbie Robertson, the individual members of the Band have enjoyed a remarkable anonymity that belies their status as one of America's most popular and important groups. A mystique surrounds them, not only because they spent years as Bob Dylan's backing group, but because of the haunting, often sombre music they create.

The five musicians, one supposes, are serious, dedicated men who have little in common with the regular trappings of the rock scene. Musicians first and stars second, the Band exists in a closely knit community that few outsiders can enter. After 16 years together in one form or another, they are an institution and, as such, fashion doesn't touch them.

About a month ago Arista Records announced they had signed Rick Danko, the group's bass player, to a solo contract — the first such undertaking by any member of the group since their inception. It was a shrewd move by Arista boss Clive Davis, for Danko's compositions have contributed considerably to the Band's catalogue.

As a bass player he has few betters, but it is probably his vocal talents that led Davis to his door. He shares the Band's vocal spotlight with Levon Helm and Richard Manuel, but it is the emotional pieces where he comes into his own. His slightly croaky, lonesome voice with its overtones of breathless exhaustion lend just the right flavour to those Band tunes that echo — or at least seem to echo — the hard times of the pioneers of North America.

Though he's never had the opportunity to display it, Danko is, like the rest of the group, a multi-instrumentalist. He played guitar before he played bass and he's equally happy on keyboards. On bass he's perfected the deceptively simple technique of hammering on two or three notes at once, producing a bass chord between runs. Usually — though not on the current Band tour — he uses an enormous Ampeg fretless instrument that tests the accuracy of the player but offers a deeper, more sonorous tone than the conventional fretted basses.

"I've got it all figured out in my head and on paper," he replied in a rather hoarse, early in the morning tone when I asked about the Arista album. "But well, the Band will be getting ready to record another album soon so I'm not sure when it comes first. I have a lot of material for my own songs to record."

Pulling on what was to become a never ending stream of Chesterfields, he continued: "I've also formed a new group for the record. My younger brother, Terry, is in the group; Jim Atkinson, another fellow from Canada and a guy from Southern California. They're all in this group called Rendezvous, a new group that I'm going to produce."

"I'll probably use some other people but these will be the main guys. As soon as I get back off this tour I'm off to start the session, but we haven't had time yet because of obligations to Capitol."

Danko is quick to point out that his solo aspirations will in no way interfere with his position in the Band, a position that will always come first. "Robbie has been writing songs all his life and I just hope he remains writing songs that I can play all my life. It's just the same energy that I can channel everywhere, as I want to tour with Rendezvous as well. I don't want to move too quickly to rush something out and then have to tour. With the Band we don't rush and I won't rush on my own."

"I'm sure that all of us in the Band have thought about doing our own projects at one time or another, but I don't know whether they've actually made music of their own. We often go into funny forms of semi-retirement which messes up the balance."

Danko says he approached just two companies when he made the decision to branch out on his own — he won't say what the other one was — and that Clive Davis was the one who came to his house. "I played him all kinds of things I'd done myself. "We have our own recording studio so I've had



RICK DANKO: 'The Band's been together for 16 years now and I, for one, wouldn't want to stop.'

Danko—solo, but not alone

all kinds of opportunities to put down skeletons of songs and things that I wanted to be heard. I have written many things that haven't been done by the Band.

"Originally I was going to do songs that I'd written before, but now I've done new material so perhaps it'll be a while before I get to the old ones. I've written a tune called 'Missing in Action' that I did for Clive Davis but I don't think I could put it on my first album. I'd like the first album to be fresh."

"I think, though, that the Band's situation will change soon, and we'll be back to making one album a year ourselves instead of waiting

so long as we have done recently. Everybody in the group is now resigned to that commitment, but it's fun anyway. We've been together for 15 or 16 years and I, for one, wouldn't want to stop making albums with the Band. Just so long as the Band wants to continue making records, I'll be there."

This was in Port Dover, near Toronto, near where he grew up. "He was making some changes in his group and he wanted a rhythm guitar player. The next thing I knew I was playing bass. I had a group of my own when I got out of school, because I quit school when I was young."

"In fact I played in a band with my schoolteacher at one point. I started to play mandolin when I was

sixteen years with the Band have given Danko some hazy memories of the early years, but he does recall being hired by Ronnie Hawkins as a guitarist — and not a bass player — in the beginning.

"It was funny because we were taking a little time off for the first time in years. When you play juke-joints you can't afford to take time off because you live from day to day, and so when Bob first came to hear us our voices were shot and we played all instruments."

"He split and then sent his plane back for us to take us to Texas where we did three shows with him. We didn't rehearse at all, just went straight on."

There followed a relationship that was to last, in one form or another, up to the present day. Although Dylan toured with a new set of musicians (Rolling

Stone) Danko says he had persuaded the publishing company to give the song to us.

Dan and Coley cut a demo of the song and sent it to Atlantic Records. Executives from Big Tree were at the meeting where it was played and they moved quickly to sign the pair and release the song as a single.

The sessions took place in Nashville in April. Seals and Coley stuck rigidly to McGee's arrangement, delivering the song as if they were making a telephone call, and cut two other songs the same day because the studio time had been paid for. The single was released immediately and in June they went back to make their comeback album "Nightmare Before Christmas." The title track will be their follow-up single.

and they have, in fact, been singing together for some 12 years, most of them as a duo. Their current success represents the biggest break they have had in this time.

"We realised about three years ago that we had the wrong combination on a lot of things," Dan Seals told me on the telephone from his Los Angeles home last week. "We completely about-turned on a lot of things. We changed labels, we changed management and we changed producers. We started writing different material and we also decided to start playing other people's material in addition to our own. We also decided to write with other people, which I think was a milestone in our career."

The duo left ARM in 1973

Rock: Alone, Rick Danko Brays, Howls

THE ANNOUNCEMENT late last year that the Band was calling it quits as a performing unit signaled the end of an era in American rock. The five members of the Band grew up in the rockabilly period, barnstorming around Canada and the South with Ronnie Hawkins, then they became an important factor in rock's coming of age through their work backing Bob Dylan during his crucial change from acoustic to electric music, and through their own fine albums. During this period they saw rock grow from a regional, essentially lower-class phenomenon into the most popular and lu-

creative form of music in the Western world.

Five individuals always lurked behind the Band's corporate facade, and two of them, Rick Danko and Levon Helm, have begun solo careers since the Band's Last Waltz farewell concert a year ago. Mr. Danko was at the Bottom Line on Tuesday night, and his appearance was both a celebration of his own contributions to rock and a reminder that the whole of the Band was something more than the sum of its parts.

Mr. Danko's voice is immediately recognizable. It brays, it howls, it cracks and bites, it threatens to become uncontrollably anarchic but never quite does. On his first solo album, the voice is framed by lucid, finely crafted rock arrangements: at the Bottom Line it made itself heard over a stomping seven-man band that teetered on the brink of chaos without falling in. Both situations work well

for Mr. Danko, although this listener, who is very fond of his album, missed its clarity and restraint.

With the album and with this tour, Mr. Danko has proved himself a worthy singer-songwriter, fully capable of standing alone. But though his performance did not lack soul or intensity, one wanted to hear some of the counterbalancing virtues that operated in the Band. For above all the Band was a balanced ensemble, and while Mr. Danko captured the rollicking spirit of Band tunes such as "Life Is a Carnival," and much of the affecting urgency of his own features with the group, he did not play these things off against the sort of thoughtful, architectural arrangements that were the Band's stock-in-trade.

This is not Mr. Danko's problem, of course; it is the listener's problem. It seems that living without the Band is going to take some getting used to.

ROBERT PALMER

Thunder Revue) this year, his close relationship with the Band seems certain to last an eternity.

"We hadn't really thought up a name until 'Big Pink' in 1968," said Danko. "But me and a couple of the guys always used to see these posters up on marquees and it always said just 'Bob Dylan and Band,' so we thought it was quite funny just to call ourselves the Band."

"At the time of the first album me and Richard and Garth lived in this big house with about 600 acres where everything was spectacular except the colour of the house. The outside was pink. It was in the middle of all this country with mountains and rivers. That was where we did the basement tapes, too."

Danko can recall tours of England by Dylan and the Band in the mid-Sixties, a 12-city tour in 1966 which visited Ireland and Scotland. He still has a tape of a show in Liverpool. "I can remember going around the world with Bob and it was the first time anyone of us had been abroad at all."

"I was ten years younger then (Danko is 31 now) so it was a pretty strange exposure for me, and I guess an even stranger one for Bob. He was under the light and there were people all around him telling him to get rid of the Band. I don't think we were blamed by the folkies but it was uncomfortable sometimes. Bob understood and he was a friend. He just did what he wanted to do whatever anyone else said."

Dylan's 1974 comeback tour, says Danko, was as much a Band idea as it was Dylan's. "We talked about doing that up in Woodstock and Robbie had a lot to do with it. It wasn't really a Bob Dylan idea, but of course his contribution was very large."

"He was coming out after eight years or whatever so it was hard on him. I think David Geffen had something to do with it too, because Bob had signed with his company. There was a business thing involved, but I don't discuss business with anyone but my lawyer. Not even Bob, even though we have the same lawyer."

"I know that not long after that tour I got a message from Bob saying that he wanted to take the Band over to Europe, but it didn't happen because in the end he thought the timing wasn't right. We'll be there sometime soon though, that's for sure."



ENGLAND DAN (left) and JOHN FORD COLEY: a tour with Elton set them on the road to fame — but it took four more years to come up with a hit single

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The duo left ARM in 1973

What's happening at Pountney's



DANKO'S NEW DANCE

*It Isn't a
Last Waltz*

BY HARVEY KUBERNICK

Rising like creeping vines from an urban jungle, the architectural wonderlust of Century City reveals not only the ingenuity of man but his empty spirituality: shopping centers, huge high-rise offices, towering apartment complexes and a token park complete with sodded grass and color-coordinated water fountain effects, all constructed with respect for the best intentions of the Bauhaus — cold and functional, where arty flourishes border on kitsch.

Twenty-four hours after his solo debut at Hollywood's Roxy Theatre, Rick Danko, the 34-year-old (perhaps) former Band bassist, contemplates his future within the 15th-floor conference room of Arista Records, shielded by the concrete fortress of Century City from the outside world. Clad in blue workshirt, a tough brown suede jacket, Levi's, and black boots of Spanish leather, Rick sheds the protective coating that has heretofore insulated the Band's personalities from the media. He exhibits a frisky, extroverted demeanor as he leans back on a beige chair.

Rick Danko is a warm, sensitive and unguarded character further described by friends as funny and manic. He's still smiling from his Roxy stint, where he packed the room for two nights and showcased his new group to the likes of Ali MacGraw, Leo Sayer, Alice Cooper, Al Stewart, Ronnie Hawkins, and Band mates Garth Hudson and Robbie Robertson. The paying public made the most noise, demanding and receiving two encores each performance.

Danko's backing outfit includes his brother Terry on guitar; Danny Siwell from an early flight of Wings on drums; Marty Greb, once with Bonnie Raitt, on organ; Michael DeTemple, once associated with Dave Mason, on another set of guitars; Jerry Peterson on saxophone; and Walt Richmond on piano.

Since the Band's "Last Waltz" in San Francisco on Thanksgiving, 1976, Danko has put together a bubbling, celebratory rock and roll unit that combines urgent, festive white southern blues with Southern California humor and precision.

Danko admits that there are strains in the music akin to past works of the Band. Talking to one writer, he said, "Well, you gotta remember that I've been in the Band for years. But I don't think what we're doing is as disciplined as the Band's music. I was looking for a simpler, fresher routing. It's an extension, that's for sure. But I really like this new group. I can go out and perform the record now."

"I'm the focal point on stage this time, and it doesn't bother me. I put this new group together. I telephoned them all. I sought out personalities who could bus and fly together and continue to put up with each other. What I do is collect performances from everyone. I make quicker decisions in this position than when I'm a member of the Band."

Born on December 9, 1943, Danko grew up in the small Ontario rural town of Simcoe. Country music was all over the radio dial and he admits to especially liking Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell, and Johnny Horton. Later, young Rick listened to 50,000-watt Nashville country station WLAC. At 14, he quit school and worked briefly at cutting meat for a market, but before he logged time in the butcher shop, the Grand Ole Opry had made a major impression on Rick's musical sensibilities. He learned to play guitar, bass, mandolin, and a variety of other instruments.

Not much time had passed when he put down his cutting knife and formed a group who would rent halls, book themselves, and clear up to \$300 per night. After five sets opening for Arkansas rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins one night, Danko was asked to join his band, the Hawks.

In the late Fifties, Hawkins scored U.S. chart success with remakes of Young Jesse's "Mary Lou" (recently again revived by Bob Seger) and Chuck Berry's "Thirty Days," mysteriously retitled "Forty Days" for that reincarnation. "It was different back then," Danko told Richard Blackburn for *Circus*: "When the cops knocked on your motel door, they weren't looking for acid or grass. They were looking for guns, man. Guns, blackjacks, and pills. And underage girls."

Rick was still a teenager when the Hawks broke from Hawkins to work under names including the Crackers, the

Canadian Squires, and then Levon Helm and the Hawks. In that last form, they recorded several classic singles including "Leave Me Alone" and "The Stones That I Throw (Will Free All Men)." Helm wrote what was to become a rhythm and blues classic, "You Cheated."

(Four years ago, a record buff approached another Band member and Hawks alumnus, Richard Manuel, and in just asked him to sing a couple of bars of "Leave Me Alone." Manuel responded immediately with much more than a few bars, as if the group has been performing the song, uninterrupted, for the preceding decade or so.)

John Hammond, the white blues singer, invited the Hawks to New York, where they participated in some of his best recordings. In 1965, they met Bob Dylan in Atlantic City. Dylan had completed his first electric-music sessions, with studio musicians providing the backup, and was looking for a road band. The Hawks toured with him in late '65 and '66 before settling in West Saugerties, New York, with a big, pink house serving as their headquarters. In 1968, they had again changed their name, to the Band, and released their first album, *Music from Big Pink*.

Ten years later, Danko is equipped to give a complete dissertation on the Band. He lights a cigarette and grins. "We put out that first album and it was a relative underground success. Then we issued *The Band*, and it sold a million copies immediately," he snaps his fingers. "Just like that."

But now, says Danko, the Band is "on ice" for a while. "It

had become like eating dinner night after night with the same person. It was time to make a change.

"A week or so after our second album came out, we were on the cover of *Time*," he remembers. "From that point on, everybody was . . . uh . . . a little spaced," Danko had said earlier to Daisann McLane of the *Soho Weekly News*. "I stayed in my house for about a year and a half once, not really speaking to anybody. Then we went out and spent a million dollars touring. It changed everybody's life immediately, and took all of the fun out of it."

"We've in no way broken up," he assures me. "In fact, we've just signed a collective record contract with Warner Bros. *The Last Waltz* soundtrack is issued this week. It's the live show plus a side of new studio material."

[The album was *not* released that week. More than a month after this interview, Warner Bros. was still awaiting master tapes, to be delivered by the album's producer, Robbie Robertson. The three-disc set may be out by the time you read this, but nobody's holding his breath.]

In 1976, the Band played about thirty live dates before their Thanksgiving eve Last Waltz at Winterland. After sixteen years on the road, the Band decided to bow out while on top, rather than diminish to self-parody in the manner of, say, the Beach Boys. The Band refused to sacrifice what they felt to be their integrity, and months before the actual concert they began planning the special performance.

"We focused on one last concert. It gave us something to concentrate our energies on. When people heard that we weren't going to perform anymore, the phone wouldn't stop ringing. They all wanted to be there: Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Joni, Van Morrison . . .

"You were there. You saw the concert. Wasn't it terrific? The cameras didn't inhibit *anyone*. We wanted to feed five thousand people a gourmet dinner — and I think we also gave 'em a good show." He winks.

"The movie was a labor of love. At the start, the Band had to raise a few hundred thousand bucks so that the event could take place. We were taking a chance. We almost hocked our houses. We would have been the *perfect* House Band. Even the rehearsals were incredible. It cost \$125,000 to renovate Winterland. I hate to keep relating to money, but I want to show you how important it was for us to have the theme and decor amplify the mood of the celebration.

"Preparing for the gig was a trip in itself. For four days, we did nothing but play music. We finished *Islands*, our last album for Capitol, then began nonstop rehearsals for the Last Waltz.

"The Band really came alive that night. We had been cruising for the last year, and that was obvious. For the *Waltz* show, we were onstage for six hours and worked 'til five a.m. the night before. We rehearsed with Dylan at the hotel. We presented the cameramen with a 300-page script. The Band has always been into precision, like a fine car. We didn't take it easy during preparation. I think that it will show in the movie. There's no split screen stuff, and very little backstage footage to pad the performances. *No way* was I going to wing it next to Joni Mitchell. And Muddy Waters — wait 'til you see Muddy in the film. I was playing next to him and got chills," he confesses. "I think that both Muddy and Ronnie Hawkins arrived at the high point of their lives that night.

"It's a very honest movie," Rick says enthusiastically. "It was a very special and a very memorable night for all of us."

"It was the Band's last performance. What more can I say?" he concludes, slightly out of breath and forgetting, perhaps in his excitement, his earlier contention that the Band has "in no way . . . broken up."

"The truth of the evening will come out on the soundtrack. The essence of *The Last Waltz* is in the grooves." &

Harvey Kubernick is the Los Angeles correspondent for British music weekly, Melody Maker. His work has also appeared in the Los Angeles Times, Crawdaddy, Bay Area Music, and Record World. Al Stewart performed at his most recent birthday party. Harvey adds that he prefers girls who wear glasses and are into Bruce Springsteen.

A Band member strays, but not too far

Rick Danko's wink is as good as a nod

By Mikal Gilmore

LOS ANGELES

FROM THE OUTSIDE, Mecca Billiards bears an uncanny resemblance to the Blackie's Pool Hall pictured on the cover of the Band's *Moondog Matinee* album, right down to the ill-proportioned paintings of pool sharks that adorn its magenta walls. And the characters huddled around a table seem stereotypical of the poolroom-seedy type. It's not, however, a six-pocket table that they're gathered around, but a sixteen-track mixing board. And Mecca Billiards is no longer a pool hall; it has been converted into a rehearsal studio by the Band's bassist, Rick Danko.

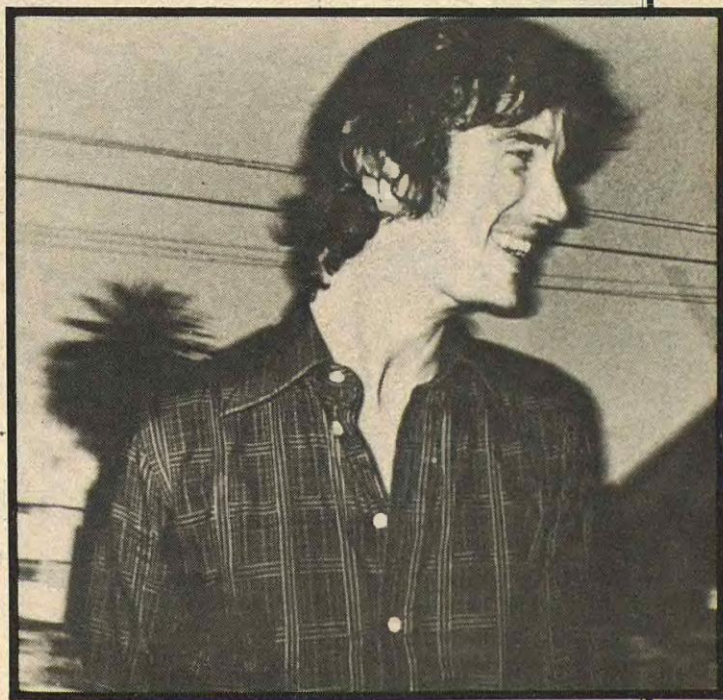
"Can you tune the room up, Rob?" Danko asks Rob Fraboni, his and the Band's coproducer. "Try to make it sound as good as you can," he says with a wink.

"Y'know, bright and big."

I'd been told that Danko was auditioning drummers, but what's in progress is a full-fledged rehearsal for Danko's new band, a touring ensemble made up mostly of the musicians who played on his solo debut, *Rick Danko*. "Naw," says Danko, leading the way to a four-poster bed in the corner where he flops. "I don't audition musicians; I audition attitudes."

Danko was the first of the Band to go solo, signing a nonexclusive contract with Arista (which means that when he appears on future Band albums, his name won't appear with a "courtesy of Arista" credit) a full season before the *Last Waltz*. The first fruit of that decision, a ten-song set with all songs either written or cowritten by Danko, has just been released, and its guest log includes all Band members as well as Ron Wood and Eric Clapton. In contrast to Band drummer Levon Helm's first solo LP, Danko's sounds [Cont. on 23]

Danko: a wink here, a nose-to-nose whisper there



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID ALEXANDER

Danko

[Cont. from 18] very much like the Band. The album's warm organ layers, punchy bottom and Rick's fervid vocals echo the fireside camaraderie of the Band's best recordings.

"I've been likely working on this album all my life," says Danko. "I've always tried to make music with a timeless element involved. I like to keep a taxing feeling out of it, both for those who make and listen to the music. Everybody's the same: if they drink too much alcohol they act like drunks, if they eat too many cheeseburgers they get fat. The idea in making this record was not to get fat or drunk."

That's a roundabout way of making an analogy, but there's always something circuitous and surprising about Danko.

His whole demeanor seems geared to the sharing—or keeping—of secrets. It's conveyed through an odd wink here, a nose-to-nose whisper there, but most tellingly by the unwavering gaze of his solidly set, deep-brown eyes. Like his mannerisms, those eyes seem to say "this is just between you and me."

But when he sidesteps a question about the air of leave-taking in the album's lyrics, he reveals more than was bargained for.

"Just the different seasons can change your mind," he says in response to the departure-theme question. "We're all built on some kind of emotional structure. We're all acrobats to some degree. But I sure feel sorry for the people who blow the balance." He pauses, glancing downward. "I've been fucked up myself—I'm sure you've heard all the stories. I'm a cripple in disguise. Right after *Big Pink* I had a car wreck and I broke a lot of bones in my neck and back. On top of that I took pills all my life for nerves, but those days are gone. I stopped four years ago. Nobody wants to see anybody fucked up these days. I may drink a little white wine after the show, but I won't have hard liquor around my group. It just drains the energy."

When the Band announced its decision last fall to stop touring, it seemed as much a widening of vistas for individual members as an acknowledgment of their collective limitations. To even the

Band's most steadfast critical supporters, the group's vision of community seemed to become insular after *Stage Fright*, converting what once appeared protective into something reclusive.

And through the Band's ten albums (including *The Basement Tapes*), Rick Danko shared only four writing credits, although his voice graces several of the group's better-known songs. As far back as 1972, after coproducing an album for New Orleans singer Bobby Charles, Danko knew he wanted to make his own record. "For me to sing three or four songs a year, do some background vocals and not go on tour... well, that's not enough to keep my mind occupied. And it was hard to grab anybody's attention in the Band, to get them to hear my music. But I have a lot of writer friends, like Emmett Grogan [who, as well as Bobby Charles, cowrote several of Danko's songs], and they've all

helped me along, given me confidence in what I had to say.

"I mean, I love playing with the Band. I'm sure they would never abandon me and I would never want to abandon them. But it's a very collective thing and I'm only one-fifth of it. I plan to write my own

music for my solo situation, but I really want Robbie to be my writer in the Band, because he's very special. He's got some songs for this next album that are killers. We keep that whole thing in a safe place right now. Nobody wants to hear anybody yell or scream, least of all me."

Across the room, Rob Fraboni is coaching a couple of band members in their harmonies on a song from the new album, "Once upon a Time." Danko leaps in at the bridge with a soulful bark: "Whether you're young or old, never ever let yourself get put on ho-old!"

He beams. "It's like having a new girlfriend. These guys pull stuff from me that the Band could never. That's my little brother Terry," he says, indicating the rhythm guitarist. (Terry Danko made three albums with Barefoot for Columbia before the group disbanded in 1975.) "I'm not sure how old he is—twenty-six, twenty-seven?"

And how old are you, Rick? "Whoa," he says laughingly, lurching forward nose-to-nose for one of those "between-you-and-me" exchanges. "Do we have to know that? I'm as young as you want me to be. No older than Leon Redbone," he winks, "no younger than Donny Osmond." ♪

If they drink too much alcohol they act like drunks, if they eat too many cheeseburgers they get fat. The idea in making this record was not to get fat or drunk.'

by Harvey Kubernik in Los Angeles

RISING like creeping vines from an urban jungle, the architectural wonder of Century City reveals not only the ingenuity of man but his empty spirituality: shopping centres, huge high-rise offices, towering apartment complexes and a token park complete with sodden grass and colour-co-ordinated water fountain effects, all constructed with the best intentions but cold and functional.

A day after his triumphant Rocky Theatre debut, Rick Danko, the 34-year old Band bassist, contemplates his solo career within the conference room of Arista Records, shielded from the outside by the concrete fortress of Century City.

Clad in blue workshirt, a tough brown suede jacket, Lewis and black boots of Spanish leather, Rick sheds the protective coating that has insulated the Band from media exposure.

He is a warm, sensitive and unguarded character, described by friends as being funny and maniacal. He's still smiling from the Rocky gigs, where he packed the place for two nights and showcased his new group to the likes of Ali McGraw, Leo Sayer, Kim Fowley, Al Stewart, Ronnie Hawkins and Band mates Garth Hudson and Robbie Robertson.

The paying public made the most noise, and they demanded two encores each performance.

Rick's live repertoire began with an a capella introduction to the Four Tops' "Lovin' You Is Sweeter Than Ever," and also included such Band staples as "The Weight," "Stage

Carnival." The programme was linked together with selections from Danko's solo album. His backing band is brother Terry on guitar, Denny Seiwell, from an early edition of Wings on drums and Marty Grob, once with Louie Raitt, on organ. Michael DeTemple, previously associated with Dave Mason, also chips in on guitar, Jerry Peterson saxophone and Walt Richmond on piano.

Since the Band's Last Waltz, Danko has put together a bubbling, celebratory rock 'n' roll unit that combines the urgent, festive white blues of the South, underscored with Southern California humour and precision.

Just back from a six-week live tour, where they did 34 shows in 42 nights, Rick admitted the opening dates were a feeler for more extensive road work that begins this month.

"I went out a week before my album was released, mainly just to hear some response to an album no one has heard before.

"We did some dates opening for Boz Scaggs, but I felt a greater link with the audience in clubs. When we do college concerts it will be an additional challenge to play for people who don't know Rick Danko through his Band identity. I'm a new face to them.

"I'm the focal point now on stage and it doesn't bother me. I put this new group together. I telephoned them all. I sought out personalities who could bus and fly together.

"I had 13 people on the road with me and seven on the stage. What I do is collect performances from everyone. I make quicker decisions in this position than when I'm a member of the Band."

BORN on December 9, 1943, Danko grew up in the small country town of Simcoe in Ontario. Country music was all over the radio dial and he admits

especially liking Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell and Johnny Horton.

Later, he was able to pick up WLAC from Nashville — the 50,000 watt station.

At 14 he quit school and worked for a while cutting meat in a market. Before he logged time in the butcher shop, the Grand Ole Opry had made a big impression on his musical sensibilities.

He learned to play guitar, bass, mandolin and a variety of instruments. He put down the cutting knife and then formed a group who would rent halls and clear up to \$300 a night. They did five shows opening for Ronnie Hawkins one evening, and Rick was asked to join Hawkins.

In the late Fifties Hawkins achieved chart entries in the US with powerful reworks of "40 Days" and "Mary Lou."

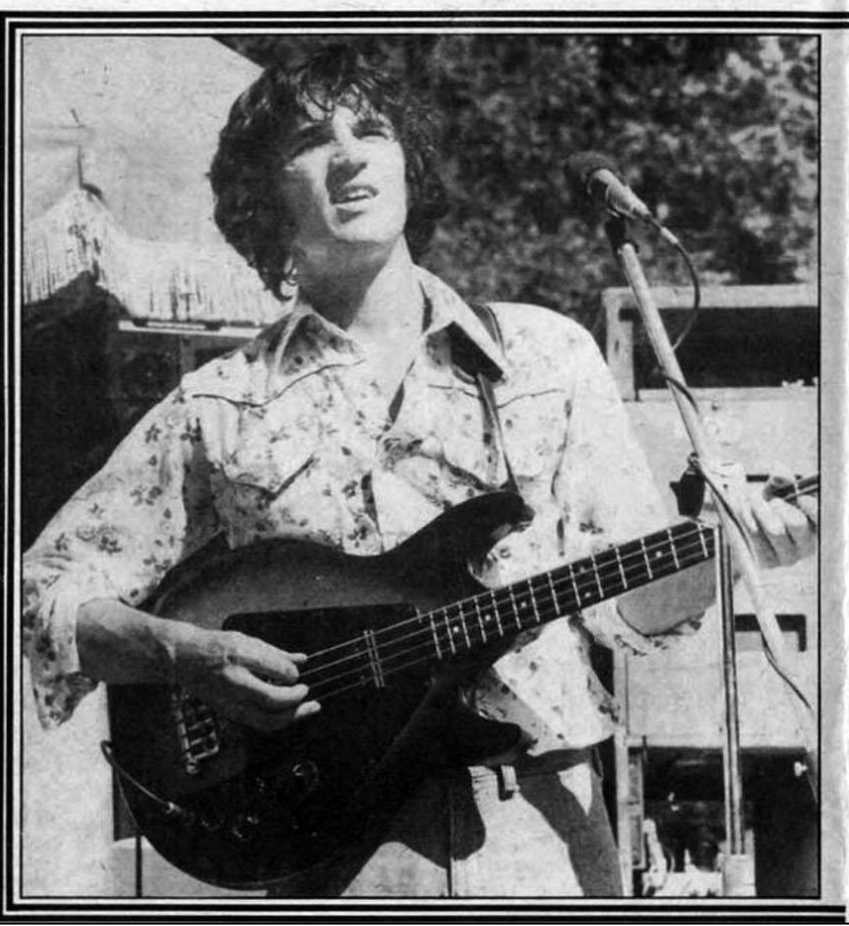
In Toronto, Rick hit the road, as a member of the Hawks. They came to New York at the invitation of John Hammond Jr, with whom Rick and Robbie Robertson made a few Vanguard albums.

Along the way they changed their name to the Crackers, to the Canadian Squires and then to Levon Helm and the Hawks.

The stint with Ronnie Hawkins had lasted several years, and they toured through the East Coast and Canada. As Levon and The Hawks they recorded some singles: "Leave Me Alone," "Go Go Liza Jane," and the pride of my record collection, "The Stones I Throw (Will Free All Men)."

In 1965 they met Bob Dylan, who hired them for tours in late '63 and '66. After some hectic world treks behind Dylan, The Hawks settled in West Saugerties, New York. They emerged in 1968 as the Band.

A year earlier in 1967, recuperating from his motorcycle accident, Dylan began to record, and so did the Band. The music they tossed around, co-singing, co-writing, taking turns at the lead microphone became the legend



ROLLING STONE, SEPTEMBER 7, 1978

HI-FI 1979: FOR EARS ONLY

STEREOS OF THE STARS 36
Aerosmith, Rick Danko, Clive Davis, Al DiMeola, Albhy Galuten and Karl Richardson, Herbie Hancock, Martin Mull, Gene Simmons, Southside Johnny and Warren Zevon.

Rick Danko

RICK DANKO, WHO SPENT SIXTEEN YEARS as the Band's bassist and is now pursuing a solo career, has a collection of stereo equipment in his Malibu home that would make any audiophile envious. "What your ears like, you like," Danko said as he popped a cassette of the previous night's recording session into his Nakamichi 700 recorder.

At the center of Danko's system are two amplifiers: a McIntosh 1700 and a Luxman L-85V. His turntable is a Bang and Olufsen Beogram 2400, and for speakers he has two ADS L-500s and two ADS L-810s. A ReVox two-track tape machine that records at fifteen inches per second rounds out his home system.

"The bad part about expensive machinery is that it requires more maintenance," moaned Danko, who also has some less-expensive equipment for use in his office. "When we were in Japan on tour, I bought a stereo setup with a Sansui AU-717 amp, a TU-217 tuner and an SC-1110 cassette deck. It's inexpensive but has very good quality."

REEL LIFE—Rick Danko is reportedly nearing the homestretch in sessions for his second Arista solo epee, which he's producing himself at One Step Up in West Hollywood. Sepp Donahower is associate producer on the sessions, which thus far have seen Danko's touring band augmented by Keith Allison, Jim Atkinson and Blondie Chaplin . . .

RECORD WORLD SEPTEMBER 2, 1978

The Band's Rick Danko and actor Gary Busey ("The Buddy Holly Story," "Big Wednesday") have joined forces for a two week tour of the California coast. The tour, which also features Ronnie Hawkins and his band, the Hawks, as the opening act — was originally slated for just Danko and his band in order to "get my wheels spinning." Busey, a neighbor and good friend of Danko's in Malibu, later joined to play rhythm guitar, sing an occasional Buddy Holly tune and selections from his forthcoming A&M debut LP.

Since the tour was announced, rumors have abounded that other members of the Band, perhaps even Bob Dylan or Neil Young, will turn out for some of the shows. Danko would not confirm the rumors but did say, "This show is going to be attracting all of my friends that I've played with over the years. We are looking forward to a rock & roll revival."

The Morning Record and Journal, Meriden, Ct., Saturday, Dec. 9, 1978

Rolling Stone
RANDOM NOTES

After the tour, Danko returns to the studio to record his second solo album for Arista. "I've written all the tunes myself this time," says Danko. "It's more of a spontaneous album, a lot of rock & roll, fast music this time. It's going to be a real live album." . . .

With Rick Danko You Don't Quickly Forget the Band

By Charlie McColjum
Washington Star Staff Writer

About the last thing you'd ever hope to hear on the stage of a 200-seat club like the Cellar Door is a Band number like "The Weight," "Stage Freight" or "Wheels On Fire." The Band, which started out as Bob Dylan's backup band and ended as one of the most influential groups in American music, never did play facilities that small.

Yet, that is precisely what a nearly full house heard last night at the club — good, solid versions of those tunes offered by at least a reasonable facsimile of The Band. The man in charge was Rick Danko, the group's bass player, and his engagement at the Door — the first by a Band member on solo tour — gave every indication that The Band has not died, but merely, and perhaps temporarily, splintered into five parts.

"The Band really hasn't broken up," Danko said between shows last night in his tour bus. "The Band has just stopped touring. We've signed a contract with Warner Brothers for recording and United Artists for recording and film work. I'm sure, though, that this individual work will be for the best. Certainly I'll have a lot to contribute after this."

MUCH OF WHAT DANKO has to contribute will come from his first solo album on Arista, "Rick Danko." Unlike the other Band members, he went solo early — he signed with Arista before the group decided to stop touring — and the release is far more successful and interesting than the other Band solo album, Levon Helm's set with Paul Butterfield, Dr. John and others. Perhaps the most obvious difference is that Danko's album is clearly Danko's, while the inclusion of so many other heavyweights seems to have intimidated Helm somewhat.

Danko suggests that his dominance of his own album was crucial. "Before, it was a sensitive situation," he says, speaking of The Band. "Now, I get my own way. It's something different. The folks who played on it (which includes the likes of The Band, Eric Clapton, Ron Wood and Blondie Chapin) did it as a labor of love."

"I wouldn't try to compare my album with anything The Band did," he continues. "It's that different . . . I tried to make something young people and old people and people my age could understand."

"I mean, I love playing with The Band," Danko suggests. "I'm sure they would never abandon me and I would never abandon them. But it's a very collective thing and I'm one-fifth of it. I plan to write my own music for my solo situation but I really want Robbie (Robertson, The Band's leader and songwriter) to be my writer for The Band, because he's very special. He's got some songs for the next album that are killers. We keep the whole thing in a safe place right now. Nobody wants to hear anybody yell or scream, least of all me."

WHAT DANKO DOES seem to do, though, is loosen

Danko suggests that his dominance of his own album was crucial. 'Before, it was a sensitive situation,' he says, speaking of The Band. 'Now, I get my own way. It's something different.'

The Band's style. More than any of the other members, he is a pure rock 'n' roller and his attitude shows both on the album and in his live work. The Danko studio set is made up of the sort of material The Band was doing around the time of "The Basement Tapes" with Bob Dylan; tough-minded, neatly-perceived rock. Even though the songs are often co-written with the likes of Emmett Grogan and Bobby Charles — "if I had put out



Rick Danko at the Cellar Door

—Washington Star Photographer Willard Volz

an entire album of Rick Danko songs, I'm not sure anyone would have bought it" — it's clearly Danko's album, especially when one remembers that, in the beginning, he co-wrote several of The Band's better-known songs.

On stage, it is even clearer that Danko is the main man. While his band is made up of quality musicians — brother Terry Danko on guitar, Denny Seiwell from Wings on drums, Marty Grebb from Bonnie Raitt's band on organ, Michael DeTemple from Dave Mason's group on guitar — it is Rick Danko himself who calls the shots. Liberated from The Band's ensemble structure, he charges around the stage like a Bruce Springsteen and thoroughly dominates the proceedings.

BOTH SETS LAST NIGHT were marvelous and beautifully paced. From the new album, Danko pulled off the best material — the sharp "New Mexico," the hard-driving "What A Town," "Tired of Waiting," and "Brain Wash," the Dylanesque "Java Blues." For new material, there was the opening "Loving You" — the first chorus done acapella as the group marched in — and the lively "Christmas Song." And, from the older works, there was a speeded-up "The Weight" and "Wheels On Fire" in both shows and "Stage Freight" as an added treat in the second.

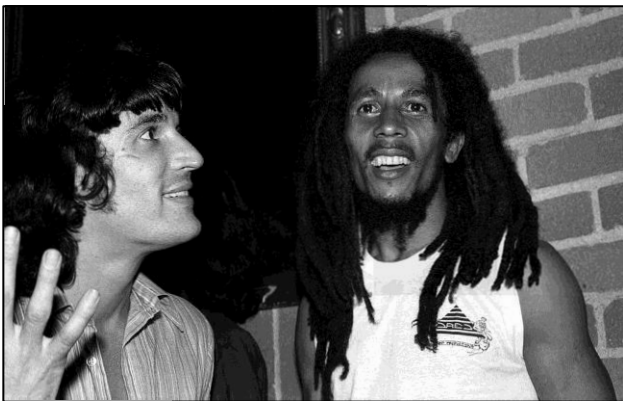
Throughout, Danko sounded just fine on vocals and added some solid guitar to his usual impeccable bass work. The backup band gave superior support, especially DeTemple on lead guitar and Jerry Peterson on saxophone. For once, the cheers and standing ovations both audiences mustered were actually well-deserved.

Danko will be back at the Cellar Door tonight and says he hopes to return to the club circuit soon. With a strong

What Danko does seem to do, though, is loosen The Band's style. More than any of the other members, he is a pure rock 'n' roller and his attitude shows both on the album and in his live work.

opening act in Rory Block — a woman singer-songwriter who would have upstaged many other headliners — this is a high-quality doublebill. If you can get in, it is something you ought to see and, if you can't, it is worth picking up Rick Danko's new album.

As Danko says, The Band may not be dead but — while the group is deciding which way to go — it is well-worth checking out the members' solo efforts.



With Bob Marley at the Daisy, Beverly Hills, July 26, 1978.



DANKO STRIKES—When Japanese employees want to express their unhappiness they wear headbands that say, "danko," which literally means "to go on strike." Arista's Rick Danko, second from left, during his recent Japanese tour visits Toshiba-EMI, Arista's licensee, where head and arm bands, which coincidentally spell his name, were worn in his honor.

Courier News, Blytheville, (Ark.)
Thursday, December 22, 1977

AUSTIN, Texas — The news came as a shock to Austin. Willie Nelson was leaving the town he made famous to live in Malibu, Calif., the oceanside retreat of such Beautiful People as Linda Ronstadt, Kris Kristofferson and the Eagles.

Then Doug Sahn, another nationally recognized progressive country musician, announced that he also was skipping town. "Let's face it, fellow Austinites," he wrote to the Austin Sun, a weekly magazine. "The scene is rapidly decaying from the lovely, stoned, slow town it once was to a sometimes circus of egos that has made it not the fun it used to be." Sahn went to the West Coast to join Rick Danko's new band, The Group.

Rock statesman Danko goes solo

by ROB PATTERSON

Thirty-five-year-old Rick Danko explodes the myth that the senior statesmen of rock 'n' roll are tired, boring old men. After nearly 20 years "on the road" with Ronnie Hawkins, Bob Dylan and The Band, you might suspect Rick would wear the glazed face of quickly approaching senility.

But instead of spending himself for years in the music, it's almost as if Rick has invested himself instead. He still exudes a bright-eyed, almost 'aw shucks' style of exuberance.

But don't let the long, dangling limbs and rubbery smile fool you into thinking he's some backwoods innocent. On his first solo outing, Danko has created an album which stands with the most creative and energetic work of The Band itself.

THE BAND bid farewell to live performances over a year ago with "The Last Waltz," a Thanksgiving night concert in San Francisco which featured such guests as Van Morrison, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, and of course, Bob Dylan (and which will reach the public in the form of a movie and live album in the very near future). Although they will continue to cut studio albums together, a multiplicity of reasons (ranging from the logistical to the legal and the emotional) brought about the decision to stop touring.

"You know how that whole family thing is set up," Rick points out. "There's a lot of emotions there, and I'll bet you don't find yourself eating with your mother and father every night, although it sure is nice to see them."

The first one out of the nest was Danko, who signed a contract well over a year ago with Arista Records for solo work. For a member of The Band — who cut a most original and inspired path across American popular music — the inevitable comparisons to the group as a whole were a factor to be faced. Already the critics (myself included) have been comparing Danko's lp with Levon Helm's, and the process will continue until we've heard from Robbie, Richard and Garth too.

"I CAN SEE through all that," said Rick with a winner's grin. "If I started out thinking in terms of the competition, I'm sure I'd waste half my day. I'm just looking for another space to relate to musically, and I'm sure soon enough people will be comparing Rick Danko with Rick Danko."

Danko's basic game plan was simple. "I tried to put together the

DISCovering rock

album like a theatrical production. I didn't want it to sound mono — like just one voice — so I used a lot of voices that I have up my sleeve. But the concept, as well as what was left up to the imagination, had to coincide from cut to cut. Basically it's a bunch of songs thrown together for entertainment. For old people, young people, people like you and me," Rick said. "I made it for entertainment reasons..."

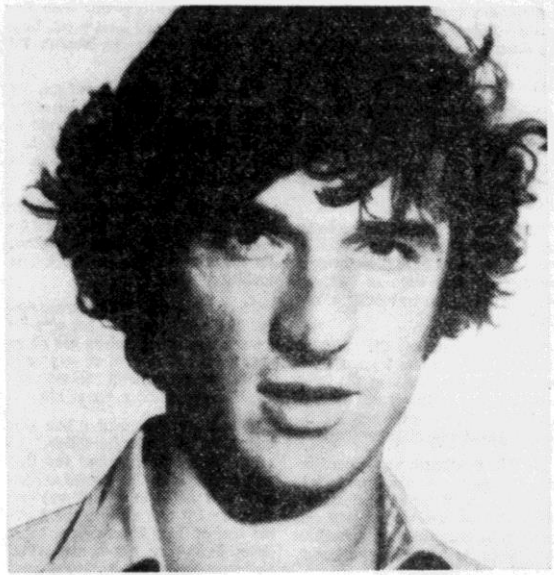
"Including your own entertainment?" I asked the lanky bass player.

"I'm sure mostly including myself," Rick said. "I had a lot of fun making it!" Helping out on the lp were all four of his old Band-mates, as well as folks like Eric Clapton. But from the swirling rock of "Brainwash" to the resonant balladry of a song like "Small Town Talk," not one of the featured guests outshines the fact that this is Danko's finest moment.

AND THOUGH The Band may not be touring, Rick is out with a superb seven-piece band who invest his songs with all the dynamism they can muster. His performance at New York's Bottom Line (which can be heard later in January on The King Biscuit Flower Hours. Tune into your local Biscuit outlet for specifics), where Rick grinningly thrust himself into each song, proved that the man's telling the gospel truth when he says, "I love playing — and it just gets better and better!"

And as far as rock 'n' roll goes, The Band were always a ring of truth amidst the fog of musical fashions. Danko has taken that Hickory-bark authenticity and whittled it into a personal style and energy all his own. Danko has written a new chapter in one of the finest stories in American music — one well worth reading.

In between a live show like Danko's and the eventual broadcast of radio, there are a lot of steps the public rarely sees. One of them is the process of live recording, and the rolling results of technology often can be seen huddled up beside your favorite arena, auditorium or club these days. During the past few months I've had the chance to glimpse the process from inside the Fedco Sound live



"I'M SURE soon enough people will be comparing Rick Danko with Rick Danko," the senior statesman of rock 'n' roll said.

recording truck, the outfit who recorded the Danko show.

ALTHOUGH A LIVE recording truck may appear imposing with its soundproof walls and doors, the components inside are relatively simple. The Fedco truck has two 16-track tape machines, a mixing console, various smaller recorders and mixing equipment, power supplies and not much more.

Although the prospect of sitting through a live recording may sound exciting, it actually involves seemingly endless preparation beforehand — in order to get all the microphones and sound levels right — and

then sitting through the show amidst a quiet, attentive air of tension. From the first note, every ear is trained to catch any electrical monsters creeping into the mix which might not be able to be eradicated later.

As with any aspect of rock 'n' roll, a little taste of live recording gives you an idea how much hard work the seemingly fun life of music really is. Next time you hear a live album or radio concert, give a moments thought to the poor engineer whose nerves were frayed in the process. As unsung heroes, go, they've got a lot of credit coming.

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DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1977

Danko: bass goes solo

Music/By ERNEST LEOGRANDE

Rick Danko was so up he couldn't sit down, roaming his hotel room like a hyperkinetic child, his dark eyes snapping with delight. He was listening to a tape of a show he and his group had performed at My Father's Place in Roslyn.

A Christmas song was rollicking away on the tape with Danko on vocal: "Come down to the manger/And see the little stranger..." Despite Danko's conversion of it to a good-time rock and roll number, the song, "Christmas Must Be Tonight," loses none of the reverence implicit in it in composer Robbie Robertson's original version.

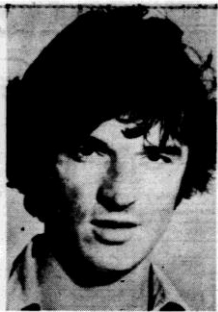
Danko, former bassist with the group known simply as The Band, has started a solo career, as have fellow members Robertson, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson and Richard Manuel. Danko will be performing in front of his new group at the Bottom Line tonight.

The last time The Band played together was Thanksgiving 1976 in San Francisco, an event documented on film by Martin Scorsese to be released in February as "The Last Waltz." Still this doesn't mean The Band, which had its origins 18 years ago, has split completely. Although they won't perform together live, Danko said, they will be doing studio recordings together.

"We separated for the same reason you stop eating with your mum and dad every night," he said. "Now we would rather get together once in a while and have picnics."

It was Bob Dylan's decision to record and perform with them that brought them fame, including a Time magazine cover story in 1976. "We went out and toured and made a million dollars," Danko said. "It changed everybody's life immediately. It took away all the fun of it."

Well, obviously not all the fun, as observers of The Band over the years since then know. Still, one of the



Rick Danko

changes was the gradual retreat of Danko as contributing composer. (He had written one of The Band's most honored songs, "This Wheel's on Fire," with Dylan.)

Now he has an LP made up entirely of his compositions with instrumentation of his choosing. Four of the songs include lyric ideas contributed by a friend, Emmet Grogan, author and one of the main founders of The Diggers, a West Coast hippie-era version of the Salvation Army.

Despite their separate ways, The Band members still are close. Danko stressed, "It would be very easy to rip it up," he said, "but we don't want to burn any bridges."

Exhibit in the cards

Novelist and playwright Donald Windham will read from his novel "Tanzil" Jan. 4 at the Drawing Center, 137 Greene St., in conjunction with an exhibition there, "Artists' Postcards." The exhibition, which includes a work by Windham, is of paintings, drawings, photographs and collages by 23 artists, all postcard size and meant to be reproduced as postcards.

Friday, November 24, 1978 — Santa Cruz Sentinel—13



Rick Danko, Paul Butterfield and Gary Busey at Grove.

Rock Stops the Clock — Rick Danko, formerly of The Band, Gary Busey (star of "The Buddy Holly Story"), Paul Butterfield, of the harmonica hall of fame, and an array of surprise guest stars will all be on hand tonight for a Rock 'N' Roll Revue, which begins at 8 o'clock at the Coconut Grove Ballroom. There's no telling who's liable to show up for this Bill Graham production (presented in association with Rick Danko and Sepp Donahower and radio station KLRB), and the whole thing is liable to become a little "Last Waltz." Tickets are available in advance from Santa Cruz Box Office.

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POP NEWS

RICK DANKO GOES THE SOLO ROUTE

BY DENNIS HUNT

The Alley was very noisy that afternoon. The quaint North Hollywood rehearsal hall was being rented for a few days by Rick Danko's band, which was preparing for a short tour. It wasn't a great place to interview Danko, best known as a singer, bassist and composer with the Band. Because the din drowned out any conversation, lipreading was the primary mode of communication.

The best place to talk seemed to be a loft, with a ceiling not much more than 5 feet high, overlooking the main rehearsal room. We retreated up there in search of quiet but didn't really find any.

Danko, who is best described as a cordial chatterbox, sat fidgeting in an easy chair, slowly burning off nervous energy. He was obviously hoping for a brief interview so he could join his colleagues as soon as possible.

He is yet another member of a popular group who is trying a solo career and finding that people like him less without his old partners and their familiar songs. Despite all its musical expertise, the Band was never able to pack stadiums and huge arenas or sell millions of albums. So Danko isn't that well known to the mass of pop music fans. That's part of the reason his debut solo album on Arista, "Rick Danko," sold only about 100,000.

Did the low sales disappoint him? "Sure as hell," he replied. "I might have been able to stay home and do nothing and make twice as much money from other sources. But it's not really the money I'm in it for."

Danko's first solo tour when the album came out last fall was a national, well-planned, record company-supported concert series. This one, however, is sort of a maverick tour, unsanctioned by Arista, confined to clubs

and to California, climaxing with five nights at the Roxy beginning Thursday.

"I booked the tour myself," he boasted, "and I'm spending my own money on it. The record company has nothing to do with it now though I think they'll be involved before it's over."

Record companies subsidize tours when an artist has a new album to promote. Danko's album, however, is more than a year old, largely forgotten and unlikely to be resurrected by this tour, mostly a trek through a lot of small towns.

"I know this tour is between albums," he said, "and it's not a time when artists usually do tours. But I had to do it. It's something to keep me busy and keep me from sitting around my house in Malibu and walking around the beach. I've been doing that for a long time and frankly I'm tired of it. I want to do something useful, something that will get my adrenalin going and keep it going. And it's nice to make a little money too."

"Rick Danko," which features his Band colleagues as well as Eric Clapton, Doug Sahm and Ron Wood, is really a Band album. Was it a mistake to make his first solo record that way?

"No," he replied. "And I don't look at it as a Band album. It was the best I could do at the time."

Apparently his second album, due in January or February, will be somewhat different. He described it as "less predictable than the first one" and then explained how it was begun in August: "It was done live in the studio (no overdubbing) with hardly any preparation. I wrote all the material and not a lot of it was written down on paper. It was real loose but I think I have something substantial." After the tour he will return to the studio and polish those tracks and maybe add some new ones.

Danko actually has two careers. He's not, as some think, through with the Band. "The Last Waltz" was a film about the group's last concert, not its breakup. The Band will continue to record though tours are out—for now anyway. For this new studio phase, the group has switched from Capitol to Warner Bros.

"I'm going into the studio with the Band in January,"



PHOTO BY LARRY BESSEL

Rick Danko, formerly with the Band, returns to L.A. with a solo stint beginning Thursday at the Roxy.

Danko reported. "We'll start then but who knows when we'll finish. I've worked on projects with the Band that have lasted a year. But I'm not looking to do that now. I have my own career to think about. I'd get out of it very quickly if I saw it was going to be a long, drawn-out thing."

As the rehearsal continued and those unpolished rock 'n' roll songs slowly acquired polish, Danko, listening to it all, became too revved up to continue talking. Paul Butterfield, the veteran San Francisco bluesman, was playing well and actor Gary Busey, star of "The Buddy Holly Story," had just arrived from Minnesota where he had been filming. A mutual friend brought Busey, also a singer-guitarist, to Danko's home a few months ago and a short while later Danko invited him to join the band. This rehearsal was Busey's first with the band.

"Gotta go, gotta go," Danko yelled, leaping up and racing down the steep spiral staircase to join in the fun.

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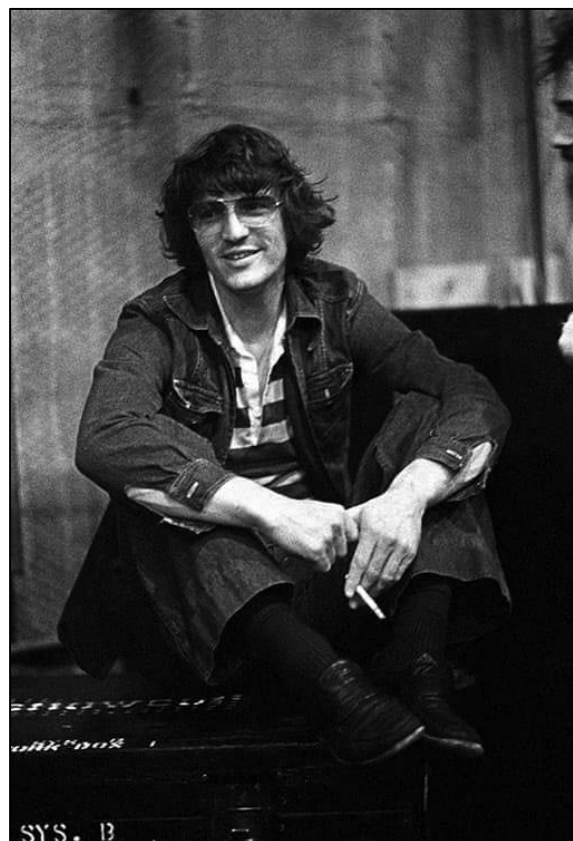
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Rick Danko concerts 1977-78

An incomplete listing

- 1977-08-26 Arista convention, Coronado Hotel, San Diego, CA
- 1977-11-15 The Cellar Door, Washington, DC
- 1977-11-16 The Cellar Door, Washington, DC
- 1977-11-21 San Diego Sports Arena, San Diego, CA (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-22 Community Center Arena, Tucson, AZ (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-23 Aladdin Theatre, Las Vegas, NV (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-24 Aladdin Theatre, Las Vegas, NV (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-25 Henry Levitt Arena, Wichita, KS (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-26 Pershing Auditorium, Lincoln, NE (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-28 Municipal Auditorium, Austin, TX (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-29 Lloyd Noble Center, Norman, OK (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-11-30 Tarrant County Convention Center, Fort Worth, TX (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-12-01 The Summit, Houston, TX (Opening for Boz Scaggs)
- 1977-12-12 Paradise Theater, Boston, MA
- 1977-12-15 My Father's Place, Roslyn, NY
- 1977-12-17 Capitol Theater, Passaic, NJ
- 1977-11-18 The Cellar Door, Washington, DC
- 1977-11-19 The Cellar Door, Washington, DC
- 1977-12-20 The Bottom Line, New York, NY
- 1977-12-21 The Bijou Cafe, Philadelphia, PA (2 shows)
- 1977-12-23 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA
- 1977-12-24 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA
- 1977-12-27 Old Waldorf, San Francisco, CA (2 shows)
- 1977-12-28 Old Waldorf, San Francisco, CA (2 shows)

- 1978-02-00 Soundstage (TV) (Aired February 23)
- 1978-02-00 The Midnight Special, Burbank, CA (TV) (Aired February 10)
- 1978-02-03 Ivanhoe, Chicago, IL
- 1978-02-04 Electric Ballroom, Milwaukee, WI
- 1978-02-08 Golden Bear, Huntington Beach, CA
- 1978-02-10 La Paloma Theater, Encinitas, CA
- 1978-02-12 Keystone, Palo Alto, CA
- 1978-02-13 Keystone, Berkeley, CA
- 1978-02-14 Catalyst, Santa Cruz, CA (CANCELLED)
- 1978-02-17 Freeborn Hall, University of California, Davis, CA
- 1978-02-18 Santa Rosa High School Auditorium, Santa Rosa, CA (CANCELLED)
- 1978-02-18 Rio Theater, Rodeo, CA
- 1978-02-19 Civic Auditorium, Santa Monica, CA (Opening for the Charlie Daniels Band)
- 1978-02-20 Celebrity Theatre, Phoenix, AZ (Opening for the Charlie Daniels Band)
- 1978-02-23 Ben H. Lewis Hall, Riverside, CA (Opening for the Charlie Daniels Band)
- 1978-02-25 Winterland, San Francisco, CA (Opening for the Charlie Daniels Band)
- 1978-03-01 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA (2 shows)
- 1978-05-11 Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan
- 1978-05-12 Nakano Sunplaza, Tokyo, Japan
- 1978-05-13 Shibuya Kokaido, Tokyo, Japan
- 1978-09-20 Dick Clark's Live Wednesday (TV)
- 1978-10-13 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA (2 shows)
- 1978-11-04 Leroy Theatre, Pawtucket, RI (Opening for Al Stewart)
- 1978-11-21 Golden Bear, Huntington Beach, CA
- 1978-11-24 Coconut Grove Ballroom, Santa Cruz, CA
- 1978-11-25 Rio Theater, Rodeo, CA (2 shows)
- 1978-11-26 Old Waldorf, San Francisco, CA
- 1978-11-27 Old Waldorf, San Francisco, CA
- 1978-11-28 Catamaran Hotel, San Diego, CA (2 shows)
- 1978-11-29 Raincross Square, Riverside, CA
- 1978-11-30 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA
- 1978-12-01 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA
- 1978-12-02 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA
- 1978-12-03 The Roxy, Los Angeles, CA

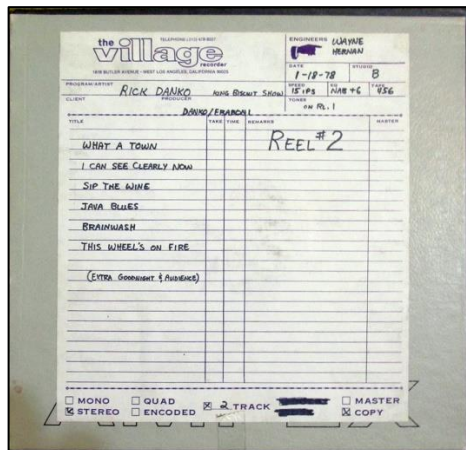
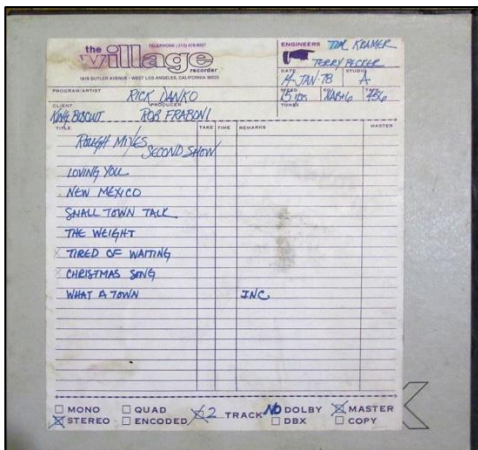


Cash Box/ February 25, 1978

... While down in Orange County for a show at the Huntington Beach Golden Bear, Rick Danko was joined on stage by fellow Band member **Levon Helm**, who helped Rick on a rousing version of the Band classic "The Weight."



With Bonnie Raitt at the Old Waldorf, San Francisco, December 1978



Recording from the Bottom Line, December 1977 broadcast on the King Biscuit Flower Hour in 1978.



What are you doing now that "The Last Waltz" is over?



Eddie, why don't you--?



- Just making music, you know.
- Oh, yeah.



Trying to stay busy, man.



-It's good.
-It's healthy.



Arista in Expansion; Six Artists Signed

By BARRY TAYLOR

NEW YORK — A "major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.

At an informal press conference held by Clive Davis in his office at the Arista Building, it was disclosed that the label has acquired Alan Parsons, Rick Danko, Mandrill, Don McLean, Randy Edelman and the Hudson Brothers.

Davis opened the meeting by citing the number of new artists the label has successfully broken in its first two years of existence and how its interest in launching long-term careers has drawn "ar-

(Continued on page 18)

Arista Expansion, New Signings

(Continued from page 5)

tists of quality and distinction" to Arista. Davis pointed out that the label's recent acquisitions (which include Lou Reed and the Kinks) are not indicative of any "wholesale signings of artists" but rather the result of "almost a year's work in attracting to Arista the type of artists whose careers are very much ahead of them."

Alan Parsons, a noted engineer and producer, will concentrate on producing his own records which will be concept works along the lines of "Tales of Mystery and Imagination." Rick Danko will embark on a career as a solo artist in addition to his recordings with the Band. Davis quoted an article in Melody Maker stating that Danko is "gaining steam as the major component in the structure (of the Band) and a solo album will prove the point."

Mandrill

Mandrill is a group with album sales "consistently in the 150,000 to 200,000 unit range" and were described by Davis as "the one group equipped to go after the audience of Earth, Wind & Fire."

Don McLean

Don McLean and Randy Edelman are a couple of singer/songwriters joining the label. McLean is known for songs such as "American Pie," "Vincent" and "And I Love You So." According to Davis, "he has only just started." Edelman is represented

Steckler and secretary/treasurer Sid Feller as the Academy's national officers.

by a song, "Weekend In New England," on the new Barry Manilow album and has recently had a European hit with a re-make of "Concrete and Clay."

Hudson Brothers

The Hudson Brothers' first record for Arista will be produced by Lambert and Potter. The group's television series will return to the tube on Saturday mornings in the fall.

"Add the Kinks and Lou Reed to these artists and you can get some idea of the kind of major expansion at Arista," said Davis. He claims that the rash of signings do not mark a trend but rather a "happenstance" and the "newly acquired artists alone could comprise a new record company."

The press conference was concluded with the announcement that Barry Manilow, whose total album sales during the past year and a half are approaching three million units, has been re-signed to Arista to a long term exclusive contract.



RICK DANKO

Promotion & Production Office
P. O. Box 49035
Los Angeles, Ca. 90049
(213) 820-7141/826-4683
Contact: Sepp Donahower

Artist Touring Company
8380 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, Ca. 90069
(213) 655-3632
Contact: Richard Halem

While You Were On Vacation— WE MOVED!



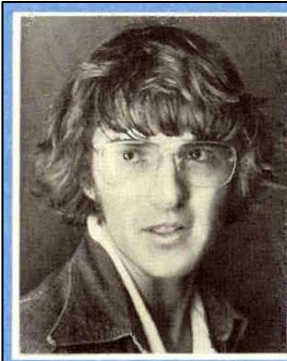
Our new home.
The Arista Records Building
6 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019
(212) 489-7400

And Kept Moving... And Moving!

Last year these artists each achieved world-wide album sales from 200,000 to more than 2,500,000!

Barry Manilow "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.	Melissa Manchester "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.	Alan Parsons "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.	Lou Reed "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.
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Gil Scott Heron "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.	The Breckers "A major expansion" was announced last week at Arista with the addition to the label of six new artists, marking a move to "a new level of market penetration." In addition, it was reported that Barry Manilow has been signed to a new long-term contract.	All Now On Arista Records	

Arista industry ad, September 1976



RICK DANKO

Having been a star among a firmament of stars, he will emerge from The Band as a major new figure in contemporary music.

PRESS RELEASE

ARISTA RECORDS, INC.
ARISTA BUILDING
6 WEST 57 STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019



October

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARISTA SOLO ALBUM AND NATIONAL TOUR SCHEDULED FOR RICK DANKO

Rick Danko, former vocalist, bass player and composer for The Band, will be releasing his first, eponymous album for Arista Records in November. All the material on the LP is Danko-composed, either alone or in collaboration, including the frequently recorded Danko-Bobby Charles song "Small Town Talk." Among the musicians making guest appearances are Ron Wood, Eric Clapton, Doug Sahn, Blondie Chaplin, Richard Manuel, Garth Hudson, Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson.

This is the solo debut for Danko, who was a lead singer on, and had a hand in writing, many of The Band's best-loved cuts including "Stage Fright," "This Wheel's On Fire," "Life Is a Carnival," "The Weight" and "Baby Don't Do It."

Coinciding with the release of *Rick Danko* will be a national club tour with Danko leading a seven-member band also consisting of guitarists Michael DeTemple and Terry Danko, drummer Denny Seiwell, Walt Richmond on piano, Jim Gordon on organ, and Jerry Peterson on saxophones.

What A Spring Story!

First Barry Anderson breaks all industry records with an unprecedented achievement. Two of his albums go double platinum the same week!

Next Joseph Werners bursts on the scene with a smash hit single, "Right Time Of The Night," and her beautiful debut Arista album becomes one of the best-sellers by a new artist this year.

Then The Heads are launched to new heights of international stardom with a remarkable Arista debut "Sleepwalkers," their biggest selling album in years, being hailed worldwide as a classic.

And then Wesley Bell brings his new band to Arista and immediately explodes with his most exciting album ever, winning raves that herald his return to southern rock supremacy.

And look what's coming in the next four weeks!

GRIEFFUL DEED
The Arista debut by the Central Coast, Torrance, California, rock group, "Griefful Deed," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

ERIC CARMEAN
ERIC CARMEAN'S SECOND ALBUM, "ERIC CARMEAN'S SECOND ALBUM," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

THE ALPHA PROJECT
The Arista debut by the Los Angeles, California, rock group, "The Alpha Project," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

OUTLAWS
With the debut album, "Outlaws," the California rock group is ready to make an impact on the scene. The album is expected to be a major rock release to come in years.

Lily Tomlin
Lily Tomlin's second Arista album, "Lily Tomlin," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

RICK DANKO
The eagerly anticipated solo debut by Rick Danko, "Rick Danko," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

MARY PATTON INC.
Mary Patton's second Arista album, "Mary Patton Inc.," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

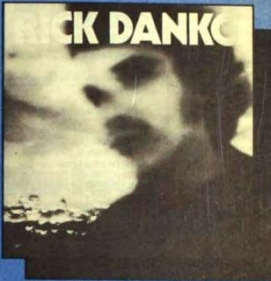
BRITNEY BOLLERS
Britney Bollers' second Arista album, "Britney Bollers," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

REVEREND & THE MIGHTY
Reverend & The Mighty's second Arista album, "Reverend & The Mighty," will appear before the album is even released. The band's debut album is a major rock release to come in years.

ARISTA RECORDS
An unprecedented show of strength from today's fastest growing record company.

Arista industry ad, May 1977

RICK DANKO



The eagerly anticipated solo debut by Rick Danko. Stepping out from The Band, the great unmistakable Danko voice combines with great songs and inspired musicianship to make a truly exceptional album that will establish this major star.

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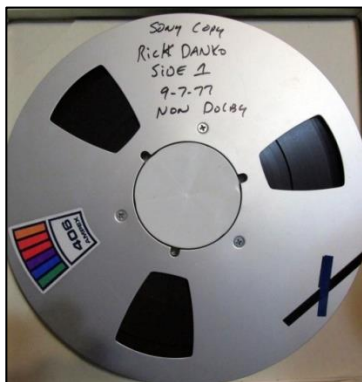
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ARISTA RECORDS
An unprecedented show of strength from today's fastest growing record company.

Arista industry ad, June 1977

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The eagerly anticipated solo debut by Rick Danko. Stepping out from The Band, the great unmistakable Danko voice combines with great songs and inspired musicianship to make a truly exceptional album that will establish this major star.



Allen Zentz, Mastering

ARISTA RECORDS
RICK DANKO
SIDE ONE

What A Town	3:24
Brainwash	2:39
New Mexico	4:00
Tired Of Waiting	2:16
Sip The Wine	4:45
	17:15

15 IPS 2 TRACK EQ STEREO COPY
NON DOLBY - TONES AT HEAD

Sony Copy
9-7-77

6255 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, Ca. 90028

RECORD WORLD OCTOBER 8, 1977

15 From Arista

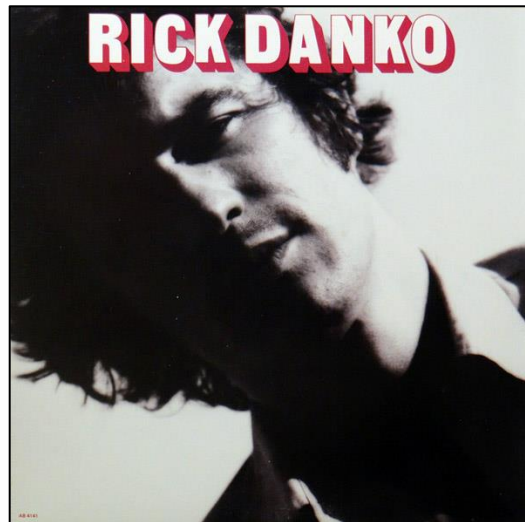
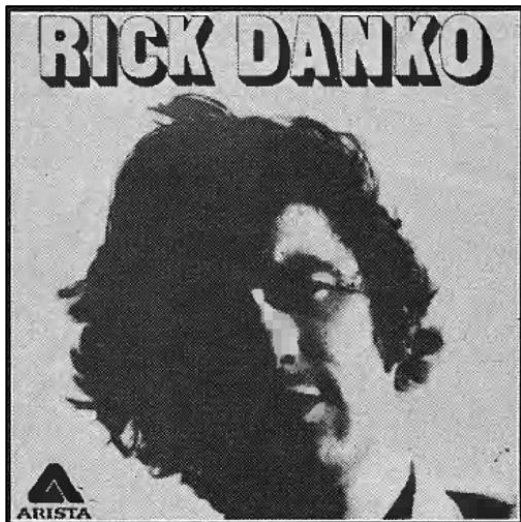
NEW YORK — Arista Records will release 15 albums during October, including the first two under the Arista-Passport distribution deal, as well as several new collections on the Savoy and Freedom labels.

"The Bay City Rollers' Greatest Hits," with 10 songs, heads the release. Lily Tomlin's "On Stage," Rick Danko's solo debut, Don McLean's "Prime Time," Mandrill's "We Are One" and the debut album from Baby Grand are also due.

Also in the release will be "The Muppet Show," "Wings Of Love" by Nova, Bob Weir's first solo lp for the label, and, on Passport, Brand X's "Livestock" and "Intergalactic Touring Band."

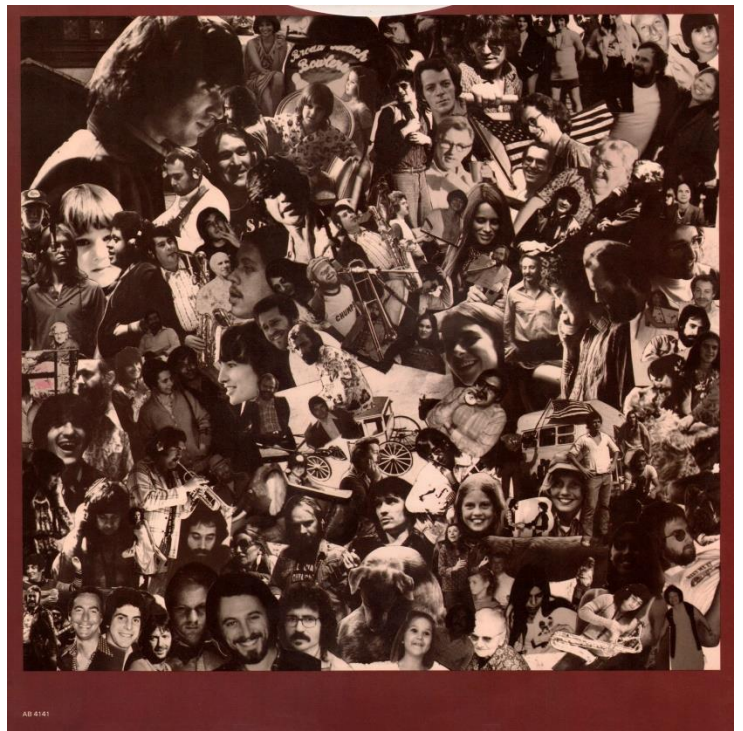
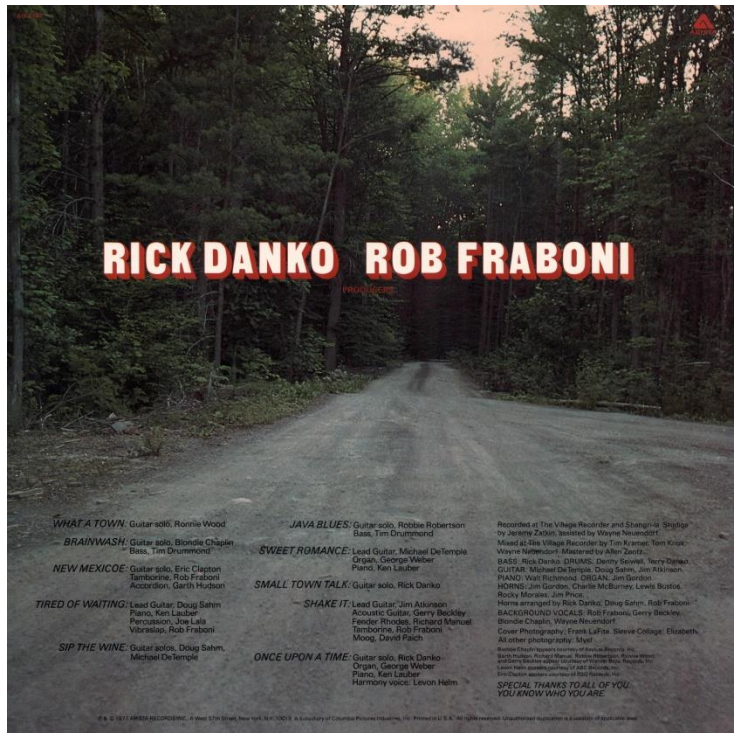
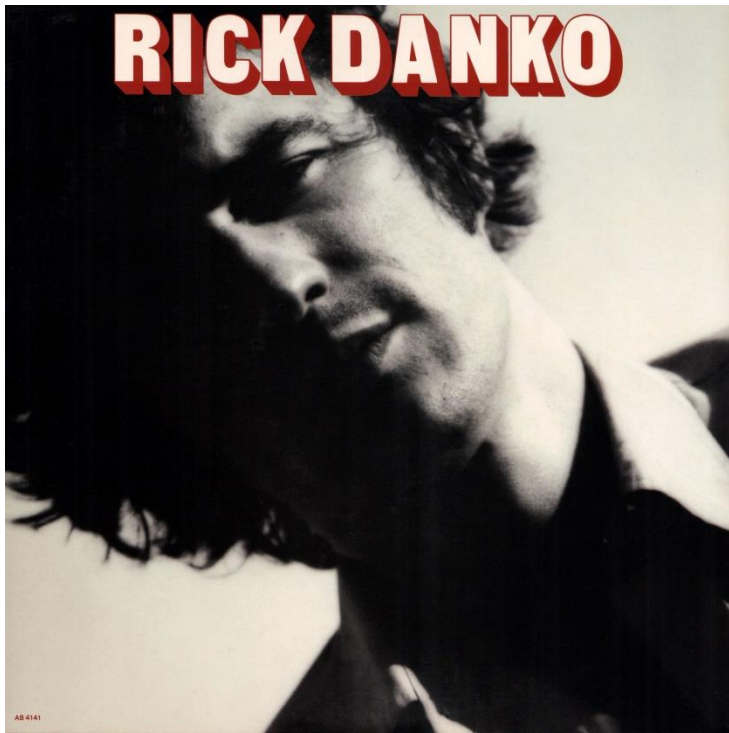
Mike Mainieri's "Love Play," Larry Coryell and Steve Khan's "Two For The Road," the Headhunters' "Straight From The Gate" and Harvey Mason's "Funk In A Mason Jar" represents Arista's progressive releases.

On the Savoy and Freedom labels, the month will see "Kenny Clarke Meets The Detroit Jazzmen," "Mirage" by Art Blakely, Charles Mingus' "Jazz Workshop," Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray's "The Hunt," a Joe Turner collection entitled "Have No Fear, Joe Is Here," volume two of the anthology "The Changing Face Of Harlem," a new lp from Miroslav Vitous, Anthony Braxton's "The Complete Braxton," Mal Waldron's "Signals," Stefan Grappelli's "Parisian Throughfare," Hampton Hawes' "I Little Copenhagen Night Music," "Diamond Express" by South Africa's Dudu Pukwana, and "Whisper Of Dharma" by the Human Arts Ensemble and C. Bobo Shaw.



Cashbox/November 6, 1976
... If you missed **The Band** on **Saturday Night Live**, well, that was probably your last chance. They did four songs, including the new single "Georgia On My Mind" ...

... Rick Danko working on his Arista LP with **Rick's Rendezvous**, a back-up group that includes his brother. The backing band just might be signing with **RSO** ...



WHAT A TOWN: Guitar solo, Ronnie Wood

BRAINWASH: Guitar solo, Blondie Chaplin
Bass, Tim Drummond

NEW MEXICOE: Guitar solo, Eric Clapton
Tamborine, Rob Fraboni
Accordion, Garth Hudson

TIRED OF WAITING: Lead Guitar, Doug Sahn
Piano, Ken Lauber
Percussion, Joe Lala
Vibraslap, Rob Fraboni

SIP THE WINE: Guitar solos, Doug Sahn,
Michael DeTemple

JAVA BLUES: Guitar solo, Robbie Robertson
Bass, Tim Drummond

SWEET ROMANCE: Lead Guitar, Michael DeTemple
Organ, George Weber
Piano, Ken Lauber

SMALL TOWN TALK: Guitar solo, Rick Danko

SHAKE IT: Lead Guitar, Jim Atkinson
Acoustic Guitar, Gerry Beckley
Fender Rhodes, Richard Manuel
Tamborine, Rob Fraboni
Moog, David Paich

ONCE UPON A TIME: Guitar solo, Rick Danko
Organ, George Weber
Piano, Ken Lauber
Harmony voice: Levon Helm


Recorded at The Village Recorder and Shangri-la Studios by Jeremy Zarkin, assisted by Wayne Neuenendorf.
Mixed at The Village Recorder by Tim Kramer, Tom Knox, Wayne Neuenendorf. Mastered by Allen Zentz.
BASS: Rick Danko. DRUMS: Denny Seiwell, Terry Danko.
GUITAR: Michael DeTemple, Doug Sahn, Jim Atkinson.
PIANO: Walt Richmond. ORGAN: Jim Gordon.
HORNS: Jim Gordon, Charlie McBurney, Lewis Bustos, Rocky Morales, Jim Price.
Horns arranged by Rick Danko, Doug Sahn, Rob Fraboni.
BACKGROUND VOCALS: Rob Fraboni, Gerry Beckley, Blondie Chaplin, Wayne Neuenendorf.
Cover Photography: Frank LaFite. Sleeve Collage: Elizabeth. All other photography: Myle.

Blondie Chaplin appears courtesy of Asylum Records, Inc.
Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson, Ronnie Wood, and Gerry Beckley appear courtesy of Warner Bros. Records, Inc.
Levon Helm appears courtesy of ABC Records, Inc.
Eric Clapton appears courtesy of RSO Records, Inc.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF YOU.
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE.**

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Rick Danko. A great name in American music.




RICK DANKO Rick Danko. The name is familiar. And his voice is unmistakable. The incomparable singer and bassist from The Band has brought together old friends and special guest artists to record the most exciting music of his career. His own, Rick Danko's new album marks the beginning of a whole new chapter in a great American tradition.

"The songs on Danko's debut album capture the apocalyptic mysticism that was at the heart of The Band's greatest music as well as anything the old group has done in years. Danko co-wrote 'This Wheel's On Fire' with Bob Dylan, and the best material here is worthy of comparison with that masterpiece."

—John Rockwell, *New York Times* II, 10/77

"Rick Danko.
Everything that came before was leading up to this.
On Arista Records and Tapes."




Once you get a taste of Rick Danko you'll never get enough.

Rick Danko has the gift of making people respond whether they want to or not. And they love him for it. With sweatshirt dripping he performs one song after another, giving them everything he's got. And then some. But the audience refuses to let him leave the stage. They always want more. They can't get enough. That's his gift.

That same energy and drive is what makes his new album special and makes more stations across the country add it every day.

Once you get a taste of Rick you'll want all you can get.

"The songs on Danko's debut album capture the apocalyptic mysticism that was at the heart of the Band's greatest music as well as anything the old group has done in years. Danko co-wrote 'This Wheel's On Fire' with Bob Dylan, and the best material here is worthy of comparison with that masterpiece."

NY TIMES, 11/11/77
—John Rockwell

"Danko and his band are a cause for celebration."

"At the Bottom Line someone at one of the tables shouted out, 'play anything!' It didn't matter what it was. It was worth hearing."

NEW YORK POST, 12/20/77

"Rick Danko is moving, he's finally being himself, and he's delighted being his own boss."

VILLAGE VOICE, 12/19/77
—Ken Tucker

"Rick Danko comes up a winner on his first solo LP."

LIVELY ARTS, 12/2

"The vocal urgency of his singing is as distinctive now as it was on 'This Wheel's on Fire'."

CHRONICLE, by Dale Adamson



Rick Danko. On Arista Records.

Producers: Rick Danko and Bob Fraboni

アメリカン・ロックの最高峰ザ・バンドの名ベジストとして活躍してきたリック・ダンコ。初のソロ・アルバムからのシングルカットはロニー・ワットがリード・ギターでゲスト出演!!

IER-20427 STEREO

ホワット・ア・タウン

WHAT A TOWN

来日記念盤



リック・ダンコ
[歌+演奏] RICK DANKO
[SIDE B] シェイク・イット SHAKE IT

¥600

What A Town / Shake It - Japan

JANUARY 21, 1978, BILLBOARD

First Time Around

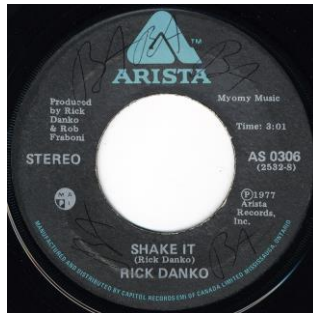
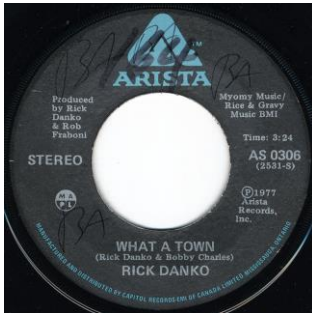
RICK DANKO—What A Town (3:24); producers: Rick Danko, Rob Fraboni, writers: Rick Danko, Bobby Charles, publishers: Myomy Music/Rice & Gravy, BMI, Arista AS0306. Ex-Band member Danko presents a Band-like sound since he sang lead vocals on many of the group's songs. This solo effort features that deep, identifiable voice over a fiery rhythm section that has a country rick feel to it.

MARCH 25, 1978, BILLBOARD

recommended

RICK DANKO—Java Blues (2:46); producers: Rick Danko, Rob Fraboni, writers: Rick Danko, Bobby Charles, publisher: Myomy, BMI, Arista AS0320

Picks—a top 30 chart tune in the opinion of the review panel which voted for the selections released this week; recommended—a tune predicted to land on the Hot 100 between 31 and 100. Review editor: Ed Harrison.



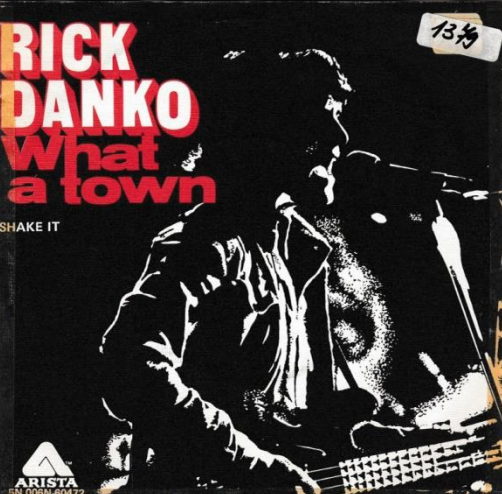
What A Town / Shake It - Canada

139

RICK DANKO

What a town

SHAKE IT



ARISTA
BN 009N-60472

What A Town / Shake It - Holland



What A Town / Shake It - UK

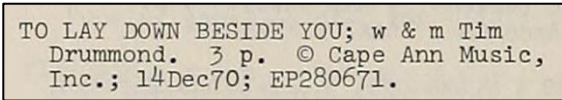


Java Blues / Shake It - USA

I Want To Lay Down Beside You aka Sip The Wine...

1970

Copyrighted as "To Lay Down Beside You"
Words & music by Tim Drummond,
© Cape Ann Music, Inc.

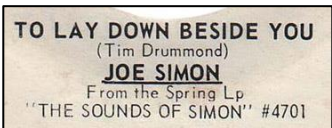


Catalog of Copyright Entries, 1970

1971

Joe Simon

LP: *The Sounds of Simon*
(Spring Records, SPR 4701)
7": *To Lay Down Beside You / Help Me Make It Through The Night*
(Spring Records, SPR 113)



1971

Esther Phillips

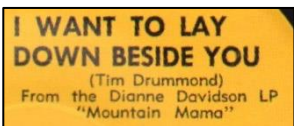
LP: *From A Whisper To A Scream* (Kudu, KU 05)



1972

Dianne Davidson

LP: *Mountain Mama*
(Janus Records, JLS 3048)
7": *Ain't Gonna Be Treated This Way / I Want To Lay Down Beside You*
(Janus Records, J 204)
Tim Drummond plays bass on this version.



1972

Tracy Nelson / Mother Earth

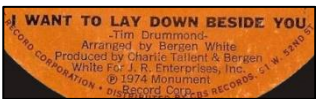
LP: *Tracy Nelson / Mother Earth*
(Reprise Records, MS 2054)



1974

Terri Lane

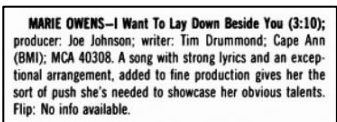
7": *I Want To Lay Down Beside You / Aunt Katie* (Monument, ZS7 8598)



1974

Marie Owens

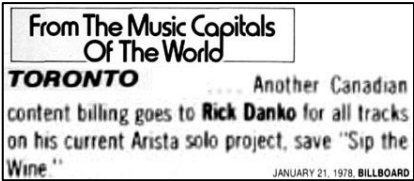
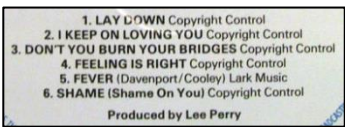
7": *I Want To Lay Down Beside You / Broken Wings* (MCA, 40308)



1975-76

Susan Cadogan

LP: *Sexy Suzy* (Upsetter, UP121 (1975)
LP: *Susan Cadogan* (Trojan Records, TRLS 122) (1976)
as "*Lay Down*"



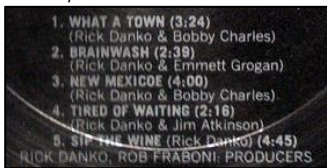
1977

Rick Danko

LP: *Rick Danko* (Arista, AB 4141)
as "*Sip The Wine*"



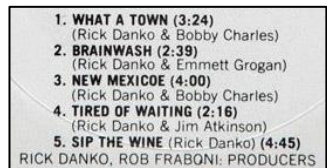
US label variant, song credited to Tim Drummond



US label variant, song credited to Rick Danko



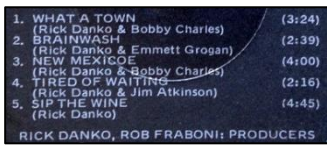
US label variant, song credited to Rick Danko



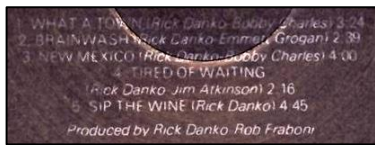
US promo label, song credited to Rick Danko



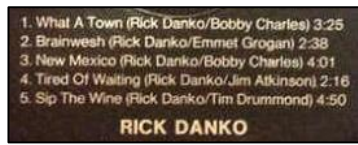
Canada label variant, song credited to Tim Drummond



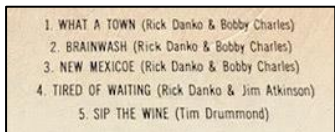
Canada label variant, song credited to Rick Danko



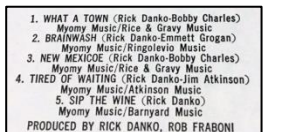
Holland label, song credited to Tim Drummond



Germany label, song credited to Rick Danko/Tim Drummond



Japan label, song credited to Tim Drummond



Japan promo label, song credited to Rick Danko



UK label, song credited to Rick Danko

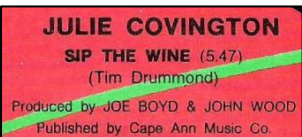


UK reissue label, song credited to Rick Danko

1978

Julie Covington

LP: *Julie Covington* (Virgin, V2107)
as "*Sip The Wine*"



Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars
ABC AA-1017

Rick Danko
Arista AB 4141

By Kit Rachlis

THE BAND NEVER did take much stock in garishness, so it's not surprising that Levon Helm and Rick Danko would introduce their first solo albums with humility and sobriety more akin to a Sunday-morning service than a Saturday-night session. And while it was impossible to imagine the Band without one of its members, it was equally fruitless to isolate any one of them as the linchpin to the sound.

Levon Helm's response to being on his own is as idealistic as the Band's original intentions. The RCO All-Stars are no publicist's exaggeration. Helm has formed a band that on paper, at least, ought to lead the division, boasting R&B greater at almost every position (Booker T. Jones, Duck Dunn, Steve Cropper, Fred Carter Jr., Dr. John, Paul Butterfield and a four-piece horn section that includes Howard Johnson). Unlike most such gatherings, the group goes after and actually achieves an ensemble sound—no grandstanding, no egos flashing. In the best R&B tradition, they emphasize fills over solos, which are kept short and to the point. Section work is precise, the choice of covers imaginative.

Yet none of it seems to mean much. In aiming to be a cohesive band, rather than a collection of hotshots, the All-Stars leave out exactly those elements that make R&B and rock & roll exciting—humor, tension, exuberance and drama. The band behaves as if it were at a formal dinner party. The music sounds decorous and polite. Helm and the rest deliver "Milk Cow Boogie" with all the flair of the postman bringing in the morning mail, and Berry's wonderfully eerie "Havana Moon" is about as exotic as a Halloween trinket. Before this album appeared, nobody could have convinced me that the All-Stars wouldn't make this year's play-offs. But at this point, they're struggling to reach .500.

Danko, too, has employed a number of name players (Eric Clapton, Doug Sahn, Tim Drummond and all of the Band, none of whom appears on the same cut) but primarily as designated hitters, relying instead on an anonymous, more flexible crew for his starting lineup. And there's no question whose record this is. Danko's cracked country voice dominates. The sound, C&W tinged with the blues, is a perfect mirror for the faith and fatalism that war in Danko's best songs. Solos snap and snarl at each other; the rhythm section swirls. Unlike Helm, Danko (along with Bobby Charles) has written almost the entire album. The modesty of his lyrics and the passion of his tone would make this record endearing if it weren't for its understated despair. Danko seems to be fighting for his identity here and he's not sure he's winning. The love songs (especially "Sip the Wine" and "Sweet Romance") rank with anything the Band has done in years, and the rockers ("Brainwash," in particular) jump with an energy I once thought the Band had completely lost. There are some throwaways here ("What a Town" and a curiously offhand version of "Small Town Talk"), but Danko has made a record on which modesty is not an excuse for failure.



Rick Danko & Levon Helm: Two Band Members Go Solo

by Sam Sutherland

With the Band dismantled as a touring unit and recording plans nebulous at best, the arrival of the first two solo albums from its members tests not only the durability of the quintet's legend, but several assumptions about its evolution. Its emergence in the progressive rock milieu of the late Sixties challenged a number of then-dominant trends, not the least of which was the rock star system. In contrast to its more self-conscious peers, the Band had no

stars; its strength emanated instead from a true ensemble approach that sounded revelatory alongside the monolithic dynamics and extended solos of the day. Its five principals weren't paragons of hipness, but maverick adherents to an older tradition that prized experience as much as the energy of youth.

If the group had no front man, its ranks did suggest a subtler hierarchy—at least to critics. Robbie Robertson rarely sang more than a few lines of backing

harmony, and his brilliance as a guitarist was compressed in brief but bracing solos and delicate ornamental comments on his partners' playing. But the group's thematic concerns and coherence were generally attributed to him. It was Robertson the songwriter who supplied the Band's historical sensibility and its recurrent theme: the vanishing innocence and vitality of America.

That bassist Rick Danko and drummer Levon Helm should embark on separate solo careers challenges the legend of Robertson's supposed control over the ensemble's mood and message. Both albums allude directly to the original arranging style as well as its thematic perspective: it is the degree of variation from that style that sheds new light on how actively each musician contributed to the original process. Both "Rick Danko" and "Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars" succeed as credible extensions of their respective authors' personalities and further suggest that the Band's seminal arranging approach and song sense were indeed arrived at collectively. At the same time, neither set quite approaches the scope or intelligence of Robertson's best songs as performed by the original quintet.

In Helm's case, that gap is less obvious because he isn't really trying to reincarnate the earlier style. While he has co-written one song, he isn't a songwriter, and his choices as an interpreter reveal a much more traditional range of interests than either Danko's or Robertson's. The songs are evenly divided between originals by members of the All-Stars and vintage r&b. And it is the down-home wryness and the central topic—romance in the real world—that unify the material. Without the burden of a more serious objective, Helm and the All-Stars—Booker T. and the MGs, a crack horn session, Mac Rebennack's keyboards, Paul Butterfield's chugging harmonica, and Helm's spare, snappy drumming—can focus on playing. The results are predictably close to the Band's later recordings, which likewise balanced concise rhythm arrangements against crisp horn parts, but the overall feel is more relaxed and less mannered. Helm's affable vocals hold the session together without obscuring the band's playing. And the MGs sound particularly tight and energetic as the foundation, working in the classic Memphis style they helped create a decade ago, rather than in the elaborately modernized variants used since their reformation. On the best songs—Rebennack's *Washer Woman*, Helm's *Blues So Bad*, Earl King's *Sing, Sing, Sing*, and Chuck Berry's lesser known and atypical mood piece *Havana Moon*—the confluence of the playing more than compensates for the slightness of the material's overall content.

Danko, on the other hand, strives for a more explicit continuation of the old group's style. And while his best songs cut deeper than Helm's, capturing the taut, nearly hysterical energy of Danko's best performances in the Band, his lapses are more jarring. The personnel varies more from song to song than on Helm's set, yet a common reverence for the Band's trademarks inhibits marked stylistic divergence: As Eric Clapton, Ronnie Wood, Doug Sahn, and Blondie Chaplin switch off on lead guitar, each subordinates his own style to follow the Robertson primer. When Robertson himself appears in that capacity, the difference is obvious. On *Java Blues*, a whimsical rocker whose tone undercuts Danko's anguished singing to comic effect, he drives the session harder and faster than is done at any other point on the album. His wonderfully wired, crackling lead playing is the perfect illustration of the song's feverish worship of the dread toxin, and when Danko desperately endorses "the only pick-me-up that's here to stay," those razor-edged guitar lines are convincing testimony that coffee is the ultimate drug. As a result, a track that likely started as a throwaway becomes the LP's best.

Danko's power as a vocalist and some excellent songwriting by Bobby Charles and Emmett Grogan provide other highlights on *What a Town*, *Tired of Waiting*, and *New Mexicoe* (sic). The first captures some of the Band's early ebullience; the latter two share the restlessness of much of Robertson's writing and Danko's early collaborations with Bob Dylan. A separate identity emerges on those two cuts, one less preoccupied with generational problems and more with private conflicts of the spirit. And on *Brainwash*, another track that gradually establishes a convincing desperation, Danko lends a certain fractured surrealism to its imagery, despite a somewhat awkward lyric.

Yet those peaks only reinforce the album's overall reliance on the Band's master plan. Whether or not he is trying to compete with those earlier records, Danko's current solo style is in danger of being overshadowed by his past association. While the best songs partially justify the risk, Helm succeeds in separating himself more effectively from the past at the cost of a thematic gravity he appears to care little about.

Rick Danko. Rick Danko, Rob Fraboni, producers. *Arista AB 4141, \$7.98.* *Tape: ●● ATC 4141, ●● AT 8 4141, \$7.98.*

Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars. Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars, producers. *ABC AA 1017, \$7.98.* *Tape: ●● 5020 1017, ●● 8020 1017, \$7.95.*



Levon Helm: stylistic distinction



Rick Danko: too close to the past

PLAYBACK
BY JOEL MCNALLY

The Many Faces Of The Band

One of the best things that many musical groups do is break up. That may seem gratuitously harsh, but anyone who knows that I am a neat guy knows that it is meant only in the nicest possible sense.

There are any number of groups that regularly break up in the most creative of ways. It is a surefire way to get into Rolling Stone. Sort of like showing up at a party with Bianca Jagger.

It could be argued that the break up of the Byrds increased the group's influence on popular music as the various members scattered and formed myriad soft rock groups throughout the '60s and '70s. There were so many bands containing former Byrds that many younger people suspected that the Byrds were the Mormon Tabernacle Choir recording under an assumed name.

Something similarly healthy seems to be happening with what used to be The Band. Not that The Band has actually broken up, mind you. It just sort of has. (I told you these things get tricky.)

Just about a year ago, The Band played its "Last Waltz" in San Francisco. They gave a spectacular farewell concert accompanied by

Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, Neil Young, Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters and even the legendary Neil Diamond.

Although the members of The Band haven't ruled out recording together again sometime in the future, they say they will never tour again—as a group. (Doctor, will I ever be able to tour again as a group?)

Now here comes the part where popular music benefits. Instead of another Band album, we now have the first two new albums by Band members pursuing their own musical interests. They are by newly formed congregations of musicians, one brought together by bass player Rick Danko and the other by drummer Levon Helm.

Not only that, but with the album "Rick Danko" (Arista) you also get Eric Clapton, Ronnie Wood, Doug Sahn, Gerry Beckley and all the other members of The Band: Robbie Robertson, Richard Manuel, Garth Hudson and Helm. And on "Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars" (ABC), you get some of the best studio musicians in the business, including Mac Rebennack A.K.A. Dr. John, Booker T. Jones and Paul Butterfield

as well as Robertson and Hudson.

Clearly between the two albums there are more good musicians and more good music than is usually found in, say, the Top 80.

Of the two, the Danko album will probably be more satisfying to Band fans. It is less of a departure. The first three cuts, "What a Town," "Brainwash" and "New Mexicoe" have some of the energy, musical textures and much the same vocal sound that Danko brought to some of The Band's best numbers.

The only real complaint is that some of the lyrics lay the old meaningfulness on a little thick. The Band used to deal with very humanistic themes too, but in a less obvious way. They never sang a line quite so insipid as: "Whether you're young or old, never let yourself get put on hold."

Levon Helm's album should send blues fans into that ecstasy that they periodically get sent into.

The album is heavy on the kind of sleaze that makes blues good or bad or whatever it is supposed to be. "Blues So Bad" has a line: "The blues don't burn, they just smoke." That's what Levon and the RCO All-Stars do.

Only Helm Remains



Levon Helm

By DAN GORDON
Journal Staff Writer

WOODSTOCK — In the 1960's, some of the most progressive rock music in the nation came out of Woodstock when Bob Dylan and The Band lived there. Now only Levon Helm, The Band's drummer, remains in this artistic community tucked into the Catskill Mountains.

But Helm is making sure that the music keeps coming.

Helm, one of the premier drummers in the country, is currently working on a solo album which he expects will be completed in the next couple of months. He is recording the album in his Woodstock home — a building constructed in the last three years which is a monument to music.

The house is a large barn-like structure designed in the modern style and built for playing music. On the inside, there is one massive room with just a single partition separating it from the kitchen and Helm's bedroom. Even a philharmonic orchestra could probably squeeze into the barn to play, but the space is effectively broken up because certain sections of the main room are either elevated or sunken.

The main room is filled with instruments and electronic equipment for recording. Outside are decks which can be used by film crews. Helm thinks one of the next steps in the music business is the creation of the video-disc which would produce a video as well as audio presentation from a record album, and Helm wants to be prepared for this possible technological advance.

The building is living proof that times have changed since the days when The Band used to play and record out of a pink ranch house in Saugerties, which was affectionately named The Big Pink. The Band's first album, "The Big Pink" was named after that house.

Despite the improved circumstances brought by a number of gold record albums and tours with The Band, Helm's commitment to music remains the same. The house is usually filled with musicians who either drop in or stay for extended periods in order to play music with Helm.

After 20 years of playing professionally, Helm, 36, is still enthusiastic about his drumming and welcomes any opportunity to sit down with other musicians for a jam session.

"Playing music always seems fresh to me," he said. "Hours go by in no time when I am playing. With music, it is just like going on a trip."

Cutting a solo album is a new endeavor for Helm, but he is not too nervous about the undertaking. The album is the first of three Helm is to record for ABC Records in a contract signed earlier this year.

Helm said he is not sure whether any Band members will be able to play on the album but he will be relying on other performers he has worked with in the past like Paul Butterfield, Fred Carter Jr. and Ronnie Hawkins.

"It's not going to just be a solo album, it is going to be a combination of people playing," he said. "Without a number of talents and ideas working together, the record would lack energy."

Helm said he is still shopping for material to play on the album. But he wants the songs to be good fundamental rockers — which is certainly in the tradition of Band songs. Helm is considering writing some songs although he is not making any promises. He wants the songs to come naturally rather than be forced.

"If a tune starts to grow, I will push it," he said. "I'll just have to see what happens."

The Band will continue to record albums, according to Helm, although no dates for the next release have been set.

The other four members of the Band have moved from Woodstock to Malibu, Calif., but Helm does not anticipate any trouble recording with them despite the great distance separating them.

After almost 15 years of playing with The Band, Helm can safely say, "I know pretty much everything that I would have to do, so there should be no problem."

Although more albums are to come, The Band's touring days are over. In a historic performance at San Francisco's Fillmore West in December, The Band played its final public concert.

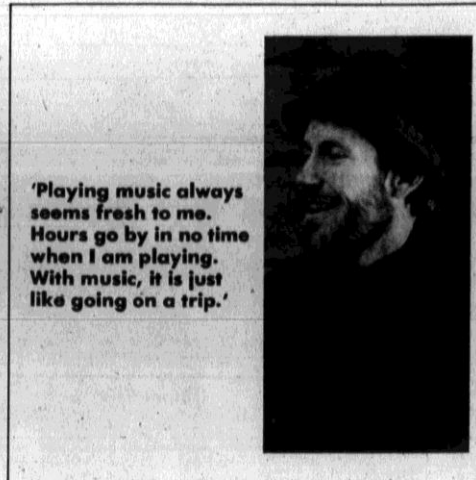
"I hated to see it come down to no more touring," Helm said. "But I can see how some of the fellas felt. They just did not like touring."

Helm enjoys performing too much to object to tours and he plans to give some live concerts after his album is recorded.

"I like playing for people," he said. "If they (the audience) like the music, I sure like playing it for them."

Helm, like the other Band members, does not fit into any rock stereotypes. The Band members have lived and played music in a manner that has defied categorization.

Helm's background might have something to do with this. He was born in Marvell, Arkansas, the son of a farmer. Blues and early rock 'n' roll were popular along the Mississippi Valley and



'Playing music always seems fresh to me. Hours go by in no time when I am playing. With music, it is just like going on a trip.'

Helm grew up listening to T-Bone Walker, Chuck Berry and Ray Charles. As a teenager, he took up the guitar and then the drums.

At 17, Helm joined an Arkansas band named Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. The group would tour in the Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma region and then move to Canada each year. On these Canadian swings, Hawkins gradually recruited four musicians from north of the border — Robbie Robertson, Rich Danko, Garth Hudson, and Richard Manuel. With Helm, they comprised the Hawks. Around 1966, they split from Hawkins and toured the East Coast where they eventually ran into Dylan.

Dylan liked what he heard and asked the Hawks to become his backup band and they moved to Woodstock to record music. The partnership turned out to be a benefit for both parties concerned.

"We helped him and he helped us," Helm said. "But we never aimed to remain his backup group."

In the late 1960's, the Hawks who had by now changed their name to The Band began to record music by themselves. The first album, "The Big Pink" sent shock waves through the rock music world.

The musicianship was taut and powerful with each instrument carrying a distinct sound. Most rock groups had been creating a wall of sound by fusing the instruments together. But The Band emphasized the unique qualities of each instrument yet at the same time managed to work together.

The vocals of the three lead singers — Helm, Manuel and Danko — fit the same description. There was a rough, grainy quality to their singing which brought greater power to the vocals than the smoother, neat harmonies so

popular in rock music largely due to the influence of the Beach Boys. The Band tried to slow down tunes stressing and elongating individual notes rather than speeding the rock tempo into a frenzy like many other groups, Helm said.

While most groups dissolved or changed personnel with time, The Band remained intact.

"We never planned to stay together this long, it just worked out this way," Helm said.

One of the reasons for the group's stability was that its members always subordinated individual interests to attain the best music, Helm said.

"We have had our ups and downs, but we never had anyone try to upstage another," he said. "We always played for what we thought was right."

Occasionally the group hit extended dry spells where no new material would be released for years.

"During those periods, we were always trying to play," Helm said. "But nothing would come up."

The Band tried not to force its material and create something that was unnatural. The music had to be genuine and unpretentious.

Helm's lifestyle seems to follow the same lines as the Band's approach to music. He makes a great effort to be personable with people he works and deals with.

While giving a tour of the new house, Helm makes sure to introduce all the workmen who are making additions onto the building. Anyone arriving at the house is given a warm welcome and is usually asked to stay as long as he wants.

Calling up out of the blue for an interview, this reporter found he was offered a dinner as well as a chance to talk with Helm. When the reporter left, Helm offered an apology for not having played any music and issued an invitation to come back when some of the musicians would be jamming.

The Woodstock setting is well suited to Helm's lifestyle. With the construction of his new house, Helm plans to go no further.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1977

Los Angeles Times CALENDAR

"Rick Danko," Arista AB 4141.
"Levon Helm and the RCO all-Stars," ABC AA-1017.

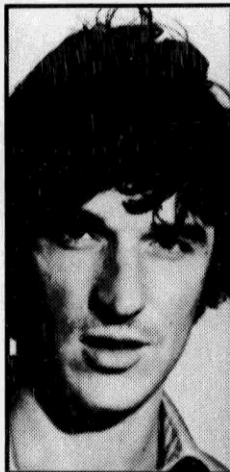
• Nobody should ever blame Rick Danko or Levon Helm for wishing they had never been in the Band. Both Danko and Helm have just released their first solo albums, and their past work with the Band may be their biggest obstacle. Despite occasional highlights, the two albums simply pale when compared to the Band's work.

Until its retirement from touring—and, for a while, from recording—last Thanksgiving, the Band had released seven studio albums, a greatest hits collection, and two live albums. One of the live LPs was with Bob Dylan. Its music was a unique fusion of rock, country, gospel and mountain music with deeply felt, evocative descriptions of America. Many songs were rock-era classics: "The Weight," "The Night they Drove Old Dixie Down," "King Harvest," "Up on Cripple Creek" and "Rag Mama Rag."

Bassist/singer Danko, who will be at the Roxy Friday and Saturday, and drummer/singer Helm were integral parts of this music, and they won't easily rid themselves of the expectations it has created. Echoes of the Band are everywhere on the two solo albums: the Band's Robbie Robertson and Garth Hudson offer unmistakable instrumental passages on two of Danko's songs, and Helm opens his album with "Washer Woman," a song whose chorus is "scrub, mama scrub."

For his debut, Danko wrote or co-wrote all the

On Their Own for the First Time



Rick Danko



Levon Helm

material. From loping, understated ballads to blues-based rockers, much of this material is similar to the Band's. The backing band—which includes Eric Clapton, Ronnie Wood, Doug Sahm and all four Band members—is crisp and proficient throughout.

But Danko's songs just aren't consistently interesting. While nearly every track has a certain appeal, the most compelling feature is too often the instrumental work rather than the songwriting. Blondie Chaplin's guitar work solo in "Brainwash," Robbie Robertson's work in "Java Blues" and Garth Hudson's sensitive organ in "New Mexico," are among the highlights.

Helm's album is even more nondescript. He is assisted by an all-star band including Dr. John, Paul Butterfield, Steve Cropper and Booker T. Jones. The material is largely blues, from standards like "Milk Cow Boogie" to several songs by Band members to a little of Helm's own tunes.

As on "Rick Danko," the execution is more effective than the songs. Helm's howling, drawl voice is in fine shape, and he seems to be having a good time, but we have every right to expect something more challenging and stimulating from an artist of his caliber.

On their own for the first time, both Helm and Danko have lowered their horizons to make congenial good-time music. But it's all too easy to think back on the Band's albums and find countless songs that were congenial and good-time—but also challenging, provocative and absorbing. ●

—STEVE POND

At Woodstock, N.Y.

The Band Is New for Levon Helm

By BUFF BLASS

Of the Gazette Staff
The signing of a personal contract in the music business is cause for celebration, and when Levon Helm, formerly of Springdale, signed a contract with ABC Records January 13 there was a celebration. Held at his production studio, RCO Woodstock at Woodstock, N.Y., the party attracted music people from around the country, as well as local Woodstockers.

Known for his playing and singing with The Band, Levon will now be singing with his own group on the three albums for ABC. Sitting at the head table, Levon signed the contract, then said, "Now we'll let them (ABC) hear what they bought."

With a smiling Jerry Rubenstein, ABC Records Board chairman, seated on the front row, Levon played some of the songs written by his arranger, Henry Glover of Hot Springs. Playing with Levon were Mac Rebennack (Dr. John), Albert Singleton of Newport, formerly of the Cate Brothers, Fred Carter Jr., Billy Jones, Larry Packer and Richard Grand.

Also playing during the evening was Ronnie Hawkins, who played some of the more impressive night spots in Arkansas with Levon in years past. Ronnie was down from Canada for the occasion but has returned to complete work on a new album.

Those who will be sitting in with Levon on his first album

include Paul Butterfield, Howard Johnson and Vassar Clements. John Sebastian, a close friend and neighbor, also has been doing some work with Levon including the theme song for a new comedy western television show.

John and his wife Ceci were among those at the party, and before he played a few tunes, John offered to help chop onions in the kitchen for the steak Tartare. But he backed away saying "I don't think my Gibson (guitar) would like it." While he was overseeing the kitchen crew, Ceci, a professional still photographer, was taking pictures in the studio.

Set up in the studio, or main room of the barn, which is what RCO is, were long tables covered with white cloths and centered with silver candelabra with white tapes. After Levon's first set, guests, including Paul Berry and Mike Bowers of Little Rock, moved to the kitchen to help themselves to the steak Tartare, baked beans, ham, chocolate mousse and English trifle.

There was more music and a lot of dancing, mostly by the Woodstockers who included members of the Shultus family. The Shultuses have been working with Levon for over two years building the barn, which is designed especially for producing video discs.

A huge stone fireplace with nine flues separates the kitchen and office area from the Hall of Flags or studio. Lofts above,

which provide sleeping areas for the musicians, are decorated with flags representing companies, countries, states and organizations. Prominent among them are those from Arkansas.

The studio is set up to provide a relaxed atmosphere for the artists to present their best work before small groups of friends for the filming of the video records.

Forest Murray, director of the film division, said that films of the party will be the background for the first tapes connecting audio and video music at the studio. In the future as RCO develops, Forrest noted that they hope to get into dramatic filming as well as the filming of recording sessions.



Cooking Up Something Special



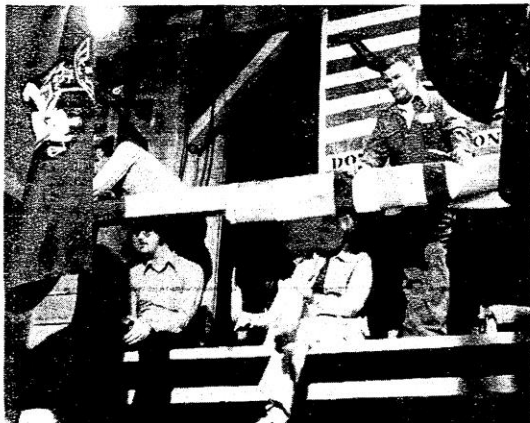
After the Business . . .

ABOVE AND RIGHT: Jerry Rubenstein, left, chairman of the Board of ABC Records, and Levon Helm celebrate their new business venture at RCO Woodstock, N.Y. Over 100 guests attended the party at the studio. At right, Levon plays a few songs for Jerry and friends.

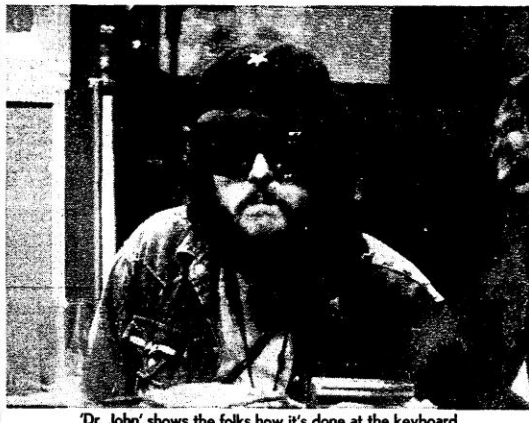
LEFT: Musicians can't help but talk music, party or no party. At left is Billy Jones, one of the guitarists who will be playing on Levon's first album. With him is John Sebastian, formerly of The Lovin' Spoonful.



... Comes the Pleasure



The Shultus family watches the show from a loft.



Dr. John' shows the folks how it's done at the keyboard.



Fred Carter Jr. is ready to play another set.



Ceci and John Sebastian find a quiet corner.

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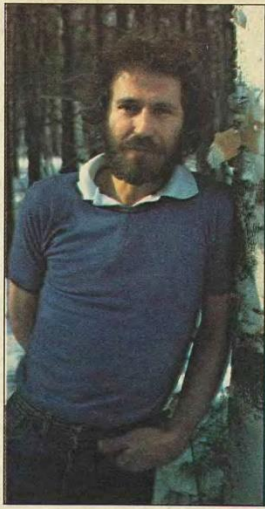
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Levon Helm: getting it all sewn up

By Tom Goldsmith

NEW YORK

IT'S HARD NOT TO BE aware that Levon Helm, the casually snarling Ozark vocalist and drummer for the Band and, more recently, the RCO All-Stars, has great teeth—shiny, clean, symmetrically arrayed across the curves of his upper and lower bites. It's fortunate they look okay (rock stars' teeth rarely are things of orthodontic joy), because Helm is grinning widely. He's delighted to be in a Midtown Manhattan Japanese restaurant, having limo'd down from his wintry Woodstock three-barn

spread with his willowy girlfriend, and he's knocked off a couple of shots of hot saki.

He's even ready to talk a little about the medical problems that wiped out his band's fifty-date tour just as its first LP, *Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars*, shipped late last year. (In addition to Paul Butterfield and Dr. John, the All-Stars include studio legends Steve Cropper, Booker T. Jones, Donald "Duck" Dunn, Fred Carter Jr. and Lou Marini.) "Kidney stones, bladder, prostatitis, all that booshee-it down there," Helm grumbles, as he pours saki from the china carafe into a tiny eyeball-sized cup before knocking another one back.

"A case of runnin' at it too hard. I was getting the [Cont. on 22]

Boston Evening Globe Monday, September 25, 1978

Levon Helm goes solo

By Steve Morse
Globe Staff

"We stubbed our toes as we came out of the gate," says Levon Helm, his voice resonant with an Arkansas twang. "I've never been sick, but I got really sick for the first time in my life, and by the time I got well it was on down the line. We missed a Boston concert, and missed a lot of other places."

Helm, who visited Boston recently in his usual dungaree jacket and baseball cap, was referring to the solo career he began last year after a long association with The Band. He had assembled a group, the RCO All-Stars, who included Paul Butterfield, Doctor John and the "Saturday Night Live" horn section, but his illness short-circuited a tour.

"I've always been able to run my body as much as I wanted to, but she backfired this time and it knocked me out. It was just a lack of sense, from runnin' it too hard and not eatin' right and drinkin' a little too much at the same time. I just got bogged down. Hell, I've been doin' it a long time. All of a sudden I'm 35 goin' on 40 years old and I guess that was some sort of warnin' to me to take it easy."

Helm admits he tried to come back too soon. An important Christmas show in New York, for instance, got bad reviews. It has been an uphill struggle ever since. "We're not as in-demand yet as we'd like to be," he says. "I'd like to get it movin' faster."

The new RCO All-Stars, who just toured Japan but have no Boston date in sight, are now minus Butterfield and Doctor John but still include the Saturday Night Live horns, guitarist Steve Cropper

and bassist Duck Dunn (both of Booker T. and the MG's), and have been bolstered by the addition of the Cates Brothers, Ernie and Earl. "They're my old buddies from Arkansas," says Helm.

That lineup, to say the least, is awesome. "It's supposed to be a musical revue that showcases each of us. Nobody's tryin' to be a front man. There's no star trip," says Helm. "And I'll tell you what we don't do. We don't show up with a makeup man... And none of us wears jewels. What you can count on is that we will start on time, we will be sober and we will rock the audience's butts off."

Helm, in town to plug his new album, "Levon Helm," which again is similar to his work with The Band but with more punch-driven horns, was asked about his old mates in The Band. "The last time I checked they were alive and well, but we don't have any plans to get together other than maybe record some more."

How about The Band's movie, "The Last Waltz," the documentary of its last concert? "To tell you the truth I haven't seen the movie. I've seen cuts of it, but after I finished the concert I was finished with it and didn't keep up with it."

Helm, who says of interviews that "I've never done any of this kind of stuff," did add that he once lived in Boston, for six months during 1973 when, in between Band projects, he studied drums (for the first time formally) at the Berklee College of Music. Did he try to remain incognito?

"No, but I've always kept as low a profile as possible. I've never gone after that big-star bullcrap. I just came down and wanted to learn a little. Nobody bothered me and I didn't bother nobody either."

Levon Helm

[Cont. from 11] RCO LP and tour together, drivin' cross-country and workin' both ends when I got there. We salvaged a couple dates [including one that drew 37,000 fans at the Superdome in New Orleans during Mardi Gras]. The reviews were bad, but I wasn't feeling well and we had no time to rehearse or do proper sound checks. It was just to let people know I was alive. But the Mardi Gras tapes sound terrific. I tell ya one thing, those sumbitches can play, that's for sure."

Helm won't offer much detail about his clinical picture, only that "they can set up a whole operatin' room up there inside ya, that's for damned sure."

Helm, 37, has been spending most of his time at his Woodstock retreat, where there are living quarters and equipment for thirty musicians, twenty-four-track recording facilities and a 16mm filming setup that he'd like to use for video discs someday. He visits his family in Arkansas now and then and clearly keeps up with sports ("Didn't them Razorbacks kick the shee-it outa the Sooners?!"). He's also been to L.A. to "work out a battle plan" to get the RCO album sales moving. (According to his manager, Ray Paret, the album has sold a quarter-million copies, below expectations.) "I'd a liked for it to go faster and bigger, and for these guys to get the recognition they deserve," Helm says. One way will be to tour this spring, he says.

When in L.A., Helm doesn't socialize with his Band cohorts (most of whom live in the Malibu area), unless they're working together. But he does get a chance to see his much-adored children, Ezra, 12, and Amy, 8, who live with his ex-wife.

Aside from medical problems and insufficient tour preparation, manager Paret cites an additional reason for RCO's slow break from the gate: "We have an education problem. People just don't know who these studio guys are, even though they've been around forever." Levon adds that "they played on more gold records than all the rest of 'em put together."

With a record-buying generation of kids who think "Green Onions" is what Mommy puts into the Cuisinart and assume "Wonderful World," "Handy Man" and "Da Doo Ron Ron" are the creations of latter-Seventies white soul stirrers, Paret's clearly on to something. But leave it to Levon to launch a fluidly profane—though thoroughly artful—attack on the current state of rock art. (Helm, at this point in our lengthy dinner,

finally has stopped pouring saki from carafe to cup. Now he's guzzling it straight from the carafe, and keeping two agile, fast-moving waiters weaving around with refills to sustain the flow.)

To Helm, the sound of the Seventies is like being struck inside a mobile home with the Top Forty blues again: "We ain't never played no fruit rock, no punk rock," he says. "We never wore dresses onstage, put on no paint on our faces, blew up no bombs onstage. We didn't suck off snakes onstage; we didn't wear tight pants and big rings. We didn't pee-uke onstage or throw TVs out the windas."

'I'd like to think we got in some good licks and played some music that'll last and be remembered.'

Then, unprovoked, Helm offers a metaphor that resounds so loudly from our centrally placed table that it all but turns the small, quaint restaurant into one of those E.F. Hutton ("everybody listens") TV ads: "The music industry's gotten so it's like Vee-yer-nam. A lotta guys making a lot of money, some guys gettin' cut up, and in five years, ain't much of it even gonna be worth a pinch a shee-it." Given the Band's unerring taste and integrity, its honest failures and its respected place in American musical culture, Helm's growling carries a certain weight.

As for the Band, *The Last Waltz* film—concert footage plus some additional cinema scenes—will be out in mid-April, Helm reports, as will an accompanying triple live LP. There will also be some new Band material (like the *Waltz* LP; it will be a Warners release; Helm's RCO All-Stars record for ABC-Dunhill) in the coming months, but he has no comment on whether the Band will ever tour again.

Helm has plenty to say, though, about the Band's contribution to American music: "Shee-it, we never sold millions and millions of albums but we did try to get a toehold. We did always plan on holdin' out, on makin' music we could put our names on. I'd like to think we never put out any real dogs, and that we never joined up, that we got in some good licks and played some music that'll last and be remembered."

"We're still in the ball game, and that's what's important. Shee-it, ain't none of us retired in Jamaica." ■

Levon Shares Helm

By MARY CAMPBELL
AP Newsfeatures Writer

Drummer Levon Helm doesn't have to be group leader all the time.

"The main thing isn't who drives," he says. "It doesn't mean a lot to me, as long as we get there. I'll take my turn at the wheel and when I get tired, somebody else can drive a while."

Helm has been a leader — there's Levon and the Hawks. And he's remembered as lead singer of the Band. In conversation, he qualifies both.

He has made two records for ABC Records, "Levon Helm and the RCO All Stars" and "Levon Helm." As they finished the first one, doing it by trial and error, Helm says, "Duck Dunn emerged as leader, without elections and without campaigns. And Tom Malone emerged as co-captain, handling horn arrangements."

On the second album, those two told the rest what to do and it went smoother and quicker, Helm says.

The RCO All Stars are some 15 musicians, whose schedules often conflict. But any time about 10 of them can get together, Helm says, they can make an album or go on a tour. Some of the musicians on the first album who were busy and couldn't work on the second may be heard from again on the third.

RCO stands for "our co. (company)," with our pronounced as it is in Arkansas.

Helm is a native of Phillips County, Ark., which is near Memphis. He was a musician on weekends in high school and met Ronnie Hawkins, a native of Huntsville, Ark. "Playing in his band was my first job out of high school. I graduated and hit the road," Helm says.

"By a strange coincidence, Conway Twitty, who is from the southeastern part of Arkansas, had connections with a couple of different nightclub circuits in Canada, so we went there to play. We had three more musicians from Arkansas. Over the years they quit and were replaced by Canadian musicians.

"When the Hawks left Ronnie to try to do something on our own, we called it Levon and the Hawks because I had been with Ronnie the longest and I knew all the club owners. That was never anything important to me; I didn't really enjoy being leader."

There were six or seven of them then, Helm says, but by the time the Hawks became the Band there were five.

"Richard Manuel was always considered by the rest of us as being lead vocalist in the Band. Rick Danko and I were primarily harmony and background singers. In the course of a night's performance we would do four or five tunes each to give Richard a rest and put a little variety into the program.

"As it turned out, after we started to record for Capitol a few years later, the tunes I sang

lead on were the singles most of the time." They included "Up on Cripple Creek," "The Weight," "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down."

"When it came time for a serious song or a more sophisticated melody, Richard was always lead singer. I was the rock 'n' roller of the group."

Helm says he probably enjoyed touring more than the other four in the Band.

"I've gone through those same kind of sleepless times, so I can understand a person getting tired of that particular part of it. But the reward of a night when you've got a crowd to play for always erases any kind of hassle for me. It energizes me. I enjoy it."

He liked "The Last Waltz," the film of the Thanksgiving Day 1976 concert that was the Band's farewell, but he liked the concert better. He's sorry any of the performances were cut from the movie in favor of reminiscences by the Band. Bob Dylan, Ronnie Hawkins, Joni Mitchell, Muddy Waters, Neil Young and many others performed, as well as the Band. A three-record set was released by Warner Brothers.

"It seemed real hot at the show," Helm says. "I thought everybody did one of their all-time-best performances. Everybody would come out, and it would be better than the last time."

On his second album for ABC, Helm sang and didn't play drums. On the first he did both. Sometimes it's difficult to do both, he says, and sometimes it's an advantage. "If the two rhythm pulses are close together, it is kind of an advantage to sing it from the drums. You can lock the singing into the beat more than you could if you were playing guitar." An example, he says, is "Milk Cow Boogie," from the RCO All Stars album.

"Life Is a Carnival," from the Band days, is one where the vocal accents fell differently from the drum beats. "I had to go in and overdub some voices on it just to make it a little bit better with the drum rhythm."

On a tour to Japan this summer, Helm met the Sunset Gang. They're a rock group with influences from Okinawan folk music and Oriental guitar plucking in the background. He'd like to record the RCO All Stars with them, in Tokyo and Muscle Shoals, Ala.

The main goal of the RCO All Stars, Helm says, is to improve their musicianship. None are beginners, but "when you hear people like Ray Charles, you realize the older you get the better you should play."

"The Band could have accomplished more," Helm says, "but we made a bit of a mark. Mainly we cut some pretty good albums which still sound okay. If your albums start sounding funny in five or six years, you're really stuck, you know."

The Band, respected and successful, is Helm's background. He admits to "a bit of pressure, just within myself," to hit that peak again.

"I'd like for us to become as popular as we can. But I'll live with whatever hand I get dealt.

"There are always going to be people that want those of us with the inclination to translate their musical feelings for them. You don't have the time to do it. I'll stay on the case and translate those musical feelings or vibrations. Whether people ignore it or jump up and down about it, I've got to keep doing it.

"It would be more fun if they'd jump up and down."

"If they don't, we'll make them."



Japan 1978 — photo by Shinya Watanabe

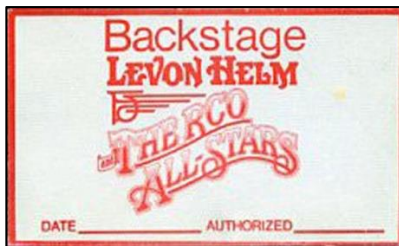
Levon Helm concerts 1977-78

An incomplete listing

- 1977-03-19 Saturday Night Live, New York, NY
- 1977-04-02 Florida Sunfest, Lakeland, FL (CANCELLED)
- 1977-07-02 Cheshire County Fairgrounds, Keene, NH
- 1977-11-09 The Rink, Fayetteville, AR (CANCELLED)
- 1977-11-11 Memorial Hall, Kansas City, KS
- 1977-11-15 Paramount Northwest, Seattle, WA (CANCELLED)
- 1977-11-16 Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver, BC (CANCELLED)
- 1977-11-17 Paramount Theater, Portland, OR
- 1977-11-19 Fox Theater, San Diego, CA
- 1977-11-22 Civic Auditorium, Santa Monica, CA (CANCELLED)
- 1977-11-26 Berkeley Community Theater, Berkeley, CA
- 1977-12-11 Convention Center Theatre, Dallas, TX
- 1977-12-18 State Theater, Minneapolis, MN (CANCELLED)
- 1977-12-18 Leona Theater, Homestead, PA
- 1977-12-28 Warner Theater, Washington, DC (CANCELLED)
- 1977-12-29 Tower Theater, Philadelphia, PA
- 1977-12-31 Palladium, New York, NY

- 1978-01-06 Ivanhoe, Chicago, IL (CANCELLED)
- 1978-02-07 Superdome, New Orleans, LA
- 1978-02-00 Soundstage (Air date February 26)
- 1978-03-10 Riverfront Coliseum, Cincinnati, OH (Opening for Neil Young)
- 1978-03-16 Spectrum, Philadelphia, PA (Opening for Jerry Garcia Band)
- 1978-03-17 My Father's Place, Roslyn, NY
- 1978-03-23 The Shaboo Inn, Willimantic, CT
- 1978-05-07 Armadillo World Headquarters, Austin, TX (2 shows)
- 1978-05-24 Ontario Place Forum, Toronto, ON (CANCELLED)
- 1978-05-25 Outremont Theatre, Montreal, QC (CANCELLED)
- 1978-06-08 Shibuya Kokaido, Shibuya, Japan
- 1978-06-10 Hibiya Open Air Music Hall, Tokyo, Japan
- 1978-06-11 Shimin Kaikan, Sapporo, Japan
- 1978-06-13 Festival Hall, Osaka, Japan
- 1978-06-14 Kubo Kodo, Tokyo, Japan
- 1978-06-16 Kinroh Bunka Center, Fukuoka, Japan
- 1978-06-17 Neal S. Blaisdell Arena, Honolulu, HI (Opening for Tower of Power)
- 1978-12-01 Opera House, Austin, TX
- 1978-12-03 Austin City Limits, Austin, TX (CANCELLED)
- 1978-12-04 Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY

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STEVE CROPPER
DR. JOHN
DONALD DUNN
ARMADILLO
2 SHOWS
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8:00-11:00 PM
SPECIAL GUEST: DELBERT MCCLINTON

Cash Box/June 17, 1978
TORONTO — Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars have broken up. The sudden breakup of the band left officials at Toronto's Ontario Place facility angry and perplexed. The band's breakup took place three days before their May 24 engagement at the Ontario Place Forum, but officials didn't find out until the morning of the show. Rompin' Ronnie Hawkins was a late replacement. Levon Helm tried to come to Canada to jam with Hawkins at the show, but was stopped at the border, leaving many Forum attendees dissatisfied . . .

Cash Box/March 5, 1977
... Levon Helm, singer and drummer for The Band, has signed with ABC to do solo albums, although he still plans to record with the Band. Since they no longer tour, however, Helm will hit the road for a tour following the release of his debut album in April . . .

RECORD WORLD FEBRUARY 12, 1977

Levon Helm to ABC

Levon Helm, drummer and vocalist for The Band, recently hosted a party at his new home and studio complex in Woodstock, N.Y. to celebrate his solo signing to ABC Records. Helm will continue to record with The Band but his new group, formed for the solo project, consists of Henry Glover, Mac Rebennack, Albert Singleton, Fred Carter Jr., Billy Jones, Larry Packer and Richard Grando. Shown here are Helm (left) and Jerold Rubinstein (right) chairman of the board of ABC Records signing the final contracts. Pictured in the background are Henry Glover, Fred Carter and Mac Rebennack.

Cash Box/October 22, 1977

Helm's All Stars Leads ABC LP Release Roster

LOS ANGELES — The debut album by the Band's vocalist and drummer, Levon Helm, titled "Levon Helm And The RCO All Stars," leads the list of new LPs scheduled for release October 21 on ABC Records. Other artists in Helm's lineup include Paul Butterfield, Dr. John, Steve Cropper, Booker T. Jones, Donald "Duck" Dunn and Fred Carter Jr.

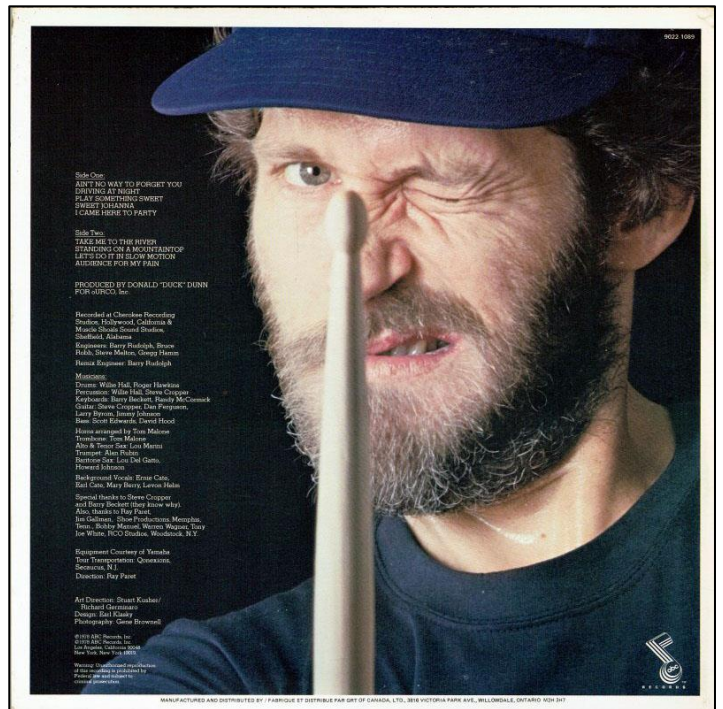
Other LPs slated for release include: "Brand New Day," Blood Sweat & Tears' ABC debut; "Live" by Crosby And Nash; "Live At The Roxy" from keyboard player Les McCann and "Live And Direct" by the Mighty Clouds Of Joy, a gospel group.

Also scheduled are: "Having A Party" from the Pointer Sisters and "African Violet" by Blue Mitchell.

ABC's classical releases will include "J.S. Bach: The Brandenburg Concertos," with Gustav Leonhart and Frans Bruggen conducting and "The Baroque Lute, Volume II," by Eugen Dombois.



Levon Helm



Side One:
AIN'T NO WAY TO FORGET YOU
DRIVING AT NIGHT
PLAY SOMETHING SWEET
SWEET JOHANNA
I CAME HERE TO PARTY

Side Two:
TAKE ME TO THE RIVER
STANDING ON A MOUNTAINTOP
LET'S DO IT IN SLOW MOTION
AUDIENCE FOR MY PAIN

PRODUCED BY DONALD "DUCK" DUNN
FOR oURCO, Inc.

Recorded at Cherokee Recording
Studios, Hollywood, California &
Sheffield, Alabama

Engineers: Barry Rudolph, Bruce
Robb, Steve Melton, Gregg Hamm
Remix Engineer: Barry Rudolph

Musicians:
Drums: Willie Hall, Roger Hawkins
Percussion: Willie Hall, Steve Cropper
Keyboards: Barry Beckett, Randy McCormick
Guitar: Steve Cropper, Dan Ferguson,
Larry Byrom, Jimmy Johnson
Bass: Scott Edwards, David Hood

Horns arranged by Tom Malone
Trombone: Tom Malone
Alto & Tenor Sax: Lou Marini
Trumpet: Alan Rubin
Baritone Sax: Lou Del Gatto,
Howard Johnson

Background Vocals: Ernie Cate,
Earl Cate, Mary Berry, Levon Helm

Special thanks to Steve Cropper
and Barry Beckett (they know why).
Also, thanks to Ray Paret,
Jim Gallman, Shoe Productions, Memphis,
Tenn., Bobby Manuel, Warren Wagner, Tony
Joe White, RCO Studios, Woodstock, N.Y.

Equipment Courtesy of Yamaha
Tour Transportation: Qonexions,
Secaucus, N.J.
Direction: Ray Paret

Art Direction: Stuart Kusher/
Richard Germinaro
Design: Earl Klasky
Photography: Gene Brownell

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New York, New York 10019
Printed in U.S.A.



"LEVON HELM"
LEVON HELM

SIDE ONE

AA-1089
(AA-1089-A)

1. AIN'T NO WAY TO FORGET YOU (W.C. Quillen, Grady L. Smith) Muscle Shoals Sound Pub. Co., Inc. (BMI) 3:20
2. DRIVING AT NIGHT (Daniel Moore) Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp. (BMI) 2:40
3. PLAY SOMETHING SWEET (Allen Toussaint) Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp./Marsaint Music, Inc. (BMI) 4:18
4. SWEET JOHANNA (J. & J. Hall) Mojohanna Music/Hall Music (BMI) 3:34
5. I CAME HERE TO PARTY (Tony Joe White) Tennessee Swamp Fox Music Co. (ASCAP) 3:49

PRODUCED BY DONALD "DUCK" DUNN
Horns arranged by Tom Malone
© 1978 ABC RECORDS, INC.



"LEVON HELM"
LEVON HELM

SIDE TWO

AA-1089
(AA-1089-B)

1. TAKE ME TO THE RIVER (Al Green/Mabon Hodges) Al Green Music, Inc./J&C Pub. Co. (BMI) 3:57
2. STANDING ON A MOUNTAINTOP (Earl & Ernie Cate) Flat River Pub. (BMI) 4:06
3. LET'S DO IT IN SLOW MOTION (B. Latimore) Sherlyn Pub. Co., Inc. (BMI) 4:43
4. AUDIENCE FOR MY PAIN (Gerry Goffin/Barry Goldberg) Screen Gems-EMI Music, Inc./Blackwood Music, Inc. (BMI) 4:21

PRODUCED BY DONALD "DUCK" DUNN
Horns arranged by Tom Malone
© 1978 ABC RECORDS, INC.

Side One:

- AIN'T NO WAY TO FORGET YOU
- DRIVING AT NIGHT
- PLAY SOMETHING SWEET
- SWEET JOHANNA
- I CAME HERE TO PARTY

Side Two:

- TAKE ME TO THE RIVER
- STANDING ON A MOUNTAINTOP
- LET'S DO IT IN SLOW MOTION
- AUDIENCE FOR MY PAIN

PRODUCED BY DONALD "DUCK" DUNN
FOR oURCO, Inc.

Recorded at Cherokee Recording
Studios, Hollywood, California &
Muscle Shoals Sound Studios,
Sheffield, Alabama

Engineers: Barry Rudolph, Bruce
Robb, Steve Melton, Gregg Hamm

Remix Engineer: Barry Rudolph

Musicians:

Drums: Willie Hall, Roger Hawkins
Percussion: Willie Hall, Steve Cropper
Keyboards: Barry Beckett, Randy McCormick
Guitar: Steve Cropper, Dan Ferguson,
Larry Byrom, Jimmy Johnson
Bass: Scott Edwards, David Hood

Horns arranged by Tom Malone

Trombone: Tom Malone
Alto & Tenor Sax: Lou Marini
Trumpet: Alan Rubin
Baritone Sax: Lou Del Gatto,
Howard Johnson

Background Vocals: Ernie Cate,
Earl Cate, Mary Berry, Levon Helm

Special thanks to Steve Cropper
and Barry Beckett (they know why).
Also, thanks to Ray Paret,
Jim Gallman, Shoe Productions, Memphis,
Tenn., Bobby Manuel, Warren Wagner, Tony
Joe White, RCO Studios, Woodstock, N.Y.

Equipment Courtesy of Yamaha
Tour Transportation: Qonexions,
Secaucus, N.J.

Direction: Ray Paret

Art Direction: Stuart Kusher/
Richard Germinaro
Design: Earl Klasky
Photography: Gene Brownell

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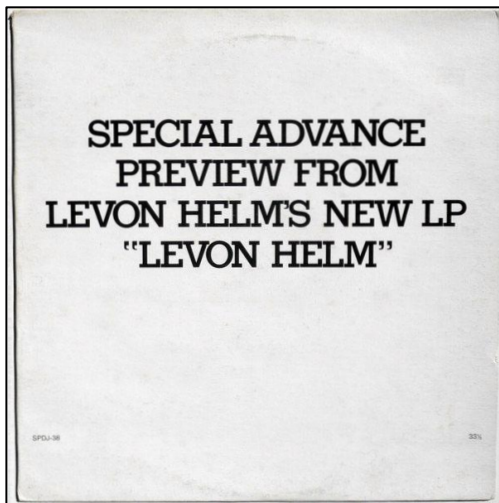
Levon Helm.

Levon Helm.
 The force behind The Band.
Levon Helm.
 The star of "The Last Waltz."
Levon Helm.
 The drummer and singer.
Levon Helm.
 Now with a new solo album.
 Backed by the RCO All Stars.
 Produced by Donald "Duck" Dunn.
Levon Helm.
 On ABC Records
 and GRT Tapes.



ABC Plans Picture Discs

LOS ANGELES — ABC Records will release limited edition picture discs of Don Williams' "Expressions" album and Levon Helm's second solo LP, "Levon Helm." The Williams disc will feature the singer/songwriter's face on the label, with the grooves displaying a solid blue denim color. Helm's record will depict the same portrait of the drummer/vocalist used for his album cover. The two discs will be utilized for promotional purposes only, and will be distributed to key accounts, radio and press.



Ain't No Way To Forget You / same - 12" promo



Ain't No Way To Forget You / Standing On A Mountaintop



Ain't No Way To Forget You (Stereo) / Ain't No Way To Forget You (Mono) - promo



"Washer Woman," "A Mood I Was In," "Blues So Bad," "Milk Cow Boogie," and "Rain Down Tears," recorded at RCO Studios, Woodstock, New York by Eddie Offord. Additional engineering by Ray Paret, Forrest Murray, Jim Sharp, Dick Gibbs and Paul Berry.

"You Got Me," "Havana Moon," "That's My Home," "The Tie That Binds," and "Sing, Sing, Sing," recorded at Shangri-La Studios, Malibu, California by Eddie Offord. Additional engineering by Ed Anderson, Tim Kramer, Rick Ash, and Larry Samuels.

Band Master: Henry Glover

Vocal overdubs on "Washer Woman," "A Mood I Was In," "Blues So Bad," and "Rain Down Tears," recorded at ABC Studios, Hollywood, California.

Re-mixed and Mastered at ABC Studios, Hollywood, California. Additional engineering by Michael Boshears, Bob DeAvila, Leslie Jones, Walt Weiskopf, and Lanky Linstrat.

Additional vocals by Emmaretta Marks, John Flamingo, Jeannette Baker, Paul Butterfield, Mac Rebennack and Levon Helm.

Guitar on "Sing, Sing, Sing" by Robbie Robertson. Accordion played by Garth Hudson. Baritone Sax played by Charles Miller. Strings played by Sid Sharp, William Kurash, Louis Kievman and Jesse Ehrlich. Winger played by Fred Staehle.

Personal thanks to The Band and Jerry Rubinstein.

Art Direction: Frank Mulvey.

Design: Tim Bryant/Gribblitt.

Photography: Fred Valentine, Melanie Nissen and Ceci Sebastian.

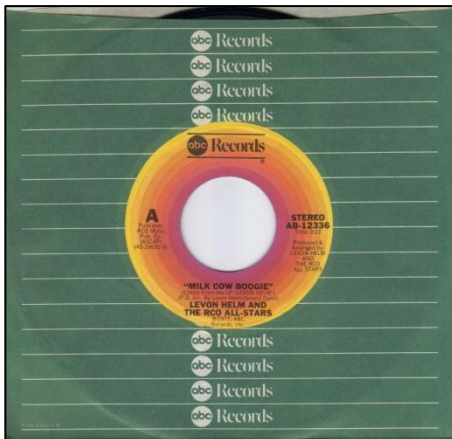
Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Donald "Duck" Dunn, appear through courtesy of Elektra/Asylum Records.

Paul Butterfield appears through courtesy of Bearsville Records.

Robbie Robertson and Garth Hudson appear through courtesy of Warner Brothers Records, Inc.

Charles Miller appears through courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

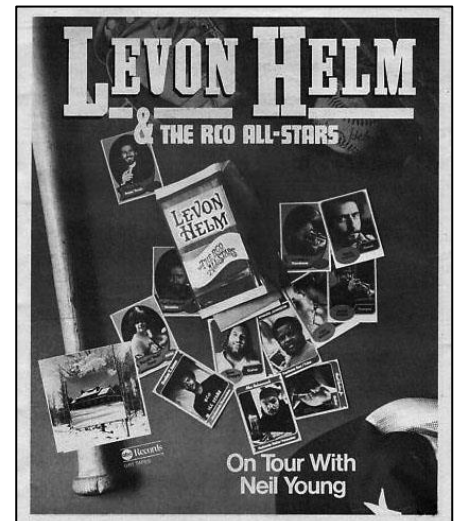
RCO Productions, Woodstock, New York

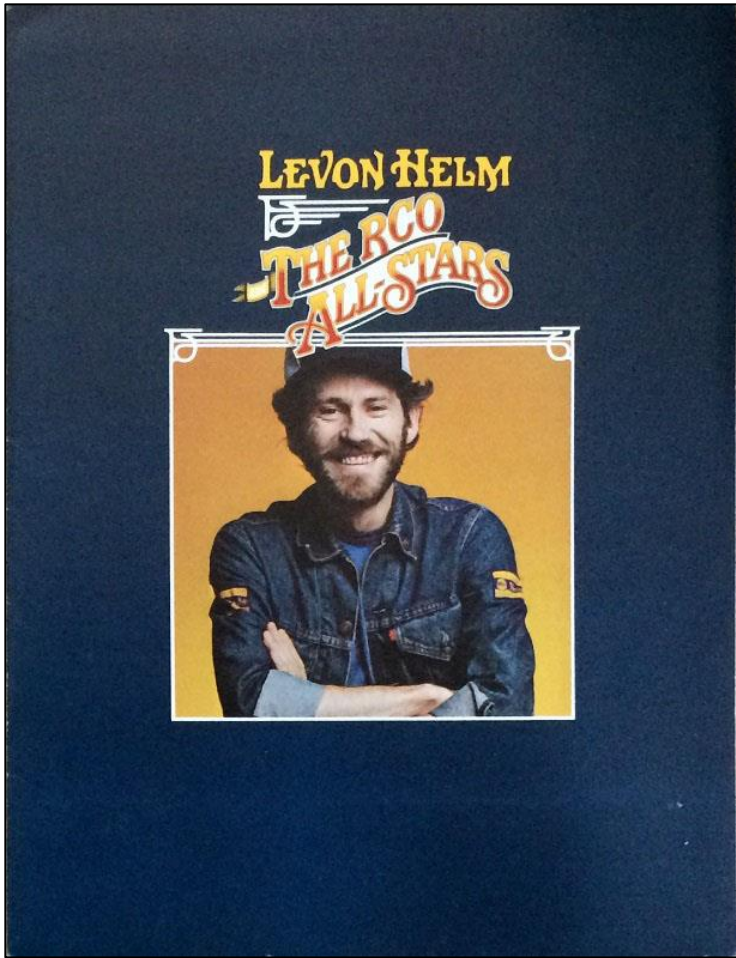


Milk Cow Boogie / Blues So Bad



Milk Cow Boogie (Stereo) / Milk Cow Boogie (Mono) - Promo





Press kit.

It's a whole new ball game.

Levon Helm: Lead vocals on *The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down*, *Rag Mama Rag*, and is the drummer with The Band.

Booker T. Jones, Mac "Dr. John" Rebennack.

There's not a stronger team of Rock Superstars anywhere. Hear them in action on their premiere ABC album. Watch them in action on their 50-date tour.

The RCO All-Stars: Paul Butterfield, Fred Carter, Jr., Steve Cropper, Donald "Duck" Dunn.

abc Records
GRT Tapes

●アメリカン・バンドの最高峰、「ザ・バンド」のドラマー兼リード・ヴォーカリスト、レヴオン・ヘルムが最高のミュージシャンを集めて選に発表した初ソロ・アルバム

レヴオン・ヘルム

LEVON HELM

WASHER MAN — 3:14
 YOU GOT ME — 4:12
 MILK COW BOOGIE — 3:16
 RAIN DOWN TEARS — 5:16
 HAVANA MOON — 4:28

PRODUCED AND ARRANGED BY LEVON HELM AND THE RCO ALL STARS

レヴオン・ヘルム: Vocals, Drums
 フォーター・ジョーンズ: Guitar, Keyboards
 マック・レベナック: MC, Bass
 ボール・バターフィールド: MC, Harmonica
 フレッド・カーター・ジュニア: MC, Harmonica
 スティーヴ・クロッパー: MC, Harmonica
 ドナルド・ダック・ダニエル: MC, Harmonica

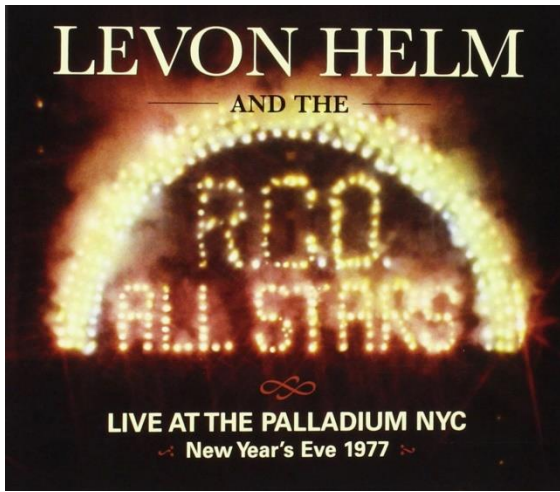
YX-8118 12月25日発売

abc Records
V-100

Japanese promo LP.

LEVON HELM

abc Records



Live album released by [Levon Helm Studios](http://www.levonhelm.com) in 2006

1. Ain't That A Lotta Love (BANKS/PARKER) 2. Washer Woman (REBENACK) 3. A Mood I Was In (FRED CARTER JR.)
 4. Milk Cow Boogie (P.D./HELM/DUNN) 5. Ties That Bind (REBENACK/CHARLES)
 6. Goin Back To Memphis (YOUNG/YOUNG/JOHNSON/KENNEY/ORR/MARTIN) 7. Blues So Bad (HELM/GLOVER)
 8. Born in Chicago (NICK GRAVENTIS) 9. Rain Down Tears (TOOMBS/GLOVER) 10. Got My Mojo Working (PRESTON FOSTER)
 11. Sing, Sing, Sing (EARL KING) 12. Ophelia (J.R. ROBERTSON) 13. Good Night Irene (LEDBETTER/LOMAX/BYNUM)

Produced by Levon Helm Studios
 Mixed by Justin Guip
 Assistant Engineer: Chris Edwards
 Mastered by Chris Athens at Sterling Sound

www.levonhelm.com
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Levon Helm & the RCO All-Stars

STUDIO JAMS

- Havana Moon (run thru) Bookers Idea 4:59
- Havana Moon 4:51
- Valley Of Tears 3:45
- Searchin'/Fanny Mae 4:35
- Good Night Irene I 5:46
- Good Night Irene II (slow) 6:15
- Nobody Loves You When You Down And Out (instrumental) 7:11
- Jam/riff I 2:19
- Jam/riff II 0:58

ROUGH MIXES

- Good Night Irene (Tim Kramer & Rob Fraboni mix) 5:29
- That's My Home (Tim Kramer & Rick Ash mix) 3:10

MONITOR MIXES

- That's My Home 3:29
- Booker's Tune (last take w/o Fred C.) 5:21
- Booker's Tune (aka You Got Me) 5:09
- Booker's Tune (w Fred C.) 5:14

BONUSTRACKS

- Blue Moon Of Kentucky (single 1980) 2:48
- Working In The Coal Mine (b-side single 1980) 2:26

The Reel Stuff

Levon Helm & the RCO All-Stars

The Reel Stuff

Total time: 74:44

Studio sessions at Shangri-La Studios, Malibu, CA, July 1977
 Tracks 1-6: July 17th 1977. Tracks 7-9: July 20th 1977

Levon Helm DRUMS & VOCALS
 Mac Rebennack KEYBOARDS, GUITAR & PERCUSSION
 Booker T. Jones ORGAN & PERCUSSION
 Steve Cropper GUITAR
 Fred Carter Jr GUITAR
 Donald 'Duck' Dunn BASS

RS 253 © 2013 Rattle Snake

Bootleg CD released in 2013



WOODSTOCK '77 — ABC recording artist Levon Helm threw an all-day party recently at his home in Woodstock, N.Y. to showcase material from his forthcoming ABC album "Levon Helm And The RCO All-Stars," which is scheduled to be released in mid-October. Pictured among the many guests who attended the affair are, top row from left: Mark Meyerson, vice president of A&R for ABC Records; Tom Corcoran, director of "Old Grey Whistle Test," a British rock TV show; Mike Appleton, producer of the show; Elaine Corlett, director of artist development for ABC International; Bob Harris, MC of "Whistle Test"; Barbara Harris, eastern director of artist relations for ABC Records; Shelly Salover, national director of publicity for ABC Records; Barry Grieff, vice president of creative services for ABC Records; Levon Helm; and Marion Sommerstein, eastern manager of publicity for ABC. Pictured bottom row from left: Marylou Capes, eastern director of publicity for ABC; Caroline Prutzman, tour publicist for ABC; Nancy Cooper, staffer for ABC; Shelly Rudin, New York and Boston branch manager for ABC Howard Smith, buyer for ABC; Jackie Smollens, merchandising staffer for ABC; Tex Weiner, NY sales manager for ABC Records; and John Brown, national R&B promotion director for ABC.

RECORD WORLD SEPTEMBER 10, 1977

Helm Hosts Heavies



Ronnie Hawkins, Albert Grossman, Diamond Helm, Robbie Robertson, Levon Helm.
Photo by Paul Godfrey.



ABC Records artist Levon Helm threw an all-day picnic at his Woodstock home recently to celebrate the association of his RCO Woodstock company and ABC and to showcase the material from his new album, "Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars." The outing included barbecued lunch and dinner, an hour-long fireworks display and a performance by the RCO All-Stars. Among the more than 100 guests were ABC executives, local Woodstock performers and press representatives. Pictured here are, from left, back row: Mark Meyerson, vice president, a&r, ABC Records; Tom Corcoran, director of the London TV show "Old Grey Whistle Test;" Mike Appleton, producer of "OGWT;" Elaine Corlett, ABC International director of artist development; Bob Harris, MC of "OGWT;" Barbara Harris, eastern director of artist relations; Shelly Salover, national director of publicity, ABC; Barry Grieff, vice president of creative services, ABC; Levon Helm, and Marion Somerstein, eastern manager of publicity. Front row, from left: Marylou Capes, eastern director of publicity, ABC; Caroline Prutzman, tour publicist, ABC; Nancy Cooper, ABC Records, N.Y.; Shelly Rudin, New York/Boston branch manager; Howard Smith, buyer for ABC Records; Jackie Smollens, merchandising, ABC; Tex Weiner, N.Y. sales manager, ABC, and John Brown, national r&b promotion director, ABC.



Photo by [Catherine Sebastian](#)

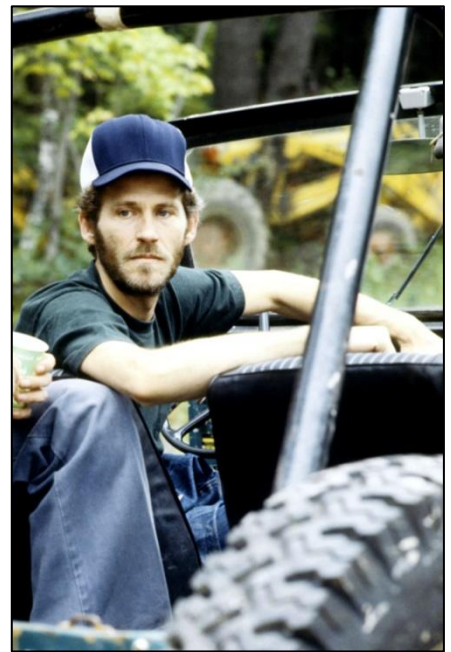


Photo by [Richard E. Aaron](#)



Photos by [Ed Berenhaus](#)



[Richard E. Aaron](#)



Saturday Night Live, March 19, 1977

The Pop Life John Rockwell

LIKE Rick Danko, who was at the Bottom Line a few days ago, Levon Helm is best known as a member of the Band. With his rock-solid drumming and his buzzing, raspy and tireless baritone, Mr. Helm did much to lend the Band its distinctively American, roots-of-rock-and-roll feeling. And since the rest of the Band was Canadian and Mr. Helm came from the depths of Arkansas, he did, in fact, bring a genuine flavor of the American South to a group of musicians who came originally to that region's music from a distance.

Now the Band has broken up as a touring unit, at least for the present, although it will apparently still make records. The first two members of the quintet of the band and out with their own bands are Mr. Danko and Mr. Helm, who will be at the Palladium tomorrow night, New Year's Eve, with his RCO All-Stars.

His new band, which was augmented on the record and will be similarly augmented tomorrow with a horn section from the Saturday Night Live band, consists of Mr. Helm, Mac Rebennack (Dr. John), Paul Butterfield, Booker T. Jones, Steve Cropper, Fred Carter Jr. and Donald (Duck) Dunn. They are genuinely "all-stars" in that they all have commitments to their own performing careers or their own bands. But Mr. Helm said recently from Springdale, Ark., that they all consid-

ered the All-Stars to be a permanent aggregation.

"As far as I'm concerned, we're going to play forever," Mr. Helm said. "We've sort of worked it out among ourselves to reserve whatever producing and recording talents we have for one another. Everybody's got some irons in the fire. I've got the Band. Booker and Steve and Duck want to keep the M.G.'s going. And there's Max with Dr. John and Paul, too. But this seems to be the freshest and maybe the most rewarding, if we can ever get it geared up."

The problem has been that Mr. Helm, who is now 37 years old, has had kidney stone troubles that have delayed the opening of their projected tour. Two warm-up dates in Philadelphia and Albany last night and tonight were set at the time of this writing before tomorrow's New York engagement, although even then it was hard to squeeze in adequate rehearsal time. "I wouldn't mind winging it," Mr. Helm mused, "but I don't know how the others feel."

The RCO All-Stars—named for a studio in Woodstock, N.Y., near where Mr. Helm lives and where the album was recorded—is a cooperative, but it's a cooperative with a chief, Mr. Helm. "I'm the leader because I've been day-dreaming it longer than anybody else and because they've chosen me as the leader," he said. "As long as it goes O.K., I'm wearing the cap."

Unlike Mr. Danko and some others in the Band, Mr. Helm doesn't consider himself a songwriter. And although he and the others in the RCO group may turn more seriously to composing in the future, he thinks the new band's primary function to be performing.

"This is a straight musical deal," he said. "We don't care who writes the songs; we're just going to do them better than anybody else, if they're down our alley. Everybody here grew up on the river, and we're real rock-and-rollers."

Austin American-Statesman, Dec. 2, 1978
 ACL 1979 debuts Feb. 5 at 9 p.m. and runs for the next 13 Mondays. The first show will feature **Levon Helm** and the **R.C.O. All-Stars** with the **Cate Brothers**. It'll be taped Sunday.

Austin American-Statesman Monday, December 4, 1978

Levon Helm's abbreviated set, bizarre behavior disappointing

By **JOE FROLIK**
 American Statesman Staff

Maybe Levon Helm was having a flashback; maybe that explains his bizarre behavior at the end of his Austin Opera House set Friday night.

There he was, walking slowly off the stage, grinning and waving happily like he did in the good ol' days when he drummed in The Band, one of rock 'n' roll's classiest acts. Maybe he thought he was back with Robbie and Rick and Garth and Richard and that it was Watkins Glen and there were 600,000 people in the audience and they were going bonkers.

Maybe that's what Levon Helm thought. Maybe he couldn't see there were only about 600 people in the house. Maybe he couldn't hear half of them jeering and questioning his ancestry. Maybe he really thought he'd given the people their money's worth.

"Get back here, Levon," screamed one fan who obviously thought a \$6 ticket entitled him to more than a baker's dozen songs. "Don't rest on your laurels, Levon."

He yelled and so did many others, but Helm didn't return—at least not Friday night. Emcee Marty Manning came out as the house lights flipped on and told the audience Helm and his band had agreed to do another show Saturday night.

"That doesn't do me any good, you . . .," shouted a woman.

Out of earshot, Manning continued his announcement. ". . . so come back tomorrow night and bring some people with you."

"My six bucks aren't any good because there

aren't enough people here," muttered the exasperated woman. "What kind of a rip-off is this?"

A good question, lady.

The show was billed as Levon Helm and the RCO All-Stars with the Cate Brothers. It turned out to be Levon Helm and a horn section he hired last week sitting in with the Cate Brothers. The group was hastily assembled so that Helm could tape "Austin City Limits" Sunday and fulfill some other commitments, and its lack of work showed.

The original RCO All-Stars included such stellar musicians as Duck Dunn. "Special guest" Dunn showed up for a few numbers Friday, but that was it.

Joe Mulherin on trumpet, Jim Gambill on trombone, Jim Spack on tenor sax and Bill Easley on baritone sax were called the RCO horn section, although none ever worked at The Band's famed RCO Studio in Woodstock, N.Y. They were joined by the Cate Brothers Band—Ernie Cate on keyboards, Earl Cate on guitar, Ron Eoff on bass and drummer Terry Kagie, Helm's nephew.

All are fine musicians who showed flashes of brilliance Friday night. They played funk-ed-up rock with a jazz-like improvisational work. But they had to improvise because they didn't have much material prepared—the musicians even said so after the show.

Hopefully, Helm will be better prepared the next time he comes to town. The legacy of The Band remains strong, and people expect a lot from its members when they attempt solo careers. Unless Helm gets his act together, he's doing his fans, his old group and himself a disservice.

New York Times, December 30, 1977

Helm and RCO All Stars Play at the Palladium

By **JOHN ROCKWELL**

Expectations ran high among admirers of the Band New Year's Eve at the Palladium, even if there weren't quite enough such admirers to fill the hall. The headlining act was Levon Helm and the RCO All Stars. Of the first two Band members to come forth with solo records, Mr. Helm's was inferior to Rick Danko's. But one reason for that was the excellence of the people Mr. Danko had playing with him on disk, and by all reports his touring band didn't live up to that excellence.

Mr. Helm's record suffered from a lack of good material and a vaguely rote execution, despite all the stellar talent that the All Stars boast. But it was hoped that in live performance the sheer skills of the players would make for a great concert experience.

It didn't work out that way; in fact, the playing sounded oddly dispirited, lacking both in interest and excitement. Part of that was because one All Star—Booker T. Jones—was missing, with no announcement as to the reason. Another reason may have been that Mr. Helm had been ill, and perhaps the men hadn't had time to hone their set before New York.

But there are other, deeper problems. Chief among them is the material, which simply seems lightweight and unvariegated. What



Levon Helm
 Trying for rock without the art

Many of the individual players were excellent, to be sure—above all, Paul Butterfield and his harmonica playing, and Mr. Helm's own twanging singing and rock-solid drumming. Mac (Dr. John) Rebennack offered some lively keyboard work (all of it, since the missing Mr. Jones normally complements him on organ), but he was mixed too quietly in relation to the other instruments and cast a somewhat dull presence visually. The two guitarists, Steve Cropper and Fred Carter Jr., are both spare; even austere players; it might be nice if one were a bit more flashy. Donald (Duck) Dunn was the bassiest, and there was a fine four-man horn section from the Saturday Night Band—the house band of the "Saturday Night Live" television program—which opened the evening with a pleasant batch of big-band electric jazz arrangements.

Perhaps in the future all these talents will cohere either into something genuinely amusing or even into something important. There seems no real reason—apart from the apparent lack of a central artistic force who takes this whole project with a passionate seriousness—why they couldn't do both, and be more entertaining at the same time that they said something worth saying. Either way, they need better songs.

made the Band great was the blend of serious poetic and musical aspirations and tough, unpretentious rock-and-roll. Mr. Helm and company try for the rock without the art. But they didn't rock ebulliently enough.

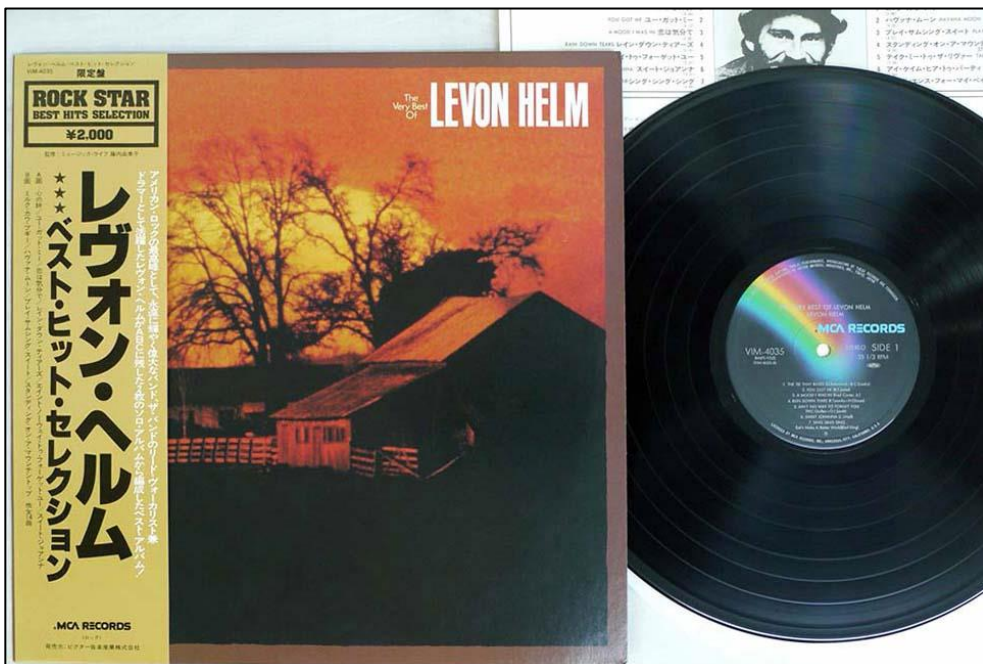
New York Times, January 2, 1978

Austin American-Statesman Thursday, December 7, 1978

Late cancellations threw the final filmings of this year's "Austin City Limits" television series into chaos this week. First, Maria Muldaur was forced to cancel her Wednesday taping date due to studio problems on her next album. Elvin Bishop tentatively was substituted, but he couldn't make it. Then Sunday night, after the band and television crew and live audience had assembled at the studio, **Levon Helm** phoned from his hotel to say he would not appear. The folks at KLRN hope now to schedule and film one additional show, but it won't be possible until January.

Austin American-Statesman, Dec. 9, 1978

WAITS TO THE RESCUE: Tom Waits' "Austin City Limits" taping went so well he'll likely get a full hour show during the 1979 season. That's a big relief for ACL producer Terry Lickona who was facing the prospect of trying to line up another act—or perhaps two—to fill the void left by Levon Helm's sudden attack of stage fright last Sunday. The way it looks now, Waits will get an hour to himself, Leon Redbone—originally slated to share a program with Waits—will be paired with Steve Fromholz and Delbert McClinton will be on with the Cate Brothers. Luckily, ACL was able to get 30 minutes of material from the Cates at Sunday's fiasco. All is subject to change if Lickona can line up a blockbuster act for a January taping, but the hassles involved—the ACL set is to be torn down and its studio used for another program next month—make that a remote possibility. . . . Lickona flies to Nashville next week to edit next year's programs. . . . Look for Norton Buffalo to lead off the 1979 season Feb. 5.



The Very Best Of Levon Helm—rare Japanese compilation from 1979/80 containing tracks from "Levon Helm & The RCO All-Stars" and "Levon Helm"

It's Medicine Hat Music — but will we ever find out why?

GERALD FISCHER
OF THE NEWS

If you take the time to check the label of The Band's *The Last Waltz* in your record collection, you'll find that the tunes are published by Medicine Hat Music.

But don't take the time to ask why, or you'll find yourself staring at a large telephone bill and with a nervous condition. Spokesmen for the record company and the publishing company's chartered public accounting firm are at a loss as to why the publishing company was named Medicine Hat Music, and Robbie Robertson, The Band's songwriter, can't be found.

The telephone is a great invention, but sometimes it can't get you any closer to your goal—finding out about the former Canadian band that went on to lead the rise of country-rock music across the continent.

The Band has been together as a group for over a decade, originally playing

back-up for Toronto's Ronnie Hawkins and then for Bob Dylan on his 1966 tour of Britain.

The five man group has several best-selling albums on the market, including *Music from Big Pink*, *The Band*, *Stage Fright*, *Cahoots*, *Rock of Ages*, and *Moondog Matinee*.

Warner-Elektra-Atlantic, WEA according to their switchboard operator in Los Angeles, is the company that records The Bands' music. It should have been a good starting point, but it wasn't.

Explaining that you're calling long distance, the switchboard operator deems it necessary to cut you off. Calling back again, the operator puts you through to someone's office (she doesn't say whose) without a word. The line seems to go dead, but just as you get ready to hang up, a voice comes on the line.

You explain the situation to the new voice only to find that the gentleman you should talk to is out for lunch. Two hours later he is still out to lunch. A call again

the next morning doesn't help either—the gentleman hasn't come in yet. The secretary tells you to phone back in two hours, he'll be in then. Two hours later, you find the elusive fellow has headed out the door for lunch again.

Transferring you to a messages desk (the second voice wouldn't take the message even though she gave the impression she was the elusive gentleman's secretary), you find yourself cut off again and staring at a dead telephone. Phoning again, you leave the message. Yes, the third voice says, he will return your call.

Two days later and your phone fias'n's rung. You check with the telephone company, but your line is alright.

You make another phone call and get through to voice number two again. "I tried to get the information," the voice says, "but couldn't find anything. Perhaps you should try our publishing department." She actually sounds sympathetic, but I take her tone with the grain of salt old pros use in times of need.

Just when you think you are making headway, the sympathetic voice attempts to transfer your call... and fails. You end up with a dead phone in your hand again.

Going through the switchboard for what you hope will be a final time, you finally get the publishing department. No, there's no way you can get hold of Robbie Robertson or anyone representing The Band, a fourth voice tells you. But there is a light at the end of the tunnel—she gives you the address in Los Angeles of a legal firm that handles Medicine Hat Music. She has no phone number but you scribble the address down, including the zip code.

You phone information and you get a number, even though the name the publishing department gave you is not entirely correct.

On top of that, it is a firm of chartered public accountants, not lawyers. You phone them, only to find that the branch handling Medicine Hat Music is located in Palm Springs. But they do have a

telephone number.

You phone Palm Springs, your heart pounding and your fingers crossed—you can see your quarry in sight.

Yes, we handle Medicine Hat Music, a nice voice says.

"Can you tell me about it, you ask in a whisper, can I get some information from you about it?" And then your heart stops beating altogether.

I'm sorry, the nice voice says, the girl who handles Medicine Hat Music is home sick with a cold and won't be in until after the weekend.

Never one to stay down long, you quickly ask what kind of connection the accounting firm has with the publishing company and in turn, The Band.

The nice voice gets even nicer and is more than happy to oblige (letting it drop in the course of conversation that they also handle folk singer James Taylor's music publishing company).

A lot of musicians produce good music, the voice lectures, but many of the

musicians can't read or write music. They send a tape of their music to the accounting firm, who in turn give it to an expert who can read and write music.

This person writes the music down on a "lead-sheet" and sends it back to the accounting firm, for a fee. The firm then sends off the lead-sheet to the Library of Congress where it is copyrighted.

All for a fee, of course. The accounting firm sells a licence to the musicians, and sets up a publishing firm for them. The musicians give them the going rate of commission in return. Surprisingly, the nice voice at the other end of the line is happy to tell you they receive "about" .0275 cents for every record sold.

"What about The Band and Medicine Hat Music?" You ask again, hoping you might trip the voice up and get it to tell you even more.

"You'll have to call back later in the week for that information," the voice says, no longer nice. "The girl who handles that is sick home with a cold." The telephone line goes dead.

RECORD WORLD JUNE 18, 1977

LET THE SMOOTH SIDE SHOW: Jesse Winchester's long-awaited (and in this case, that's the truth) appearance at the Roxy finally came to pass a couple of weeks ago, and it was worth every bit of the wait. Winchester's songs, voice, band, personality, you name it, had a charm that was simply irresistible—and if the current tour doesn't move his appeal from cult status to full-fledged "star" (a term that hardly applies to the self-effacing southern gent), there just ain't no justice. Attendees at the four-night engagement and pre-opening party at the Biltmore included Cher, Al Stewart, Van Morrison, Libby Titus, Paul Fishkin and Albert Grossman of Bearsville Records, Bobby Neuwirth, Garth Hudson and Robbie Robertson of the Band, film-maker Howard Alk, Bonnie Raitt and Glen Frey and Don Henley of the Eagles. Those folks certainly had the right idea.

RECORD WORLD AUGUST 5, 1978

MISCELLANY: 65,000 people are expected to hear the Eagles at Minneapolis' Metropolitan Stadium August 1; if they all show up, the band will set a new attendance record for that state, eclipsing the likes of the Beatles and the Beach Boys. The same is expected when they play Kansas City, and they've already broken Fleetwood Mac's record in Calgary, Alberta... (Quite the turnout etc. etc.) Quite the turnout for Teddy Pendergrass' recent Roxy dates: Bruce Jenner, Richard Roundtree, Jim Brown, Leif Garrett, Donald Byrd, Smokey Robinson, Robbie Robertson, even erstwhile associate Harold Melvin; and although the stars may not have sprung for their own tickets, the venue was charging \$10 a shot, their highest prices ever...

THE SUN, Friday, January 21, 1977

BLACK TIE, WHITE SHIRT: They're still talking about Ringo Starr's ultra-private black tie New Year's Eve party that turned away the likes of Jimmy Webb because he refused to come "formal." Ringo starring in the new Mae West movie, proved himself to be Hollywood's newest, most delightful and charming host, but he insisted guests follow the invitation to the letter. The East Coast's Jackie Rogers got up and sang with Graham Bell and Richard Manuel of The Band. The guest list ran from Tatum O'Neal in high heels and lipstick to Mae West in high heels and lipstick. That's the gamut, kids.

THE BAXTER BULLETIN Thursday, December 28, 1978

'Diamonds & Denim' is Clinton gala Jan. 8

LITTLE ROCK—Governor-elect Bill Clinton has announced plans for an Inaugural Gala, "Diamonds & Denim", at 8 p.m. Jan. 8 at the Little Rock Convention Center Music Hall. The gala, an evening of song, dance and drama, will showcase various areas of Arkansas entertainment.

The performers, all Arkansas natives, include Levon Helm (formerly of The Band), the Cate Brothers, Ronnie Hawkins, Randy Goodrum, the Ozark Folk Center Musicians, Art Porter and Sons, the Greasy Greens, the Arkansas Opera Theatre, the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, and others.

Other local and national celebrities will also make cameo appearances, according to Pat Wyatt, Gala chairman, and all will donate their time. Proceeds will go to the Arkansas Arts Council.

Tickets to "Diamonds & Denim" are \$10 and may be purchased by writing; "Diamonds & Denim", P.O. Box 615, Little Rock, 72203, or by calling 376-0050.

The Gala will be directed by Cliff Baker with Byl Harriel as technical director.

"I'm excited that this special evening of Arkansas talent is going to be available as a kick-off to the inauguration," Clinton said.

RECORD WORLD OCTOBER 21, 1978

HOME FROM THE FOREST: Rompin' Ronnie Hawkins, that jovial Arkansas rocker/standup comedian who grafted himself onto the local scene fifteen years ago, is back on the track. After some exposure in "The Last Waltz" and "Renaldo And Clara," it seems that The Hawk is back in demand and is inking a new two year deal with United Artists, a deal which former protege Robbie Robertson was instrumental in arranging. Some months back there was some bump in the local press about The Hawk struck down by a heart attack. But it was merely fatigue and a recent date at The El Mocambo laid bare the myth that The Hawk is a mere mortal.

DETROIT FREE PRESS/WEDNESDAY, AUG. 23, 1978

celebrity question

Q—What are the members of the Band doing since "The Last Waltz"?—K.K.

A—Since the Band's last concert, in November 1976, was made into a movie and record album, both titled "The Last Waltz," organist Garth Hudson has been composing, drummer-vocalist Levon Helm and bassist-vocalist Rick Danko have made solo records and keyboardist Richard Manuel has one in prepa-

ration. Guitarist Robbie Robertson's not sure what he wants to do about the stardom he's had since the movie came out.

Send your questions to: Celebrity Question, Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Mich. 48231.

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Starring The Band

Van Morrison • The Staples • Dr. John • Muddy Waters • Paul Butterfield • Ronnie Hawkins • Ringo Starr • Ron Wood

A MARTIN SCORSESE Film
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Produced by ROBBIE ROBERTSON
Director of Photography MICHAEL CHAPMAN
Executive Producer JONATHAN TAPLIN
Directed by MARTIN SCORSESE
Cinematography by LAZLO KOVACS, A.S.C. and VILMOS ZSIGMOND, A.S.C.

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HOLLOWAY Odeon
RICHMOND Odeon
ROCHFORD Odeon
WATFORD Odeon
WELLING Granada
WIMBORNE Odeon
WOOD GREEN Odeon

SEE LOCAL PRESS FOR DETAILS

DETROIT FREE PRESS/WEDNESDAY, AUG. 23, 1978

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Innerview

Jim Ladd Interviews Robbie, Rick and Richard around the time of the Last Waltz.



Listen:

[Innerview - Part I](#)

[Innerview - Part II](#)

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE, Friday, March 10, 1978

WEDNESDAY

12:20 P.M. — 20 Minutes featuring Rolling Stones-WFSO
 1 P.M. — Innerview artist featuring The Band part II-WFSO
 2:55 P.M. — Earth News-WFSO
 6:30 P.M. — Sports Line-WDAE
 8 P.M. — Talk of Tampa Bay on animals and animal care-WDAE
 10 P.M. — Hear and Now-WFLA
 11 P.M. — Listen Here-WQSR
 11 P.M. — CBS Mystery Theatre-WFLA
 Midnight — The Solid Music Hour-WQSR
 12:05 A.M. — The Herb Jepko Nitcap Show-WFLA

Waterloo Courier Fri., Oct. 6, 1978

Public radio

KUNI (FM 91)

SATURDAY, October 7

10 a.m. Voices in the Wind: Interviews with Bob Seger, Patti Smith, Robbie Robertson and movie producers Fred and Fran Bauer.

Cash Box/November 11, 1978

WATCH FOR — Watch for a spate of executive appointments at Polydor, as the first sign of **Dick Klines'** clout . . . A bar-coded **Elvis Costello** album in January (\$7.98 list) . . . A National Public Radio special on "Rock and Roll" featuring **Bob Seger, Robbie Robertson,** and **Patti Smith** the week of December 17 . . . Picture discs for the following Capitol albums: "Abbey Road," "Band On The Run," "Dark Side Of The Moon," "Book Of Dreams," and "Stranger In Town." . . . "Sound Trax," a new bi-monthly music magazine out of New York.

LEVON — If **Levon Helm** had his druthers, **the Band** would still be a working unit. But the philosophical Arkansas drummer is content to "let things fall together," and in the meantime is enjoying himself with the **RCO All Stars, Duck Dunn**, **Levon** reports, "has emerged as the leader" of that aggregation, which may be joined by **Paul Butterfield** on their next album. The All Stars are recording in Woodstock and have a gig lined up for the New Orleans Mardi Gras, followed by a Japanese tour.

MINNEAPOLIS TRIBUNE DECEMBER 10, 1978

THURSDAY ON RADIO

6:30 P.M.—Disc jockey **Cerphe Colwell**, film producers **Freddy and Frances Bauer**, author **Mark Shipper**, band member **Robbie Robertson**, poet **Patti Smith** and singers **Marshall Chapman** and **Bob Seger** on "Voices in the Wind." **KBEM-FM.**

Garden City Telegram Friday, August 4, 1978

KBUF Program Highlights

BARGAIN BAZAAR 10:10 a.m. to 10:45, Monday thru Friday.

Paul Harvey News at 7:30 and 12:15 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

The Rest of The Story with **Paul Harvey** at 4:55 p.m., Monday thru Friday.

Mid America Ag News and Markets, 12 reports daily with **Larry Steckline** and **Bob Givens**.

Saturday, August 5th "TOPICS OF 78" with **Mari Jo: Special Guest Howard Hassler**, Executive Director of South-west Developmental Services, Inc.

Dallas Cowboys vs. San Francisco at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 5.

King Biscuit Flower Hour at 9 p.m. Aug. 6, featuring **Rick Danko** and **Levon Helm**.

Page 20 Jan. 29-Feb. 4, 1978

This Week Today

10:45 a.m. — Sunday Worship of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church: The Rev. David Romig preaching. (WROC)

3 p.m. — Chicago Symphony Orchestra: Rossini's "The Barber of Seville Overture;" R. Strauss' "Death and Transfiguration." (WXXI)

6 p.m. — King Biscuit: **Levon Helm** and **The RCO All Stars** and **Rick Danko** are featured. (WCMF).

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE, Friday, March 10, 1978

SUNDAY

Noon — Jazz Flight-WTMP
 5 P.M. — The Import Hour featuring Ian Hunter and The Jam-WFSO
 6 P.M. — Community Perspective-WQSR
 6:55 P.M. — Breaker 1250-WDAE
 7 P.M. — Special of the Week featuring Fire-fall-WDAE
 9 P.M. — American Top 40 with Casey Kasem-WYNF
 9 P.M. — Innerview-WOKF
 9:30 P.M. — Sunday Artist Profile featuring the Doobie Brothers-WQXM
 10 P.M. — King Biscuit Flower Hour featuring **Levon Helm** and **the RCO All-Stars**-WQSR

**THE INCREDIBLE
MYSTIC KNIGHTS
of the
OINGO
BOINGO**

"... Funny, entertaining, loose, first-rate, entertaining ..."
J.L. Wasserman, S.F. Chronicle
"Best show of the year."
Larry Kelp, Oakland Tribune

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Datebook, Sunday, Oct. 2, 1977

Garth Hudson, organist formerly with the Band, will supervise sound operation for the first few nights of the Boarding House engagement by the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, who open a three-week engagement at the Bush street niterie October 18.

Wednesday, October 14, 1977
The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, the zany musical-theatrical troupe produced by Garth Hudson of the Band, will open a two-week engagement at the Boarding House in San Francisco on Tuesday.

**The Stanford Daily
November 1, 1977**

While touring, the group has performed both on the streets and at Lincoln Center in New York City, and is presently doing a three-week show at San Francisco's Boarding House.

Now the Boarding House just doesn't do three-week shows, and Elfman credits the club's owner, David Allen, for taking a chance on the Knights.

"Club owners tend only to want to put themselves behind a group if there's a major label behind it," Elfman explains. The boingos are currently unsigned, but did make a tape of "Oh Dominique, Send Me," an Elfman original, with the help of Garth Hudson of The Band.

That tape garnered the Knights their biggest honor yet: they were chosen out of 2,000 entries from 60 countries to perform at the Yamaha Music Festival in Tokyo, Japan next month. This is an annual contest for unsigned groups sponsored by the makers of Yamaha musical instruments.

S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle

Datebook, Sunday, July 17, 1977

NIGHT LIFE

The Mystic Knights: On the Outer Edges of Music

By Jack McDonough

IF YOU CHECKED your entertainment listings to see what the action was this week you might have noticed an entry for the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, who have already played three nights at the Boarding House and who will continue there Tuesday through Saturday.

Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo?? For an eight-day engagement??

This may have given you pause, but no need to wonder deeply. Any town like San Francisco that has spawned or harbored such acts as Dan Hicks, the Tubes, Balcones Fault, Country Porn, Melba Rounds and Leila and the Snakes should be more than hospitable to the Mystic Knights, another troupe trooping toward the outer edges of contemporary music.

The Knights have already picked up very favorable notices in their native Los Angeles, although their name would have been more broadcast if they had been able to go through with their scheduled engagement at the Las Palmas Theater in March—an engagement they had worked up to by selling out preview shows at smaller places like the Daisy, the Comedy Store and the Odyssey. But just before they were to open a righteous Angelino, miffed in some way by the Mr. Nude America pageant that had been at the theater, torched the Las Palmas, destroying all of the Knights' costumes and half their sets in the process.

Now they're fighting back, and things are looking favorable. Garth Hudson, the organist of The Band, saw them at the Odyssey and is now producing a demo tape for them at The Bands' Shangri-La studio in Malibu (they have had one record out, a single titled "You Got Your Baby Back," a Patty Hearst commentary written for the Dr. Demento radio show); and the Boarding House dates here finally gives them a chance to test their wares outside of L.A.

But back to the central questions: Who are they? What do they do?

First, the name. "Mystic Knights" refers to the Mystic Knights of the Sea, the lodge Amos and Andy belonged to. "Oingo Boingo"? Well, "that just popped out of somebody's head one day," says Dan Elfman, co-founder of the group and possessor of a most appro-

prate name for the leader of a group which indulges so shamelessly in fantasy.

The people? Well, there are nine of them. They all sing. Everybody plays at least three instruments. Their collective background includes stints with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, New York City Opera, American Ballet Theatre, John Klemmer, the Grand Magic Circus of Paris, and the Strawberry Alarm Clock.

"Versatility is the key word. We go through four costume changes in a set. We have two different and complete percussion ensembles. We can have seven horns going at once. We can use different orchestrations to project different eras.

foundation is all in rock and ours is mostly jazz so there's not much similarity there.")

One of the two percussion ensembles is composed of all-wood West African xylophones, and the other is all-metal Balinese and Javinese instruments. Elfman has traveled to Africa to collect instruments and he and the other Knights have made a number of original instruments that they use on stage.

"The show is very complicated," says Elfman. "For instance, a musician will come on stage to play a Haydn sonata. He begins, is attacked by a dinosaur, who is in turn attacked by a rocketship. Space chickens descend on a woman



MYSTIC KNIGHTS OF OINGO BOINGO

We can get quasi-classical or go all jazz."

In elaboration Elfman mentioned some sources of inspiration and comparison. The Cab Calloway films, for instance: "You'd see somebody pick up an instrument and later he'd be back to play another one. I was always impressed by how much talent they had and how much they could do, and how hard they worked. Most acts don't work that hard anymore." Or Manhattan Transfer ("Our act doesn't have the same slickness but we do a lot of four and five-part harmonies"); Dan Hicks ("I've always loved all his stuff"); and the Tubes ("Their

and a child. Live animation is incorporated with Flash Gordon robots, followed by an eight-piece marching band playing a Prokofiev perversion."

There's more—gorillas and dragons and Carmen Miranda and the lascivious Cheddarella, schemer on a planet of the future, not to mention sax player Sam Phipps doing a version of "Body and Soul."

"The Boarding House isn't the perfect place," says Elfman, "but we'll make it go. We're going to pack everything we can into every corner of the place."

Thurs., Oct. 20, 1977 * S.F. EXAMINER—Page 27

A slightly off-mark fantasy of decadence

By Philip Elwood

THE MYSTIC KNIGHTS of the Oingo Boingo, eight men and a girl, are back at the Boarding House for a three-week run. The group, mostly the brainchild of lead singer Peter Dinklage, is a peculiar combination of European street-theater, 1930s movie soundtracks, a jazz ensemble, German cabaret-style decadence, circus clown acts, high-school talent assemblies and — well, throw in a comparison with some of the sequences from "Fantasia" for good measure.

In other words, it is a complex company of multi-talented (and multi-instrumented) performers who put on a two-hour extravaganza of musical mirth and merriment which includes a half-dozen costume changes, frequent use of filmed sequences on a backdrop screen, considerable satirical material and, quite naturally I guess, a great deal of stuff that doesn't work right.

In general, the Oingo Boingo presentation is like those foolish fantasies that

had "a number of problems," was not as consistent as it should have been and as a result the performance often dragged. If anything, there was too much variety, too much foolishness and too little satirical accuracy.

Such performers as Marlene Dietrich and Cab Calloway, for instance, are sure-fire subjects for broad satirical impressions; yet Miriam Cutler was not a mature Dietrich, and Eibling's Calloway was more like a cartoon character than the living Cab.

And "Travelin' All Alone," attributed to Billie Holiday, was Ethel Waters' tune — Billie never recorded it.

Perhaps the Oingo Boingo problem is one of pacing. Things move too fast, at times like a motor whose flywheel has flipped. "Body and Soul," performed as a tenor sax solo, is done double-time; "I Can't Get Started," Bunny Berigan's classic trumpet rendition, ends with a football series of splatted notes; a "Django Reinhardt" guitar solo might just as well have been Arthur Godfrey playing a ukelele; Ellington's "Black and Tan Fantasy" came out to be "Frankie and Johnny," etc., etc.

The general staging and costuming is, however, something quite special, and the dancing and musicianship is for the most part first rate.

The use of films is a risky business in a complex revue like this. The Oingo Boingos have done a fairly good job of integrating the screened and "live" portions, and there are a few remarkable animated scenes and some hilarious sci-fi film clips included.

Too much German narration and cabaret-humor, though.

Prominent in the audience (and around the sound booth) at the Boarding House was The Band's keyboard personage, Garth Hudson, who is working with the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo in record production.

As things seemed to me, the best definition of the show was that it was excessive — like a Monty Python film at twice the speed of sound.

Too much variety and foolishness, too little accuracy

Hollywood used, in the depths of the Depression, to surround pop-music performers in their "short-subject" one-and-two-reelers. (Louis Armstrong in a jungle, Cab Calloway singing a Betty Boop soundtrack, etc.)

On and off the Boarding House stage come apes, alligators, dinosaurs, rocket ships (of a sort), a marching band, an African-style xylophone ensemble, miscellaneous ghosts and spirits, and a combination of familiar, jazz-blues-cabaret music and about a dozen Eibling originals.

The opening-night presentation of Oingo Boingo, which Eibling admitted

March 1, 1978
 Los Angeles, California
 The Roxy
 Rick Danko concert

Two shows, the other members of The Band appeared at the end of the late show.

- Sip The Wine
- New Mexicoe
- This Wheel's On Fire
- Once Upon A Time
- What A Town
- Stage Fright
- The Shape I'm In
- The Weight

Line recording.

Los Angeles Times Fri, Mar. 3, 1978 —Part IV

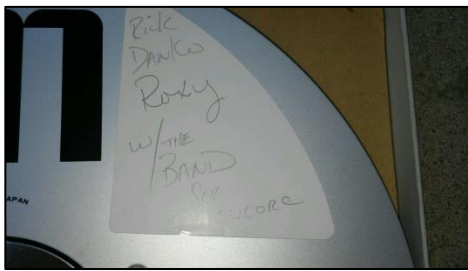
Rock's legendary **Band** was reunited Thursday morning when **Robbie Robertson**, **Garth Hudson**, **Richard Manuel** and **Levon Helm** joined **Rick Danko** on stage at the Roxy for a few tunes. **Dr. John** sat in on keyboards. Onlookers **Gregg Allman**, **Van Morrison**, **Mick Fleetwood** and **Alice Cooper** hadn't made it to the stage when the Roxy called a halt at 3:30 a.m. It was the first time The Band played together since the Last Waltz concert in '76 . . .

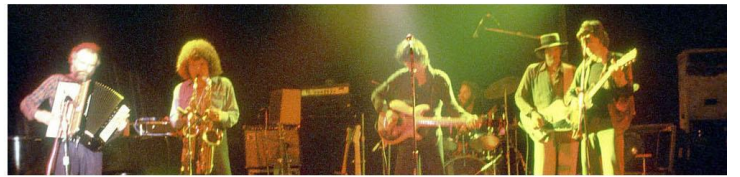
Band Stand

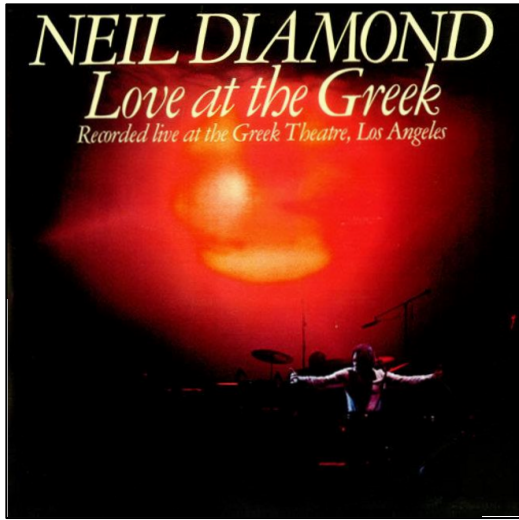
RECORD WORLD MARCH 18, 1978



Rick Danko's recent engagement at the Roxy in Los Angeles was the occasion for the first on-stage reunion of all five members of The Band since their farewell concert almost a year and a half ago. Robbie Robertson, Levon Helm, Richard Manuel and Garth Hudson all joined Arista recording artist Danko for an impromptu 2:00 a.m. set that included Band hits "The Weight" and "Stage Fright." Dr. John played keyboards, and Van Morrison and Gregg Allman were waiting in the wings to go on stage when the club finally closed at 3:30 a.m. Among the celebrities on hand in the audience were Mick Fleetwood, Joe Cocker, Jack Nicholson, Alice Cooper, Bernie Taupin, Michelle Phillips, Buck Henry and Ali McGraw. Pictured on-stage at the Roxy are (from left): Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Jerry Peterson of the Rick Danko band, Rick Danko, Michael deTemple of the Danko band, and Robbie Robertson.







Saturday, March 5, 1977 HONOLULU ADVERTISER

Neil Diamond's "Love at the Greek" (Columbia KC2 34404) is an outstanding effort, based on a performance at the Greek Theatre which also was a TV special earlier this week.

This is Diamond at his glittering best: A troubadour with keen rapport with his audience, who worship his every note. The songs are the best from the Diamond repertoire—"If You Know What I Mean," "Song Sung Blue" (with Helen Reddy and Henry Winkler chiming in at midpoint), "Holly Holy," "Brother Love's Traveling Salvation Show." One tune from the concert (and the TV special) notably absent: "I Am . . . I Said," but there are sundry other gems by the iridescent Diamond.

As produced by Robbie Robertson of The Band, the disc is exceptional in the genre of a concert performance. Methinks that the Grammy folks, who award all kinds of statuettes to all kinds of performances, ought to create a division for the live recording. And Diamond should be a natural for an award.

TV Week, Feb. 27, 1977, Page 9

It took five years of coaxing, brainstorming, and rejection, but rock-pop superstar Neil Diamond finally yielded to the NBC brass and will star in his TV special to be shown at 6:30 p.m., Monday, on KHON.

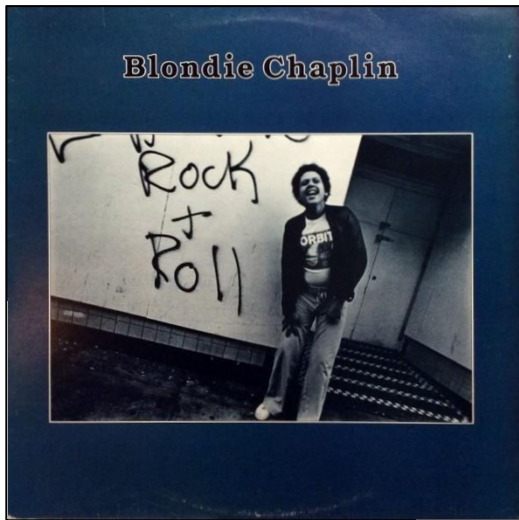
Of the lengthy negotiating process, the 34-year-old Diamond said:

"I tried to put together specials under the aegis of NBC a number of times. We got directors and writers together. They put scripts together for me, but I don't really like any of the shows they came up with.

"They were essentially standard variety-type formats...which had me coming out in a top hat surrounded by chorus line dancers. That really wasn't my kind of thing...I never felt that's where I could shine.

"This particular special is well-suited to me and shows the best that I can do."

As a footnote, the performer said he is not worried about the sound quality of his video special. Record producer Robbie Robertson (formerly of "The Band") is supervising the audio end of the telecast, and the performance will be released as a double album later this year. In addition, the special will be simulcast on FM radio in at least 16 cities.



DETROIT FREE PRESS
Wednesday, April 6, '77

**New Discs:
Tide's Out for
A Beach Boy**

BLONDIE CHAPLIN: Asylum—As a Beach Boy booster from way back, I hesitate to put the rap on any of the group's alumni. And it's not that Blondie Chaplin, a guitarist with the Beach Boys back in the early '70s, has turned out a poor record. He hasn't.

It's just that for all the fine musicianship and good taste on display (Garth Hudson of the Band even plays accordion on one cut), there isn't a truly memorable song on the album. In the most basic way, it fails to excite.

Part of the problem is Chaplin's songwriting, which is only so-so. Playing with Brian Wilson's band apparently didn't enhance Chaplin's ear for melody or the value of a musical hook.

—MIKE DUFFY

Blondie Chaplin—vocals, guitar, piano, bass, percussion

Ricky Fataar—drums, percussion

David Mason—piano

Richard Tee—piano, organ

Jon Hartmann—piano

Howard Tsukamoto—bass

Kenny Gradney—bass

Garth Hudson—accordion

Carly Munoz—organ

Strings arranged by Nick DeCaro

The Laguna Horns:

Tom Bray—trumpet

Steve Lawrence—sax

Kenny Walter—trombone

Background Vocals

Clydie King, Venetta Fields

Daniel Moore, Matthew Moore

Carol Holmes, Rita Jean Bodine

Produced by Rob Fraboni



The Herald News, Friday, Oct. 14, 1977 • Serving North Jersey

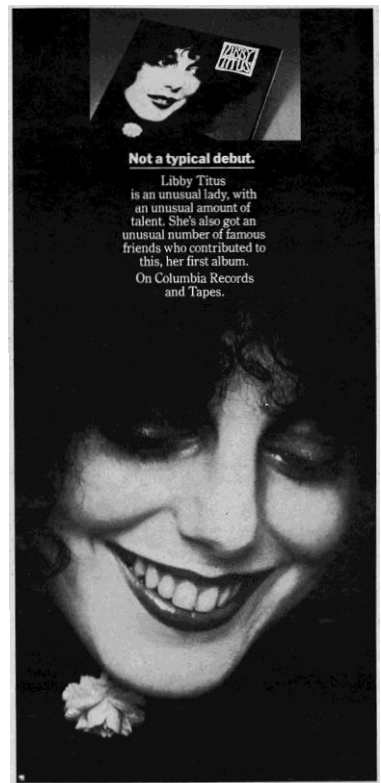
LIBBY TITUS, Libby Titus, on Columbia Records...A singer like Libby Titus comes along only once every few years so if you've a chance to grab this record, do so and hang on. It is work by an artist who doesn't seem to care that her music probably won't be played by semi-literate disc jockeys on radio stations that make enormously successful attempts to play nothing that isn't loud, insipid, musically inept or just plain bad.

Libby Titus is just plain good and because she is, she'll either have to change her style or starve. In the meantime, though, we have from her at least this one excellent album that features a wide range of compositions from Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller's "Kansas City," which Ms. Titus does in a slow, bluesy manner to Cole Porter's "Miss Otis Regrets." It is fascinating both for its handling by Ms. Titus and the fact that this distaff version of "Tom Dooley" was written by Porter (you have to hear the lyrics to believe them.)

MS. TITUS HAS the kind of relaxing voice that is seldom heard among contemporary artists, a voice as sweet as, yet softer than, Joni Mitchell's, one that insinuates, rather than clubs, its way through a room. This insinuation is particularly obvious on "Love Has No Pride," the self-anger and sadness of which she manages to convey without once raising her voice above a soft, confessional musical sigh. (Linda Ronstadt should take lessons!) As a whole, the album is soft with hints of jazz and rooted in love's blues. It's the kind of album that provides a marvelous background for a rainy Sunday morning. And speaking of background, Ms. Titus has some help from quite a few major artists, including Carly Simon (two of whose songs she performs), Paul Simon and Robbie Robertson. Garth Hudson and Richard Manuel of "The Band." Don't pass this one up.

THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR
Fri., Sept. 23, 1977

"LIBBY TITUS." (Columbia 34152). Bonnie Raitt, Linda Ronstadt and Rita Coolidge all know Libby Titus (incidentally, she's the former wife of The Band's Levon Helm). She coauthored the great song "Love Has No Pride," which they recorded. This is lyricist-singer Titus' first recording since then. Her distinctive voice, at times, evokes Maria Muldaur's and Carly Simon's. Her lyrics are in the urban pop style of Simon, who co-produced the album and wrote a couple of the tunes. An attractive pop record with jazzy flavoring. ★★★.



Not a typical debut.

Libby Titus is an unusual lady, with an unusual amount of talent. She's also got an unusual number of famous friends who contributed to this, her first album. On Columbia Records and Tapes.



The Dingoes, a pack of five Australian musicians who take their name from their homeland's wild, hinterland dogs, have delivered a curious blend of earthy rock and beautiful melody to American shores. Their debut A&M release, "Five Times The Sun" (SP-4636), exhibits many of the qualities American music lovers seek and receive from very few of their own bands—music undiluted by gimmickery and possessed with spirit.

Eight original compositions based almost exclusively on guitar, bass and drums run the gamut of soulful, strong rock to country ballad. In between, the Dingoes' sound is occasionally augmented by keyboards of The Band's Garth Hudson and session pianist Nicky Hopkins. A trace of harmonica by vocalist Broderick Smith combines with

Hudson's carnival organ to give "Waiting for the Tide to Turn" a prairie flavor along the lines of the Band's "Life is a Carnival."

But musical similarities begin and end with that song; the seven remaining tunes stand on their own as valid expressions of Australian country rock. Smith's vocals are tinged with a powerfully raw and expressive edge which match the work of the band's hand-driving guitars. Acoustic guitars and harmonica are featured on the smooth country ballads.

The Dingoes have given us an impressive debut. Their chunky rhythms and infectious melodies could signal the beginning of an effective merger of American and Australian rock styles.

FRIDAY, Valley News, Sept. 2, 1977

—Jeff Snyder

Side One
SMOOTH SAILING
 Chris: lead guitar
 John B. & John L.: Austrafarian Bass
SHINE A LIGHT
 Chris: lead guitar
 John B.: clavinet
SINGING YOUR SONG
 John B.: piano
 Kerryn: steel guitar
STARTING TODAY
 Kerryn: lead guitar
 Nicky: piano

Side Two
COME ON DOWN
 Kerryn: steel guitar
WAY OUT WEST
 John B.: accordian
 Nicky: piano
BOY ON THE RUN
 Kerryn: mandolin
WAITING FOR THE TIDE TO TURN
 Kerryn: lead guitar
 Garth: keyboards



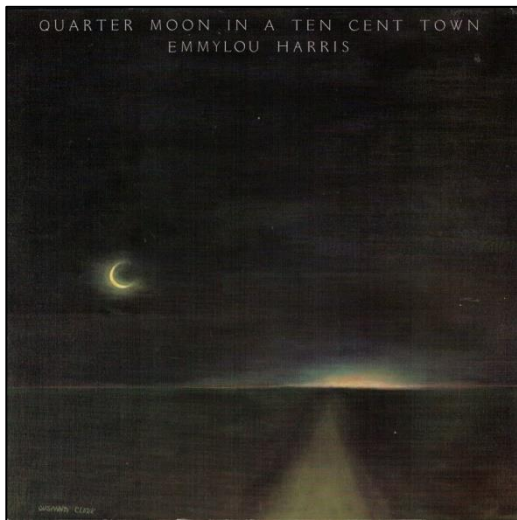
The Austin American-Statesman October 21, 1977

ROLLING STONE

record review

HIRTH MARTINEZ: "Big Bright Street" (Warner Bros. BS 3031)

Martinez is a sort of space-rocker: That is, he firmly believes that this planet is a madhouse, love is the only hope and it's impossible (or at least highly unlikely), and that the only hints of salvation lie outside. He is accompanied on these protestations of cosmic corniness by a cast which includes Dr. John and Garth Hudson of the Band, both of whom have at times seemed in touch with the outer spheres themselves. A weird record, for weird tastes.



THE AGE, Thursday, February 9, 1978

EMMYLOU HARRIS sounds and looks too delectable to be true, but here she is with another irresistible album: **Quarter Moon in A Ten Cent Town** (Warner BSK 3141).

Her talent is perhaps best explored in the rendition of Dolly Parton's country schmaltz *To Daddy*, Emmylou's light touch brings a rare credibility to the song.

But seriously, it's in the two beautiful Jesse Winchester numbers, *My Songbird* and *Defying Gravity*, that the lady finds perfect vehicles for her exquisite vocals. In the same vein is *Easy From Now On*, although the tempo increases a shade.

Interesting guests are Willie Nelson (vocals) on the plaintive *One Paper Kid*, Garth Hudson's accordion and baritone sax respectively on the rousing *Leaving Louisiana in The Broad Daylight* and revivalist *Burn That Candle*, plus Rick Dando's fiddle on "Louisiana".

Fayssoux Starling's duet vocals should also receive mention on *Green Rolling Hills* as should Mickey Raphael's harmonica on six tracks.

Backing are "The Hot Band" of Glen Hardin (piano), Emory Gordy (bass), Albert Lee (electric guitar), Rodney Crowell (acoustic guitar), Hank DeVito (pedal steel) and John Ware (drums).



MUNCIE EVENING PRESS, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1978

"LUXURY YOU CAN AFFORD" by Joe Cocker, Asylum Records.

If "Luxury You Can Afford" is any indication, Joe Cocker is back in top form after years of personal problems.

As on most Cocker albums, Cocker composes none of the songs. However, several of the songs were written for Cocker's use.

Cocker's gravelly, bluesy voice once again brings out the meaning of lyrics as few other singers are capable of doing. And he sings with amazing freshness several songs that have been previously recorded.

Helping Joe with his comeback are such top musicians as Rick Danko, Mac "Dr. John" Rebbeck, Billy Preston, Stephen Gadd, Richard Tee and Don Hathaway. As with most Cocker bands, the new group is based around a basic rhythm section of bass and drums, two keyboard players, three horns and three background singers.

Written by Phil Driscoll for Cocker, "Wasted Years" is a quasi-autobiographical tale that for some odd reason buried Cocker's vocal beneath layers of instrumentation.

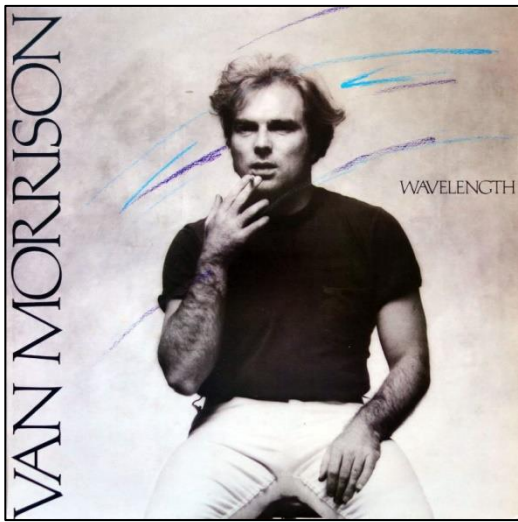
Cocker's genuine talent shines through more clearly on producer Allen Toussaint's "Fun Time," Dylan's "Watching the River Flow," Procul Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" and "Southern Lady."

Having Joe Cocker back in top form is not just a "luxury" — it is a necessity for the rock world.

I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

(NORMAN WHITFIELD) (BARRETT STRONG)

BARRY E. BECKETT — ACOUSTIC PIANO
 RANDY MCCORMICK — CLAVINET
 BILLY PRESTON — ORGAN
 PETE CARR — LEAD GUITAR
 JIMMY R. JOHNSON — RHYTHM GUITAR
 RICK DANKO — BASS
 ROGER HAWKINS — DRUMS
 HARVEY THOMPSON — TENOR SAX
 RONNIE EADES — BARITONE SAX
 HARRISON CALLOWAY JR. — TRUMPET
 WAYNE JACKSON — TRUMPET
 CHARLES ROSE — TROMBONE



CHICAGO TRIBUNE Arts & Fun—November 5, 1978

VAN MORRISON surely possesses one of the most beguiling voices in rock — emotional, evocative, and soulful in the purest sense of the word. "Wavelength" (Warner Bros.), Morrison's follow-up to the so-so "Period of Transition," which merely marked time, represents no real changes in direction, either. But this time around, Morrison's material (all self-penned, except for one song cowritten with Jackie DeShannon) is much stronger — though, with Morrison, it's the feel of the music rather than the lyrics that creates the impact. The sound, as usual, is a mix of blues, jazz, and soul, with Morrison on sax and electric piano as well as guitars and organist Garth Hudson, among others, in the backing lineup; there's also an excursion into reggae and some full-blown choral effects.

Lynn Van Matre

KINGDOM HALL

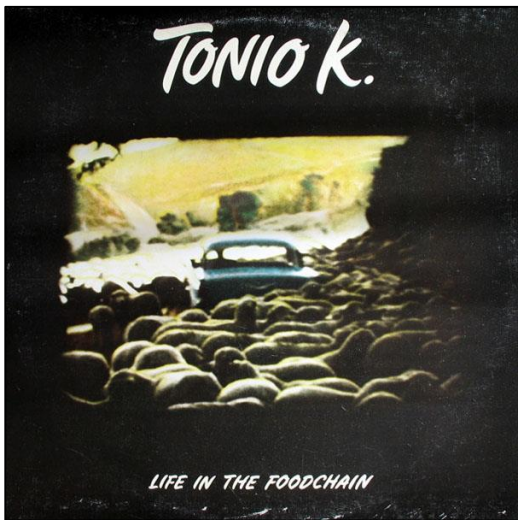
Peter Bardens-piano and synthesizer
Bobby Tench-electric guitar
Mickey Feat-bass
Peter Van Hooke-drums
Garth Hudson-Yamaha synthesizer solo
Van Morrison-acoustic guitar
Back-up vocals-Ginger Blake,
Linda Dillard, Laura Creamer

VENICE U.S.A.

Peter Bardens-organ
Bobby Tench-electric guitar
Mickey Feat-bass
Peter Van Hooke-drums
Van Morrison-acoustic guitar
Garth Hudson-accordion
Herbie Armstrong-electric rhythm guitar

TAKE IT WHERE YOU FIND IT

Peter Bardens-piano and Roland Horns
Bobby Tench-electric guitar
Kuma-bass
Peter Van Hooke-drums
Van Morrison-acoustic rhythm guitar
Mitch Dalton-Spanish guitar
Garth Hudson-organ
Back-up vocals-Ginger Blake, Linda Dillard,
Laura Creamer



Although it says 1978 on the labels, it looks like this record wasn't released until February 1979.

12—Post-Star, Glens Falls, N.Y. Saturday, June 9, 1979



Record Reviews

Life in the Foodchain: Tonio K. (Full Moon/Epic JE-35545)

This column has always stressed the importance of bringing new groups to your attention which I feel are important. Some have been winners, but most have been forgotten — much to your great loss.

This is another one of those albums which is remarkable, but probably won't raise any dust anywhere — except maybe here and in a few other rock review columns.

This dude — real name Steve Kirkorian, a member of the last incarnation of the Crickets — is one of those genuine American mondo-bizarros ala Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits, Leon Redbone or Frank Zappa. Except that he operates right in the rock mainstream — not way off in outer space like his fellow crazies.

Aside from seeming to have an obsession about not having his real name publically known or his face being shown (there is no known photograph of him showing his true face, folks) he also has a weird outlook toward music — but one that is almost obsessively interesting.

As you might expect, he's from Southern California, and he's as nuts as everybody else out here. His music reflects that Southern California insanity, with stinging, perceptive songs set in hard-humping rock tunes.

He writes all the songs and sings lead vocals with a hard-edged voice just meant for rock and roll.

He's got a variety of musicians playing here, with guitars by Earl Slick, Nick van Maarth or Albert Lee, with Garth Hudson on accordion, and others — cranking out a powerful rock sound which is outrageously good rock and roll. He is a cross between Bruce Springsteen and Iggy Pop.

The most remarkable tunes include "Willie and the Pigman" and "Life in the Food Chain," and "American Love Affair," the bitter "H-a-t-r-e-d" and the lengthy, brilliant "The Ballad of the Night the Clocks All Quit (And Governments Failed)."

It is an exceptional album which deserves your attention.

AUDIO

Guitar: Earl Slick, Nick van Maarth, Dick Dale, Tim Weston, Albert Lee, Tonio K.

Bass: Peter Freiberger, Jean Millington-Slick, Robin Something, Erik Scott

Drums: Craig Krampf, Claude Pepper, Rob Fraboni, Curley Smith

Accordion: Garth Hudson

Automatic Weapons:

Roger "The Immoral" Nichols

Immediate Response:

All available units

Vocal Abuse: Yours truly, Tonio K.

O.K. Chorale:

Tonio, Nick, and the Shangri-lettes

Crowd Scenes: Monique, Brent, Nicole

and the Epic/Full Moon Drill Team

Saxophones:

Gerry Peterson, Marty Grebb

C&W Slide Effects: Peter Freiberger

Pet Sounds: The Lone Star Boys

Percussion: Some of the above

Recorded at: Shangri-la, Malibu, Ca.;

The Village Recorder, West L.A.

Recorded by: Nick van Maarth

Assisted by: Carla Frederick,

Rick Ash, Michael Nosker

Additional Engineering:

Tim Kramer, Miles Grandfield

Mixed at: Shangri-la

Sound Advice:

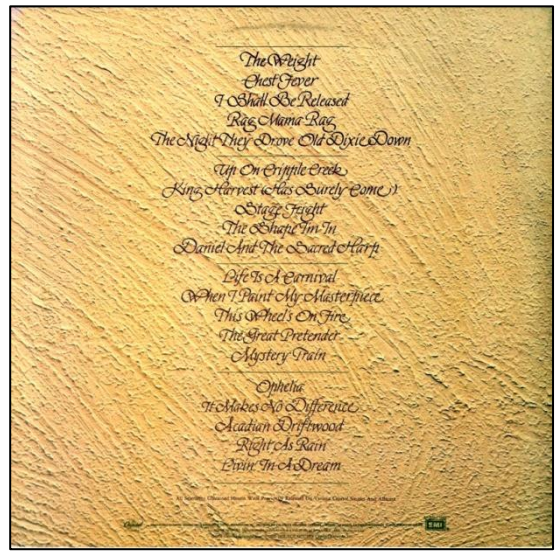
Larry Samuels, Ed Anderson

Mastered by:

Ken Perry at Capitol Records, L.A., Ca.

Garth Hudson appears courtesy of Warner Bros. Records Inc.

Albert Lee appears courtesy of A&M Records Inc.



The CAPITOL MARKET

THIS MONTH'S RELEASES NOW IN STOCK

THE BAND/Anthology
SKBO-11856 • 8227-11856 • 8227-11856

TERRY REID
RIPCORD/Anthology
SKB-11861 • 8227-11861 • 8227-11861

PLEASURE & PAIN
SKB-11862 • 8227-11862 • 8227-11862

COLISEUM ROCK
STAR
SKB-11863 • 8227-11863 • 8227-11863

JESSE COLTER/That's The Way A Cowboy Rides & Rides
SKB-11864 • 8227-11864 • 8227-11864

FREDA PAYNE/Thunder & Rain
SKB-11865 • 8227-11865 • 8227-11865

Capitol RECORDS

Billboard, October 28, 1978

Cash Box/November 4, 1978

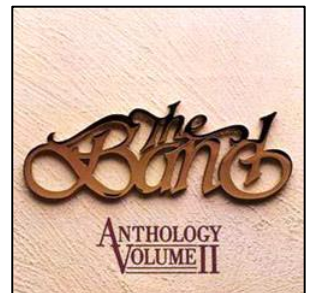
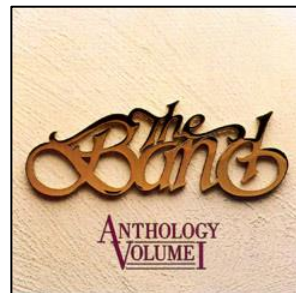
ANTHOLOGY — The Band — Capitol SKBO-11856 — Producer: The Band — List: 10.98

It would be difficult to say which album is the definitive Band compilation ("Rock Of Ages," "The Last Waltz" and "Best Of The Band" are the likely contenders), but this new package undeniably contains a solid representation of the quintet's best works from all of its Capitol albums. Including such rock standards as "The Weight," "Stage Fright," "Life Is A Carnival," "It Makes No Difference" and 16 others, this two-record set also features revealing liner notes by journalist Robert Palmer.

RECORD WORLD NOVEMBER 4, 1978

ANTHOLOGY
THE BAND—Capitol SKBO 11856

Four sides and 20 selections of the group's best material should please even their most diehard fans. Songs like "The Weight" and "Chest Fever" through to "Livin' In A Dream" chart a steady progression. Liner notes by Robert Palmer document their history.



Reissued in 1980 as two separate albums.

THE WEIGHT
Robbie wrote this, the signature song of *Music from Big Pink*, one night in Woodstock, in one sitting. "I was kind of hung up on Luis Buñuel, the Spanish film maker," he says. "He's made a few films on saints and it just doesn't work in this world, being a saint." As in so many Robertson songs, the action is fragmented in a cinematic or perhaps dream-like manner. One sees the scenes in the mind and puzzles out their meaning for oneself; nothing is didactic, but with careful listening much is revealed. Incidentally, the piano obligato that rises up around the "take a load" part of the chorus is by Garth.

CHEST FEVER
This has always been Garth's showcase, with his introductions indicating what he'd achieved at a particular point in time. By *The Last Waltz*, The Band's farewell concert in 1976, he'd begun mixing organ, synthesizers, and prerecorded tapes of Tibetan monks and a cow mooing for effects that were truly otherworldly. Here he is more Angelican in mood, but no less impressive.



SIDE ONE

building an architecture of keyboard sounds that must not have been easy to produce with the equipment then at his disposal. Because Richard and Levon take the vocal here in a kind of staggered unison, listeners have always tried hard to make out the words, failed, and wondered what the song was about. Actually, according to Robbie, it's simple: "It's kind of a hard love song, but it's a reversal on that old rock and roll thing where they're always telling the girl, you know, he's a rebel, he'll never be any good. This time it's the other way around, people are telling him about this girl and it affects him physically. These things they're telling him move him incredibly, and he's really a victim of that." In response to a question about the wonderful, wheezing horns on the bridge, he adds, "that was John Simon, Garth, Rick . . . all of us. We were trying to make a more pathetic kind of sound, and also something so we could kick back into the song."



I SHALL

Dylan **BE RELEASED**
must have given this moving song of redemption to The Band because he knew they were

the only people who could really do it justice. Richard, taking the falsetto lead, means every word, and the arrangement, with Robbie playing his old Stella guitar through a "black box" built by Garth while Garth gets an ocean effect from his organ, is brilliant. Listening to this again, out of its original context, can come as something of a shock. In the memory, *Big Pink* tends to seem woody or down home, but on this and several other selections from the album The Band's use of electronics was years ahead of its time.

RAG MAMA

This classic good-time number is the first of four songs from **RAG** The Band. Fiddle and mandolin on the intro establish a country ambience, but according to Robbie "this is a rag, a boogie. It's downtown, more a bordello kind of song than a farm song." The manic, raggedy piano is Garth, adding just a tinge of abstraction to his boogie licks and coming up with something magical, especially on the weird, jazzy ending. Richard is on drums, and of course Levon is the vocalist and mandolinist. At this remove the song seems inseparable from his appealingly grainy,

weatherbeaten voice, with its flashes of lascivious humor, but Robbie says that "nothing was ever written with anybody in mind. Sometimes while I was writing a song I would start to realize whose alley it was up the most." Levon's alley sure is swinging.



THE NIGHT

Compared to later **THEY DROVE** and more dramatic versions **OLD DIXIE** of this song, including the **DOWN** Joan Baez rendition and subsequent live performances by The Band, this first reading is pure, direct and unsentimental. It gets inside the sense of place and tradition one finds in the South with insights of rare acuity, and it captures the emotional climate of that apocalyptic moment in Southern history, the Surrender, in a few exceptionally well chosen words and a dignified, understated arrangement. What more is there to say? This is a classic.



UP ON CRIPPLE CREEK
A hard rocking introduction, with heavy bass from Rick Danko, and once again Levon is the featured vocalist, turning in another witty, exquisitely timed, altogether priceless performance. That wah-wah sound, like a jew's harp, is Garth again, using an electric clavinet. Sly and the Family Stone



were just beginning to use the same sort of rhythm riffs, but since they were black and The Band was supposed to be country, nobody made the connection. "This guy's basically irresponsible, and whenever it gets sideways he knows he can rely on this woman," says Robbie. She's etched indelibly in the listener's mind after a few short verses, Spike Jones records and all, and she definitely knows how to have fun while being protective. Note that already, before The Band's first tour as The Band, Robbie wrote, "this livin' on the road is gettin' pretty old."

KING HARVEST (Has Surely Come)

Autumn, the wind in the trees, the carnival on the edge of town. . . Memories of listening to this last song on *The Band* in the autumn of 1969 and being profoundly touched by it without quite understanding why. Now it's easier to understand. "It's just a kind of character study on a time period," says Robbie. "You know, at the beginning, when the unions came in, they were a saving grace, a way of fighting the big money people, and they affected everybody, from the people that worked in the big cities all the way around to the farm people. It's ironic now, because now so much of it is like gangsters, assassinations, power, greed, insanity. I just thought it was in-

SIDE TWO

credible how it started and how it ended up." The remarkable thing about the song is that the listener, whatever his sympathies and despite his knowledge of historical events, identifies with the narrator, feeling both his surging hopes and his underlying feeling that everything is not quite right, that it's autumn, not spring. This is one of Richard Manuel's most affecting vocals, and listen to Robbie's fine jabbing lead guitar throughout. Another thing about this song, and about *The Band* in general: the music is unusually complex, making use of odd verse patterns and tricky rhythmic suspensions and modifying the "natural" sounds of the instruments for various precisely calculated effects. But because of the way the record sounds, none of this calls attention to itself. One is left, as Robbie wanted listeners to be, touched by the songs rather than marvelling at The Band's instrumental prowess.



STAGE FRIGHT

Ralph J. Gleason called this the best song ever written about performing. Of course it can be seen as a reaction to the Band's return to live performing after the release of their first two albums. When they debuted as The Band, at San Francisco's Winterland, Robbie was extremely ill and was able to play the first night only after he'd been treated by a hypnotist. Things were much better the next night, and the Band went on to become an exceptional performing unit once again, reasserting all the tightness and ferocity they'd known as the Hawks. But Robbie's lines stress the performer's vulnerability—performing is "just one more

nightmare you can stand" and when the musician "says that he's afraid, take him at his word." Rick Danko brings just the right degree of hesitancy to a thoroughly convincing vocal performance, and once again Garth Hudson is the outstanding instrumental voice.

THE SHAPE I'M IN

Robbie warns that this one shouldn't be taken too literally: "It's about various things that come back to the same stem, you know, it talks about politics, violence, lost love, suicide, and it all comes back to the same

singing has always seemed to reflect a life lived on the edge of some abyss, was the perfect vocalist. He also provides an ominous rhythm line on electric piano, playing through a wah-wah or some sort of homemade tonal modifier while Garth sails above it all on organ. This is a particularly good example of the Band's stunningly unified instrumental interplay.

DANIEL AND THE SACRED HARP

Robbie really likes this song, and so, incidentally, does director Martin Scorsese, who impressed Robertson early on in the planning of *The Last Waltz*: by knowing every word of it. But it's a difficult song to pin down. "I guess it's



refrain." The contemporary, down mood of the song was reflected in the wraparound picture on *Stage Fright*'s cover. Everybody but Rick had grown a beard by this time, and they looked like they were hiding in some dark cabin from all the negative forces "The Shape I'm In" talked about. Richard, whose strained but eloquent

about greed, in the context of Christian mythology," Robbie says. "It's kind of a traditional thing in a way. At that time I was into sacred harp singing, and I probably had that in the back of my mind." Perhaps it's best to look at it as a parable, played in a kind of modified hill music style, with Rick on fiddle and Garth adding authenticity with his old-time pump organ. As an evocation of a vanishing America that was rooted in faith's certainties, this is just about unequalled.

LIFE IS A

Carnivals have always furnished a particularly potent strain of American imagery. Robbie's "carnival on the edge of town" in "King Harvest" carried in its train a whole tentfull of weirdness and foreboding, even though the association was difficult and perhaps impossible to explain. Here, he

extends the carnival metaphor to life itself, referring to it "in the carny sense, talking about the hustle and the freakiness of the street." This is the first of two selections from *Carnival*, and musically the most notable thing about it, aside from Robbie's stinging guitar, is Allen Toussaint's amazing antiphonal horn arrangement.

**WHEN**

A very funny, very sad, and very true **I PAINT MY MASTERPIECE**

Dylan opus, and—who'd have imagined—it turned out to be just right for Levon. Everything is here—the weight of tradition one feels in Europe and the contrast of the American wilderness in the artist's memory, his incredible boorishness ("oh to be back in the land of Coca Cola"), his eye for the kind of ladies who take up with artists and his essentially unshakable faith in himself and in things American. Garth is on accordion, Levon on mandolin.

**THIS WHEEL'S ON FIRE**

One wonders what further treasures the Dylan-Danko songwriting team might have come up with if Bob and The Band hadn't gone their (mostly) separate ways. In any event, their "This Wheel's On Fire," heard first on *Big Fish* and again, in a more bracing version, on the *Rock of Ages* live album, has been widely recorded and even more widely admired. Some have seen it as a piece of rock'n'roll burnout bravado, others as a more spiritual declaration. Whatever; its power and immediacy render literal interpretations irrelevant.

**THE GREAT PRETENDER**

This is the first of two selections from *Moondog Matinee*, named for the celebrated Alan Freed radio show that first gave rock and roll a name and then gave it a bad name when the Moondog Coronation Ball, a 1952 live show promoted by Freed and badly oversold, created the first rock and roll riot. Once again The Band shows an uncanny ability to match the



singer with the song, as Richard tackles the Platters oldie, translating it from the east coast sweet harmony idiom into a grittier but no less affecting style. There isn't much else to be said about this straightforward, heartfelt tribute, except to note Garth's decidedly contemporary organ weaving around the vocal lines.

MYSTERY TRAIN

This was originally a Southern hymn, recorded in the twenties by the Carter family. Sam Phillips, the owner of Memphis's Sun records and the producer who more than any other single individual invented rock and roll, worked out a new version along with Herman "Little Junior" Parker in 1953 and it became one of Sun's first rhythm and blues hits and an enduring classic. Phillips reworked it again for Elvis Presley, who made a more declarative but no less mysterious version. There has always been a hazy, dream-like aura to the piece—why is the train a mystery train? Robbie, taking a

cue from Sam Phillips's free hand with tradition, reworked the tune even more radically, adding a new rhythmic underpinning and two bridges and a verse of his own. This is one of The Band's masterpieces. The somnambulist intro, which seems to trail off illogically before the rhythm starts up, helps prepare the listener for the bluesy dream imagery, sounding like Robert Johnson or Sonny Boy Williamson but in fact pure Robertson, that follows: "Heard the whistle blow, it was the middle of the night / When I got down to the station the train was pullin' out of sight." What could be spookier than that?

5C 138-85685



Side four:

OPHELIA

Here we have another spook tune from the pen of Robbie Robertson, who once said, "I love mythology, Dante. . . Heavy dreamers, really admirable dreamers." It turns out, though, that the Ophelia he was thinking of wasn't a myth. "I heard the name at one point," he says, "and it stuck in my head; it's Minnie Pearl's real name. And the way she said it. . . This song also has a New Orleans, another kind of New Orleans flavor, you know, with the old vamp kind of chord changes, all major chords." Garth, who played all the horns on the *Northern Lights—Southern Cross* album where this originally appeared, contributed a deft brass arrangement, and it's Levon who begs Ophelia to "please darken my door." By this time—1975—Robbie had loosened up enough to allow space for a few guitar solos, and this one is a good, ringing example of his most recent style.

rather than depressing, he said, "I thought about it in terms of the saying that time heals all wounds. . . except in some cases, and this was one of those cases." Like everything on *Northern Lights*, the tune benefits from a careful layering of instrumental parts, with Garth stepping out for a lyrical spot on his curved soprano sax and Robbie contributing a keening guitar break.

**ACADIAN DRIFTWOOD**

It wasn't until Robbie moved to California, where all The Band but Levon now live, that he began to write about Canada with the same passion and attention to detail he lavished on the South. But of course, "Acadian Driftwood" isn't just about Canada, it's about the Acadian migration down to Louisiana, and Robbie was familiar with both ends of the journey as well as with most of the stages in between. "After the battle between Montcalm and Wolfe in 1759," he explains, "after Britain won, it was put to the people living there that they had to swear allegiance or give up their land. So some of them went

SIDE FOUR

to the old country, some of them went to the French Islands, the Caribbean, and some across the border down the Mississippi to Louisiana. The ones who went to Louisiana became the Cajuns, and the ones who stayed became Canada's outcasts. They don't have a language, the French can't understand their French, and they don't really have a nationality." Levon, Richard and Rick alternate on the vocals, with Byron Berline contributing a fiddle part and Garth adding orchestral effects. This was the masterpiece of *Northern Lights* and one of Robbie's best songs ever.

RIGHT AS RAIN

The first of two songs from *Islands*, recorded while The Band was rehearsing for *The Last Waltz*,

"Right As Rain" is, in Robbie's words, "A straight love song." It's also a lovely melody (especially the bridge) and a richly-orchestrated performance (especially Garth's keyboards). Richard is the featured vocalist.

**LIVIN' IN A DREAM**

"Life goes round like a wheel / You never know if it's real / Time goes by like a train / Let it burn, turn up the flame"—The Band has lived those lines, and Levon never sounded more convincing than when he sang them. This was the final cut on *Islands* and although it isn't really a farewell from The Band—on records, at least, they'll be back—it does signal an end to the active performing phase of the most admired and respected rock band America has produced.

ROBERT PALMER

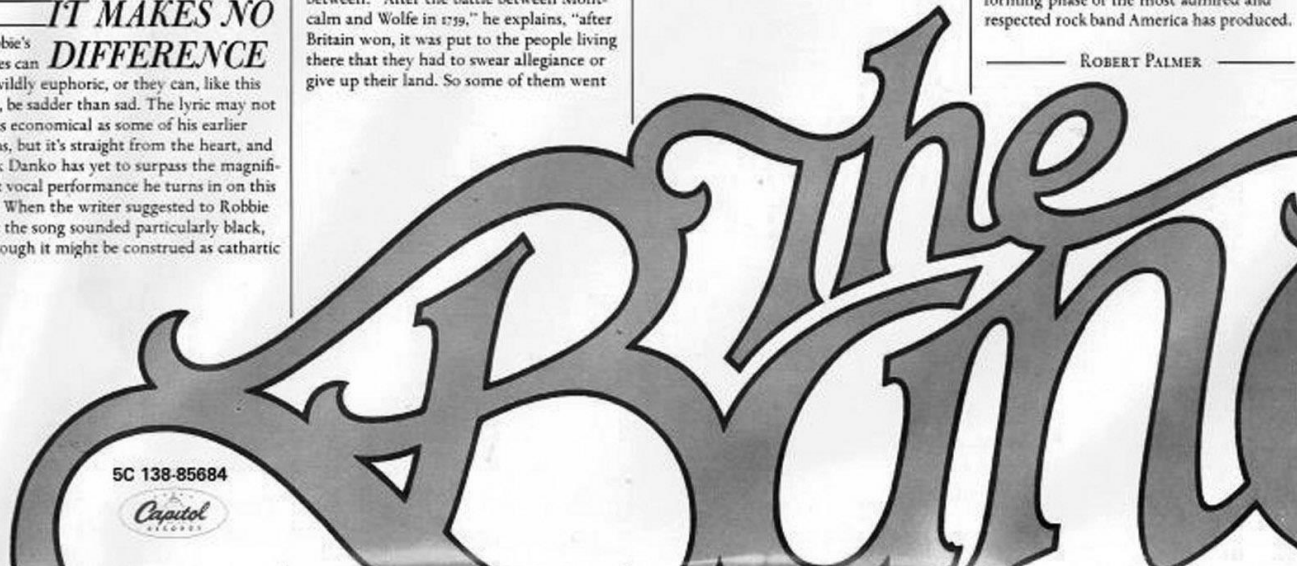
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE

Robbie's tunes can be wildly euphoric, or they can, like this one, be sadder than sad. The lyric may not be as economical as some of his earlier gems, but it's straight from the heart, and Rick Danko has yet to surpass the magnificent vocal performance he turns in on this cut. When the writer suggested to Robbie that the song sounded particularly black, although it might be construed as cathartic

5C 138-85684



SIDE THREE



ROCK SPECTACULAR FILMED

Encore for 'The Last Waltz'

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The Band's farewell to live audiences is now a part of rock music history, but the spectacular event is sure to be witnessed again on film.

Director Martin Scorsese, whose movie credits include "Taxi Driver" and "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," filmed the Thanksgiving concert that brought together Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr and more than a dozen other rock stars on the Winterland stage with The Band.

No one connected with The Band or Bill Graham, who produced the concert, is disclosing what, if any, distribution arrangements will be made for the film and recording.

But the potential for future profits is obvious, presuming there is a wide audience for a concert that featured the most impressive array of rock artists ever assembled on one stage.

Guest performers for "The Last Waltz" included Dylan, Starr, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Stephen Stills, Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Van Morrison, Muddy Waters, Ronnie Hawkins, Paul Butterfield, Dr. John

and Rolling Stones lead guitarist Ron Wood.

While the cameras whirred, 5,000 people who had paid \$25 for tickets dined on catered Thanksgiving Day dinners beginning at 5 p.m. They listened to Strauss waltzes by the 38-piece Berkeley Promenade Orchestra and blues tunes by pianist Dave Alexander before The Band took the stage shortly after 9 p.m.

The Band ended "The Last Waltz" with an encore at 2:02 a.m. amid thunderous applause in Winterland, an auditorium scarred by time and graffiti but transformed into an ornate ballroom for the occasion.

Dylan had sung five numbers with The Band, beginning and ending with "Baby Let Me Follow You Down," before the farewell "I Shall Be Released" that brought most of the guest performers onstage for a powerful ensemble rendition of his song.

Starr and Levon Helm, drumming side by side, kept the beat going, and many of the stars came back for an impromptu jam before The Band ended it

all with "Baby Don't Do It."

Later, two members of The Band jammed with other musicians until dawn while the group's lead guitarist, Robbie Robertson, discussed filming of the event with Scorsese.

The musical feast ended 16 years on the road for The Band, which will continue recording together. Robertson, bassist Rick Danko, pianist Richard Manuel, organist Garth Hudson and drummer Helm came together in Canada, backing Ronnie Hawkins' country-rock singing as Levon and the Hawks.

The Band made its solo concert debut in April 1969 at Winterland in a Bill Graham-produced affair after recording their inaugural album, "Music from the Big Pink."

The Band had backed up Dylan in the late 1960s before emerging on its own as one of the world's top rock bands. The group teamed up with Dylan again in 1974 for his return to concert performances.

Other albums by The Band include "Stage Fright" and "The Band."

Director Rejects Band Film Offer

HOLLYWOOD — While director Martin Scorsese goes through the monumental chore of editing his Liza Minnelli starrer, "New York, New York" — which will have to make some \$16 million to break even, he's ignoring a Sir Lew Grade offer for another film project which would guarantee Scorsese an instant profit of million.

Impresario Grade is ready to fork over \$3 million against a percentage of the profits — sight unseen — for the Woodstock-style movie Scorsese is preparing about The Band, that was filmed at the top rock unit's recent spectacular San Francisco "Last Waltz" farewell concert. Scorsese had a crew of 45 recording the four-hour, end-of-an-era musical happening, that featured one of the most prestigious collections of rock stars ever assembled on stage (including Ringo Starr, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Neil Diamond and Joni Mitchell), and which drew Band devotees from as far away as New York.

SCORSESE FIGURES he spent no more than \$300,000 compiling some 160,000 feet of footage of the group's final live performance, but neither he nor The Band want to discuss business with Grade — or any movie man — until the film is actually assembled and they know what they have.

If they don't like what they've got, they're determined "The Last Waltz" will never be released. And that rather than expose it to music lovers' round the world, they'll allow it to have the distinction of being the most expensive "home" movie ever made.

Cash Box/January 1, 1977

SOME FILMIC NOTES — on "The Last Waltz" by director Martin Scorsese: "(I did it) for love. I was like a television director moving back and forth from camera to camera. Sometimes, in the heat of the concert, a camera would run out of film. Then it would be kind of hit and miss." He didn't miss too often, according to Rick Danko, who's seen most of the footage. "It looks great," Danko told us, "he really captured the feeling of the show." . . .

Tallahassee Democrat
Wednesday, August 10, 1977

Martin Scorsese's documentary of the Band's last concert, "The Last Waltz," is to premiere in Manhattan on November 4. It is set to open in a dozen more cities by Thanksgiving — the first anniversary of the performance.

FILM CLIPS

Los Angeles Times Sat., Jan. 14, 1978

Intermission for 'The Last Waltz'

"The Last Waltz," director Martin Scorsese's documentary look at The Band's farewell Winterland concert that took place Thanksgiving Day, 1976, has been postponed. Originally set by United Artists to open in 500 theaters around the country on Feb. 15, "The Last Waltz" is now scheduled to open in Los Angeles and New York on April 19.

The first trade reports on the delay claimed that Bob Dylan, who appears in the film, had created a legal bottleneck by refusing to sign the necessary clearance papers. Dylan's own film, "Renaldo and Clara," opens in Los Angeles Jan. 25, and so trade speculation had it that the singer might be trying to preempt any possible competition from the Band's movie.

That is not the case, said a spokesman for Dylan, who is said both to have signed the necessary clearances and to have discussed opening dates with Robbie Robertson, Band leader and producer of "The Last Waltz."

Jonathan Taplin, who is overseeing "The Last Waltz" in the role of executive producer, confirmed that Dylan was not the problem. He attributed the delay to the fact that "we're doing one of the most complicated mixes of stereo, Dolby sound and rock 'n' roll ever tried. We've had to move about \$20,000 worth of extra equipment into one of the Goldwyn mixing rooms and the fit of the two has been awkward. Robbie is such a perfectionist on the music side

and Marty is such a perfectionist on the film side, we just didn't want to rush it."

Taplin did admit that the project ran into further snags last week when Scorsese was hospitalized briefly because of an asthma attack. In addition to Dylan and The Band, "The Last Waltz" features performances by Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison and Eric Clapton.



Martin Scorsese

LEISURE DAILY NEWS, SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 1978

TOP OF POP

Can't Beat The Band

THE LAST WALTZ, which will open this Wednesday at the Ziegfeld, is a rarity among concert movies—a film that is not only visually and musically successful, but spiritually uplifting. Finally, a name director has chosen to enter the genre, and what Martin Scorsese ("Taxi Driver") has crafted from The Band's farewell concert, at San Francisco's Winterland on Thanksgiving, 1976, is a vital, poetic piece of American musical history.

The gentle strains of Band leader Robbie Robertson's "Last Waltz" theme, at once joyful and melancholy, combine with an elegant backdrop borrowed from "La Traviata" to set a ceremonial tone for the event—a tone that is continually reinforced by both the band members and the musicians who pay tribute to their parting. "I'd just like to say that it's one of the pleasures of my life to be onstage with these guys tonight," Neil Young says with moving simplicity, and the sense that this is a moment larger than any of the individuals who participate, a concert that signifies the end of an era, reverberates through his and all other performances.

Ronnie Hawkins, who started The Band off on their 16-year touring career, begins this show by joining them for "Who Do You Love" with ebullient spirits and paternal pride. But there is more than music to be found in Scorsese's documentation. As a parade of musicians who might be considered the best of a generation continues, the film becomes a "catalogue of souls." Neil Diamond—lost to tinted shades and leisure suits, but still awesome in his art—is a

simultaneously embarrassing and courageous figure. Van Morrison's chilling, pained rendition of "Caravan" represents the purity and honesty of the best '60s music (absent from most '70s), and in Muddy Waters' "Mannish Boy" can be heard the emotion and longing that once linked rock to the pure, spontaneous sounds of the past.

In Scorsese's offstage interviews with The Band, what emerges is a group of musicians more dedicated than any who have arrived since, yet as diverse and fragile as the course they followed. Robbie Robertson, who produced the film, appears as a man of quiet dignity and unfathomable depths. As many horrendous tales of the road as I've been subjected to, nothing ever affected me as much as Robertson, with tears in his eyes, softly declaring, "It's a goddam impossible way of life."

Significantly, what might have been the film's high point—Bob Dylan's appearance with the band that contributed to his legend—is more interesting than purifying. Only Dylan, the musical catalyst of his generation, fails to surrender to the communal spirit, and fittingly, the group that once backed him now takes control—gleefully ignoring his signals to follow their own.

"The Last Waltz," before drifting out from darkness to light on a solitary soundtrack, concludes with all performers, including Ringo Starr, Ron Wood, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell, Dr. John and Paul Butterfield singing "I Shall Be Released." And here, the rite reaches its emotional conclusion. Because as the camera focuses on the faces of the Winterland guests, then The Band, we are left with a profound sense of loss, and the knowledge that in 1978 there is no group that can take their place. —S.F.

Mick Jagger dropped by the Ziegfeld Theater to see the 11:30 show of "The Last Waltz" last Saturday night. The house was sold out for the Martin Scorsese documentary about The Band. Mick offered the box office \$100 for a ticket, but there were no tickets. Finally the management let the Rolling Stone in free and he stood for the entire film.

Daily News, May 3, 1978

"Destined to be a classic."
—Archer Winstanley, N.Y. Post

A Martin Scorsese Film

THE LAST WALTZ

THE ZIEGFELD THEATRE
1230 5th Ave. New York, N.Y. 10020
Tel. 212-644-4444

United Artists
The Ziegfeld Theatre
1230 5th Ave. New York, N.Y. 10020
Tel. 212-644-4444

MGM Sound Stage, Culver City, California

April/May 1977



EVANGELINE

with Emmylou Harris



THE WEIGHT

with The Staples



THEME FROM THE LAST WALTZ



RECORD WORLD MAY 28, 1977
INSERTS: The Band and director Martin Scorsese have been shooting some scenes for inclusion in the "Last Waltz" film at MGM studios — sounds a little strange to us, since we thought it was a movie about a live concert, but that's show biz. Tunes included "The Weight" (with the Staples helping out) and "Evangeline" (featuring Emmylou Harris on throat). The group's Levon Helm, who's readying his solo debut for a late summer release on ABC, was overheard talking about his "short but happy career in the film business. Just like doing visual overdubs," he said.

Green Bay Press Gazette
Friday, August 12, 1977
Rock Talk By LISA ROBINSON
From R.B., Evanston, Ill.: Whatever happened to the Martin Scorsese film of "The Last Waltz," the Band's Thanksgiving Day Winterland concert?
Scorsese is now adding extra footage — like some scenes of Emmylou Harris, who wasn't at the original concert performing. How he's working in this later stuff is anybody's guess.

Ampersand October, 1977
MEMBERS OF THE BAND and several guest stars — most of them not at the original concert — spent several weeks this summer in hush-hush sessions at the MGM studios in Culver City, beefing up their film of *The Last Waltz*. Director Martin Scorsese and the group apparently weren't satisfied with footage or sound quality from the group's performance at the Fillmore last year, purportedly the group's last live appearance. Or maybe it was just social — there was so much cocaine floating around the MGM stages that insiders were referring to the sessions as "The Last Toot."

Monday, April 17, 1978 Philadelphia Daily News

That \$5 Million Word

There's an artistic struggle going on between director **Martin Scorsese** and United Artists, with an estimated \$5 million at stake. Marty's new film is "The Last Waltz," and it's said to be the best rock 'n' roll movie since "Woodstock." At the moment it has an R rating, which will exclude a large portion of its potential audience — which is seen as kids in their teens. The film is all about the last concert by **The Band**, and the rating was incurred for the movie's blunt language. Marty's willing to blip one naughty word but now he and officials are arguing over just one five-letter noun. If Marty holds firm, UA estimates the word will cost the movie that \$5 million. Oh yes, the word can't be printed in a family newspaper — but it was uttered in public by former Secretary of Agriculture **Earl Butz**.



DETROIT FREE PRESS/TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 1978

MARTIN SCORSESE, film director, is having words with United Artists. Scorsese's new movie, "The Last Waltz," received an "R" rating and the studio says that if two words are deleted it can get into the "PG" category and attract more young viewers. The latest word is that Scorsese will cut one word, but not the other.

Chicago Tribune, Friday, April 14, 1978

ROBBIE ROBERTSON was due in Chicago at the beginning of the screening of "The Last Waltz," in which he stars, but at the last minute he was delayed on the West Coast because of some problem with the soundtrack. Warner Bros. Records rushed him here in a private jet to arrive by the end of the screening. Half the film's budget, three quarters of a million dollars, is for the soundtrack mix.

Director Martin Scorsese, who flew here from San Francisco where he was scouting locations for his upcoming movie on **Jake LaMotta**, said "The Last Waltz" is the best thing I've ever done."



Party at the Ginger Man in New York City after a preview screening of The Last Waltz, April 17, 1978

'Last Waltz' Party

RECORD WORLD APRIL 29, 1978



Following the Warner Bros. Records special screening of the United Artists film "The Last Waltz," friends and family gathered for a special party at the Gingerman Restaurant. Band member Robbie Robertson (left) and Martin Scorsese, the film's director, greeted guests and reminisced about that historic San Francisco concert of The Band's final appearance as a group, and the tribute of their fellow artists Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, the Staples, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell and countless others, all of whom are seen performing in the film. Warner Bros. Records has just released a three record soundtrack album commemorating the event.



MONDAY, MAY 29, 1978

Rockin' in Cannes

CANNES, France — Film director **Martin Scorsese** and his movie "The Last Waltz" stopped the show late Saturday night at the Cannes International Film Festival.

The film, which includes such legendary performers as **Bob Dylan**, **Neil Young** and **Van Morrison**, records the final party-concert for the rock group, **The Band**, in 1976.

The scene before the screening was the most turbulent yet seen in Cannes, as crowds of fans held back by good-natured policemen tried to get a glimpse of Scorsese or the Band's leading guitarist, **Robbie Robertson**. — UPI



CINEMA



Robbie Robertson — picture by Frank Martin

Robbie Robertson and The Band — the men literally behind Bob Dylan — staged a farewell to life on the road. And then filmed it. The Last Waltz opens in London on Thursday. Robin Denslow reports

Long goodbye

ROBBIE Robertson, guitarist and song writer with The Band — with Joni Mitchell — the most distinguished and influential of all those Canadians who moved south to transform American music. He's been on the road, touring with the same five-piece group, for a full sixteen years. In that time they have backed Ronnie Hawkins, backed Bob Dylan — first 13 years ago when he shocked his critics by adding an amplified band, and most recently on his 74 tour — and most of all just performed as themselves.

The Band hit back against the excesses of the late 'sixties with songs that evoked a timeless feel of Americans — a mixture of country, soul, hymns, fair-ground music and rock 'n' roll, held together with the perfect, split-second rhythmic timing that can only be achieved by those who have been playing together for years. Robertson's lyrics, and his instantly recognisable stuttering guitar style, made him the first among The Band's equals.

When they decided that life on the road was killing them, and there were to be no more tours, Robertson organised the final historic concert — The Last Waltz, at San Francisco's Winterland. Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, Neil Young, Muddy Waters, and Eric Clapton were just a few of those who joined in. "It was almost automatic — the chips just fell," Robertson explained, "we didn't work out the names from a big list, it just happened naturally. Some people we'd been involved with, some were friends, some were musical influences from one aspect or another."

Robertson also organised for it to be filmed and recorded. The three-album set is already out, and now comes The Last Waltz film, produced by Robertson, directed by Martin Scorsese. In some ways it's a classic rock film — the sound is superb, and it's a lengthy, high-quality record of a historic show. The one problem is that Scorsese tries to give an impression of The Band's career and lifestyle by cutting away to interviews between each song. He does the interviews himself, and he's not very good at it — there's no real sense of life on the road, or the fears that made the group stop travelling. Robertson talks about rock casualties, but never gets a chance to expand.

When I met him in London — en route from the Cannes Film Festival to America — he was rather more explicit. "It's a way of life that just becomes dangerous and drives a lot of people crazy. It isn't a coincidence that it's happened to so many artists. They weren't especially sensitive. You just get a normal person, put them in that situation, and it drives them crazy. It's like a boxing game. You get hit on the side of the head and you're not as quick as you used to be, or else the lights go out altogether."

Robertson is the youngest of The Band (he was 35 this month) and he looks as if he has survived the 16 years remarkably well. Those who remember The Band only from the bewiskered early photos may be surprised when he appears youthful and remarkably good-looking in the film — which is doubtless why more film offers have followed. But he still insisted that his old image, that of a recluse, is at least partially accurate. "I'm a very private person. I like to be alone, I've never done

anything like this before — giving an interview — except maybe eight years ago, and doing a couple of things since. It was never in our nature to voice an opinion — what would we do in interviews other than talk about what was private to us?"

He said The Band hid away from publicity out of choice. "We could get more done. We didn't think that what we were doing had anything to do with stardom. The idea was to make music, write our songs and play to the best of our ability. That's what we thought our job was, and publicity was neither here nor there to us or any thoughts about whether people were dying their hair pink."

Mr Robertson spoke a lot, but in slow drawl that I would otherwise have suspected to be Southern rather than Canadian. He complained that "The Last Waltz" had been long and grueling. "... I was wearing many hats — the business and artistic levels and it tired me out," but the projects he now finds himself involved in may make all that, and life on the road, seem easy. Asked about his current possibilities — he didn't like the word "offers" — he concluded "they are all spagetti to me in my mind. It's wonderful, but right now I can't make a decision on whether to have fish or meat, let alone decide anything else."

The possibilities are certainly interesting. On the musical side The Band will continue to be recording out of choice. "We might do a video disc album during the summer — I'm interested in making the first of its kind, the Citizen Kane of the videodisc, and we've got a new way of doing it that's extraordinary. Robertson's all-American musical style is being revamped too. "There's another musical project I'm working on that's 80 per cent finished. It's a symphony opera of this music. I know, done in the traditional sense but dealing with my influences and songwriters. I've never thought about acting before or even considered it. I'm very hesitant. It's not in my nature to show up at 7.30 in the morning at the studio and be told what to do. I'm used to initiating what I do, not to being hired."

He went to America, hoping The Last Waltz would do as well here as elsewhere, and he said he wanted a South Pacific island I can go to, to figure out what to do next. "As a parting shot, I asked if he had seen Dylan, or his much-attacked son, Rensaldo and Clara. He hadn't seen the four-hour epic, but he had seen his greatest, and still see Dylan. I've seen him for 13 years on and off and we keep ending up together. He remembered yet another possibility. "Dylan was talking to me about a new film project too."

For Robbie Robertson The Last Waltz is anything but

For Robbie Robertson the gradual transition from full-time musician to movie producer, actor and writer has been "part accidental, part contrived."

His first effort to produce a film was The Last Waltz, which will be screened at a Sydney cinema next month.

It was the last outing in November, 1976, for The Band, of which Robbie was a member.

A few weeks of organising his friends, recruiting sound recordists, cinematographers, the filmmaker Martin Scorsese (jaded after his efforts on New York, New York), and the most extraordinary rock concert of all time was put on film.

His friends included Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Joni Mitchell, Neil Diamond, Neil Young, Dr John, Van Morrison, Ron Wood, Eric Clapton and Ringo Starr.

The film received critical acclaim in America and has been playing to good houses.

"That's a bonus for us, because we just wanted to make a good film. The performers appeared for nothing, because we never thought it would make money."

The laconic Robertson is turning more and more to films, with two projects in the pre-production stage — one with John Houston and the other with his house-mate, Martin Scorsese.

The Houston film is based on a song Robertson wrote, The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down.

He said yesterday at his Sydney hotel that the Scorsese film — in which he would probably play a role — was "a kind of modern La Dolce Vita."



Sydney, Australia, July 19, 1978

THE AGE, Tuesday, July 18, 1978



The Band's leader, Robbie Robertson, strums a 1934 National dobro (steel slide) guitar.

The Band's Last Waltz: but it won't last forever

WHEN The Band, one of America's leading rock ensembles for more than a decade, decided never to go on the road again the result was The Last Waltz — a farewell concert-dinner, a three-record set and a multi-million dollar feature film.

INTERVIEW

Patrick McLoughlin

"When it was all over I was ready to collapse but during the concert I didn't have time to think I was so worked up," the group's leader, Robbie Robertson, said yesterday. "The Band's five-hour finale was held at Winterland San Francisco, with a guest line-up as impressive as the \$25 tickets."

Performers included Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Ringo Starr, Muddy Waters, Dr. John, Paul Butterfield and Emmylou Harris.

Robertson is here to promote the film, which will be released in Melbourne in September. He produced the film and album. "The reason for the concert was that after 16 years on circuit it became little more than a business endeavor and not something that was taking us anywhere," he said. "We realised we just had to give up something."

The Band — Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel and Robbie Robertson — was christened The Hawks, a backing group for a rock-a-billy singer in 1959.

It was hired to back Bob Dylan in 1966 and two years later issued the debut album, Music From The Big Pink.

"The concert was a very emotional thing; we had spent half our lives together, but it was another step in growing up," Robertson said.

The \$1.5 million film, which was directed by Martin Scorsese — director of New York, New York and Taxi Driver — took more than 16 months to com-

plete, with technical problems causing many delays.

"Just camera positions were complicated because of the audience. You didn't want it to be inhibiting for the audience and performers," Mr. Robertson said.

"It all had to be mathematically worked out. The 5000 audience tapping their feet, for example, was another problem with the cameras shaking so we had pipes laid through the floor."

Even the catering was big with a rented opera stage set and a 38-piece orchestra. The \$42,000 dinner included 220 turkeys, 6000 rolls, 1900 litres of apple juice and 400 litres of gravy.

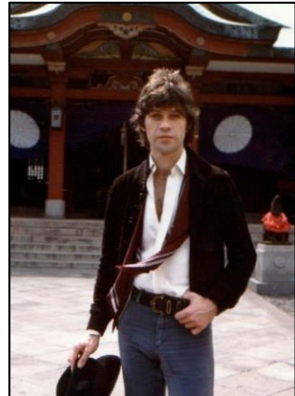
"It started just as a concert but it just grew and grew. We chose Winterland because the first major concert we did was there, so it was full circle. It was mathematically complete."

"But it never struck us as nostalgic. A lot of people seeing the film probably got nostalgia for a period lost in their lives. But for us it was all bringing it up to that point, not moving back."

The Last Waltz, which has already been shown in America, is being billed as the third film to have a Dolby noise reduction system since Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind.

"It was complex because of the elaborate recording. There was also no other film to draw upon for inspiration. Other rock films have been an embarrassment," Robertson said.

But despite the massive expense and the success of the validation, The Band will continue to play. "We will play together, but it's finished with playing on the road."



Tokyo, Japan, July 13, 1978



Savoy Hotel, London, England, 1978

Robbie leaves 'em waltzing

By ERNEST LEOGRANDE

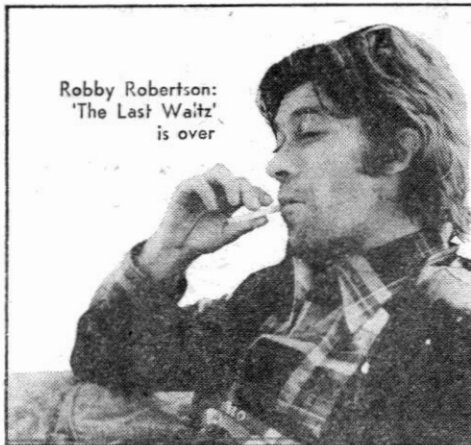
THE WALTZ THEME which dominates the beginning and end of "The Last Waltz" is lushly sentimental but beautiful in its lushness and when you're saying a last goodbye — as The Band says it's doing in this movie — a display of sentiment is justified.

"How do you get to the point of saying farewell after 16 years on the road?" asked The Band's guitarist, Robbie Robertson. "Usually performers keep doing it until someone asks them to leave."

"We quite frankly got a little scared by the odds. You start questioning how many airplane rides do you get before you use up the odds. The Band has been very good to us and the road has been very good to us but we didn't want to mistreat it and we wanted to say in a proud way, 'That's it,' bring the train into the station while it's still nice and shiny."

Tuesday at the Ziegfeld moviegoers here can see a permanent record of that last go around, performed Thanksgiving 1976 at the Winterland auditorium in San Francisco. "It has one of the most complicated sound mixes in the history of film," said Robertson, who oversaw the final mix of the four-track Dolby stereo print. A three-record set of the sound track already is available.

There is a glittering roster of names involved in the movie, from the dozens of famous musicians who performed, to the director, Martin Scorsese, and the camera crew headed by Laszlo Kovacs and Vilmos Zsigmond. Jonathan Taplin, formerly The Band's road manager, had worked with Scorsese as producer on "Mean Streets" and that's how that connection was made.



Robbie Robertson: 'The Last Waltz' is over

"Marty had the knowledge of the music and of these particular artists," Robertson said, "so that we didn't have to start from scratch. He listens to more music than I do. He knows the third line from the fourth verse of songs I wrote years ago."

You'll see lots of closeups of performer's faces in the movies but almost nothing of the audience. "It's intriguing because people have never seen these people in that way before," Robertson said, "the language

of the eyes, showing the violence and the sensuality of the music.

"Marty wasn't interested in showing the audience except from our point of view, like 'The Red Shoes.' He said, 'We've already seen those kids clapping their hands in a million shots.' This is not about the audience. It's for the audience."

"There was a dinner served that day for the 5,000 people which he also chose not to shoot. It would have taken on a grotesqueness. No one wanted to convey that feeling, 5,000 people eating turkeys."

Robertson already has a gripe about the reception to "The Last Waltz," and that is a forced bleeping of one word in an exchange between him and Ronnie Hawkins in order to preserve the movie's PG rating. The bleep is being appealed.

In a scene in the movie Robertson recalls that Hawkins, The Band's early mentor, told the fledglings that as touring performers "you won't make much money but you'll get more (bleep) than Frank Sinatra." Since the word already had been used as the name of a main female character, and quite intentionally for its leering double meaning, in "Goldfinger," Robertson thinks he's dealing with hypocrisy. He cited "All the President's Men," with its plenitude of four-letter words — and its PG rating.

Getting on with new stuff, he said that, even though The Band has danced their last waltz together before an audience, they still intend to record together in the studio in between pursuing personal projects.

"I myself have a tremendous number on ice," he said, "but first I would just like to get over my fatigue."



Interviewed by Paul Soles on 90 Minutes Live, CBC, April 14, 1978

Scorsese waltzes his way westward

By SUSAN TOEPFER

PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS asking director Martin Scorsese, who so loved the films of John Ford as a child, if he will ever make a Western. Now he thinks he may have an answer.

"The Last Waltz" is almost a Western, in the sense that it carries you back, follows The Band from its beginnings, then ends with a sunset, the musicians fading away on a stage."

Sitting in his Pierre suite before "The Last Waltz" had collected critical superlatives, Scorsese is jittery about opening night and, tiny and frail, resisting the room's numerous flowers with continual fits of sneezing.

When he was first approached with the idea of filming The Band's farewell concert, held Thanksgiving 1976, at San Francisco's Winterland, Scorsese was exhausted, still shooting "New York, New York," yet "fascinated by the idea. I thought that at least it should be reported for the archives. My first goal was to capture the essence of the performances. Then it became bigger, a whole feeling about charting the music. I wanted to show how the road influences the songs."

The first concert film to be shot in 35 millimeter, "The Last Waltz" also was meticulously choreographed in advance, with Scorsese matching camera angles to Band leader Robbie Robertson's outline of chords

and lyrics. Nonetheless he says, "When they yelled, 'Show Time,' it was the only time I ever felt butterflies in my stomach. The feature-film aspects, done in the studio, were different. But, with the concert, I knew it was now or never."

And despite the intricate advance preparations, the film often succeeded through "happy accidents," especially where the concert's numerous guest stars were concerned. "I didn't know Muddy Waters was going to sing 'Mannish Boy,' so we filmed his first song with seven cameras. Then, since 35 millimeter cameras need a rest, I gave a command to stop shooting. Fortunately, Laszlo Kovacs didn't hear it. So the whole angle is from Laszlo, until the very end. That was just luck."

There were other surprises in store when Scorsese, who had worked on such rock films as "Woodstock" and "Medicine Ball Caravan," began viewing "Last Waltz" rushes. "I made a major rule that there would be no shots of the audience. We've seen that before. I wanted to show the performers. But I was shocked at what we got. Their expressions, attitudes, the way they looked at each other. It was remarkable. I loved it."

Not so successful, perhaps, was Scorsese's own performance as Band interviewer. "Basically, the interviews were set up beforehand, so I knew pretty much what would be said. I'm not a good interviewer, not comfortable in that role, because I'm self-conscious about being photographed. But the idea was, 'We're all in this together — let's go.'"

Although there have been reports that Bob Dy-

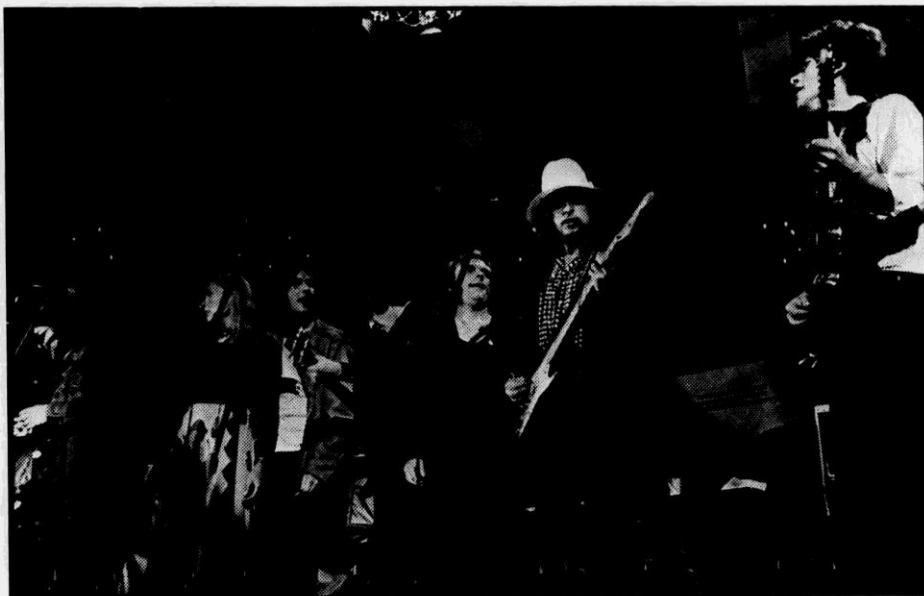
lan held up the release of "The Last Waltz" so that it would not conflict with his own "Renaldo & Clara," Scorsese admits his own responsibility for the delay. "This was the most technically complex film I've ever made. The sound, the lighting, I changed the colors of the set because I wanted a feeling of burnt-orange, rusts, reds, sort of a burning of Atlanta atmosphere, to go with the music."

"The Last Waltz" would have been a pretty boring movie without a sound track," he suggests wryly, "and there would have been a record of the concert anyway. But this is a movie. This is a movie making a statement about the type of music, how it has influenced other types of music, and the influences that went into it, taking it from the '60s and '70s to where it is now, and what's going to happen."

What will happen? "I don't know," he answers with a laugh. "I don't like much of the rock around today, except for the punk stuff, which has an energy and anger I appreciate."

With the exception of Bruce Springsteen and the defunct Sex Pistols, there are no other rock musicians Scorsese would like to film. So he foresees no new concert project.

Instead, he is moving back to New York to begin "Raging Bull," starring Robert De Niro. And as "The Last Waltz" followed "New York, New York" in color and style, "Raging Bull" will follow the Band movie. De Niro's character, Jake Lamotta, is not a musician, but a fighter. Yet his life, too, is on the road.



Dr. John, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Rick Danko, Van Morrison, Bob Dylan and Robbie Robertson at concert.

Photo by Neal Preston

Pop Music

In Step With Scorsese's 'Waltz'

BY ROBERT HILBURN

● There's reason to be skeptical about a movie like "The Last Waltz." It may have been directed by Martin Scorsese, one of America's most imaginative film-makers, and feature the classiest group of musicians ever assembled for a single U.S. concert—Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell, Neil Diamond, Van Morrison, Muddy Waters, Neil Young and the Band.

Still it's a rock concert film and they're generally booooo-ing. For every motion picture with the drama of the violence-scarred "Gimme Shelter" or the celebration of "Woodstock," there are countless reels of punchless and/or pretentious things like the Rolling Stones' "Ladies & Gentlemen . . ." or Led Zeppelin's "The Song Remains the Same."

But "Last Waltz" is a revelation. This 26-song look at the final appearance by the Band—America's most distinguished rock group—brings an intimacy and power to the screen that we've rarely, if ever, seen in a concert film.

Rather than frame the action on stage in the traditional way so that the viewer feels part of the audience, Scorsese focuses so tightly on the performers that we become part of their world. The result is at once captivating and illuminating, an exciting new dimension in the rock experience.

I've seen 2,000 concerts over the past 10 years, many of them from so close to the stage that you could hear the musicians chat with each other. "Last Waltz" takes us dramatically closer, making us aware of the energy and intensity that even a relatively gentle performer like Joni Mitchell puts into communicating her music. Scorsese also captures the shades of urgency, joy and physical ordeal of musicians in the spotlight.

But the lure of the film, which opens Wednesday at the Cinerama Dome in Hollywood and three Orange County theaters, is more than technique. "Last Waltz" also is an eloquent toast to the glories of American rock 'n' roll, especially those artists in the 1960s who took rock from its primitive foundations to a sturdier, more flexible form of musical—and sociological—expression.

When Dylan, Morrison, Young and the rest join on the final chorus of "I Shall Be Released," you feel once again the liberation and magic that these and kindred musicians brought to a generation. It's a grand, rousing last hurrah.

I wasn't alone in being surprised at the dramatic intimacy of "Last Waltz." The Band's Robbie Robertson, listed as the film's producer, also was struck by the way Scorsese captured the feel of performing. "The film is

the first time you get a real view of what happens on stage, what goes on between the musicians," he said. "You can see we're not up there just giggling and wiggling. Performing can be very painful. In each song, you put your whole body into it. You don't save it up.

"That's why I think of concerts as being like prize-fights. By the time you get to a certain stage, it almost becomes individual rounds. You have to keep telling yourself you can make it to the end. You tell your body it can take the punishment and strain."

The "Last Waltz" concert was filmed Thanksgiving Day, 1976, at San Francisco's 5,000-seat Winterland arena. It was the final concert by the Band. The quintet—Robertson, Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel—would continue to record together, but, after 16 years, there'd be no more live shows.

"The break had nothing to do with the so-called 'pressures of the road,'" Robertson said at the time. "It just

"THE LAST WALTZ"

A United Artists release. Directed by Martin Scorsese. Produced by Robbie Robertson. Director of photography Michael Chapman. Production designed by Boris Leven, Editors Yeu-Bun Yee and Jan Robies. Executive producer Jonathan Taplin. Concert producer Bill Graham. Sound track production Rob Fraboni. Concert music production John Simon. Featuring the Band, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Diamond, Emmylou Harris, Neil Young, Van Morrison, Ron Wood, Muddy Waters, Eric Clapton, the Staples, Ringo Starr, Dr. John, Ronnie Hawkins, Paul Butterfield. Running Time: 1 hr. 55 min. MPAA-rated: PG (parental guidance advised)

means the end of what is essentially a boring syndrome: recording studio, road, recording studio, road . . .

"The decision to stop touring has to be complete or you're still in the syndrome. Even if you tell yourself you're not going out on the road for two years, it hangs around and gets in the way. I was talking to Van Morrison who hasn't been on the road in two or three years, and he said it was still in the back of his mind every day. Someday, he knows, he'll be going back.

"By making the break complete, it becomes a positive, aggressive act. You remove touring so you can do other things. We can devote more time to our albums and whatever solo projects we may want."

The Band chose Winterland for its farewell show because it was where the group made its first appearance in 1969 after the release of two widely acclaimed albums—"Music From Big Pink" and "The Band"—pushed the quintet to the forefront of American rock.

The Band came together in Canada in 1960 as the backup group for rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins. It

first gained national attention in the mid-'60s as Bob Dylan's support musicians.

After deciding to quit the road, the Band invited some of the musicians it had worked with over the years to join in the Winterland concert. Once the acceptances started pouring in, the group thought about a film.

"At first we talked about making a little videocassette or something so that everyone involved might have a souvenir. Then, we thought about putting it on film; maybe a couple of hand-held 16mm cameras. Finally, I got brave enough to think about asking a real film-maker. Most of the rock 'n' roll things I've seen in theaters and on television are embarrassing. I thought, 'Let's do it right for once.'"

The connection to Scorsese was Jonathan Taplin. A former road manager for the Band, Taplin produced "Mean Streets," Scorsese's brilliant glimpse of street tension, in New York's Little Italy.

Though busy on several projects (including "New York, New York"), Scorsese was attracted to "The Last Waltz" for several reasons. He looked at the concert as a cultural event that should be documented. After editing "Woodstock" and "Elvis on Tour," he also wanted to direct his own rock film.

"I've always been interested in music," he said. "My father introduced me to the big bands and the music of people like Django Reinhardt, which influenced me to do 'New York, New York.'"

"Then in 1955-56, I heard Ray Charles' 'Hallelujah, I Love Her So' and the flipside, 'What Would I Do Without You.' That was a killer. Then, I came across Little Richard, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry and Presley. That was it. I was hooked.

"I also got into all the black groups around New York, a lot of the songs I used in 'Mean Streets.' Then, there was the music in the '60s, the music of the people in 'The Last Waltz.' That was another great period."

For "The Last Waltz," Scorsese sat down with the Band and came up with a 200-page script that gave specific camera movements for every lyric and chord change in the group's songs. He also assembled some of Hollywood's most distinguished cameramen: Michael Chapman, Laszlo Kovacs, Vilmos Zsigmond, others.

"Being a layman, I was interested in how the musicians reacted to each other on stage," Scorsese said. "There are so many films out today that call themselves musicals, but they don't deserve the name. They're imitating playing music. They're not really playing it. The thing I wanted was the excitement of performance."

● The delay in the release of "Last Waltz" was caused by Scorsese's involvement in several other projects and the film's elaborate sound mix, Robertson said.

Not only was the movie shot in 35mm rather than the conventional 16mm concert style, but it also reportedly was the first rock film to use a 24-track recording system. The final print is in four-track Dolby.

The only non-Winterland footage in "Last Waltz" is brief interviews with the five band members and three numbers that were later recorded by the Band (and guests) on a Hollywood sound stage.

The interviews, conducted by Scorsese, intrude the film's only strained notes. The early breakaways to the Band's Malibu rehearsal hall seem especially self-conscious, but the later ones fit more comfortably.

The sound-stage numbers not only provide some of the film's most dazzling cinematic moments, but two of the tunes ("The Weight," with the Staples, and "Evangeline," with Emmylou Harris) touch on various aspects of the American music heritage: spiritual, blues, country, folk.

When placed alongside the Winterland songs, the numbers show how very much the rock sounds of Dylan, the Band and others are in that historical tradition. These are not musicians who dealt in fads or gimmicks. Their styles are as firmly rooted in this country's musical pulse as those of Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly.

The best of these artists, of course, are still active, either on record or on stage. But their music is not as dominant as it once was. It is being far outdistanced in the marketplace by conservative record-makers whose music is mostly temporary and void of the '60s probing social relevance.

That could spell trouble for "Last Waltz" at the box office. Scorsese could have made the film more attractive to a wider audience by adding some Woodstockish audience scenes and split-screen visuals, but those are old tricks. It's his purist approach to a rock concert that gives "The Last Waltz" its power and dignity. To compromise would have destroyed it.

Originally rated R by the MPAA because of language, an appeal has resulted in United Artists release being given a more appropriate PG tag. A three-record sound-track album, including three songs not in the film, is available on Warner Bros. ●

NO American movie this year has been as full of the "joy of making cinema" as Martin Scorsese's "The Last Waltz," his film of The Band's Thanksgiving, 1976, concert in San Francisco. He shot it while he was still involved in "New York, New York"—which was full of the "agony of making cinema." In "The Last Waltz," Scorsese seems in complete control of his talent and of the material, and you can feel everything going right, just as in "New York, New York" you could feel everything going wrong. It's an even-tempered, intensely satisfying movie. Visually, it's dark-toned and rich and classically simple. The sound (if one has the good luck to catch it in a theatre equipped with a Dolby system) is so clear that the instruments have the distinctness that one hears on the most craftsmanlike recordings, and the casual interviews have a musical, rhythmic ease. Why was it so hard to persuade people to go see it? Were they leery of another rock-concert film? Were they tired of hearing about Scorsese? All of that, maybe, and possibly something more. They swooned and giggled over "A Star Is Born," but "The Last Waltz" is a real movie, and it must have given off some vibration that made them nervous. They couldn't trust the man who'd made "Mean Streets" and "Taxi Driver" to give them a safe evening.

—PAULINE KAEI

Films

Rock Era Ends With A Bang

A Review

"The Last Waltz," starring The Band, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Eric Clapton and friends. Directed by Martin Scorsese. A United Artists production. Opens Friday at the Rhodes and Cobb Center theaters.

By Steve Dougherty
Constitution Staff Writer

This global village gazebo that Martin Scorsese and his staff of stellar cinematographers has created for The Band is the perfect showcase for a group of rocking craftsmen one wag once described as the only rock band that could "warm up a crowd for Abraham Lincoln."

Scorsese's "The Last Waltz," a celluloid record of The Band's final road performance, is a visual and aural delight that should inspire anyone interested in two of the 20th century's most exciting pop art forms.

Band cultists will find the rocking roadhouse poets in peak form, performing with an instrumental and vocal virtuosity that's earned them resounding critical acclaim, though relatively little commercial glory, since they backed ex-folkie Bob Dylan during his revolutionary electric tour of the world in 1965-66.

Other Heroes

Rock devotees will find The Band celebrating its roots, sharing the stage with such once-and-future rock 'n' roll heroes as Muddy Waters, Ronnie Hawkins, Paul Butterfield, Bob Dylan, Eric Clapton, Van Morrison, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell.

"The Last Waltz" becomes a concise history of the art form, parading before your eyes the music's blues progenitors as well as its mid-life masters. Even Ringo Starr and Ronnie Wood are brought on-stage for cameo appearances, as if in tribute to two musical institutions without which no state-of-the-art declaration would be complete—the Beatles and Rolling Stones.

But what makes "The Last Waltz" something more than a float for a fat lot of jolly rockers on parade is the way in which this celluloid Band stand was constructed.

Producer Robbie Robertson (The Band's lead guitarist and lyricist) managed to interest director Martin Scorsese ("Mean Streets," "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," "Taxi Driver," "New York, New York") in filming the Band's final performance at the Winterland Auditorium in San Francisco on Thanksgiving Day 1976.

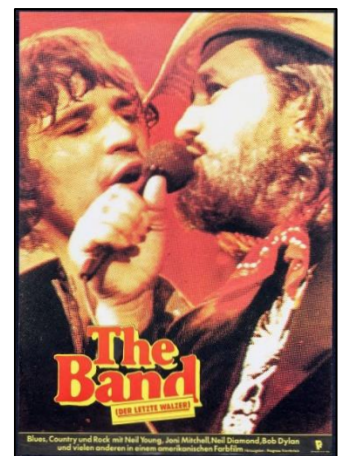
And Scorsese in turn enlisted the help of some of Hollywood's foremost cinematographers—Laszlo Kovaks ("Easy Rider," "Five Easy Pieces," "Taxi Driver") and Vilmos Zsigmond ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind") among them.

300-Page Script

Using 35mm cameras, rather than the 16mms that have been used to record most live rock events, the cinematographers, working from a 300-page shooting script drawn up by Scorsese during rehearsals for "The Last Waltz" concert, managed to produce a film documentary that has the sweeping, choreographed camera movements of a Hollywood musical spectacular.

"The Last Waltz," without plot or any sort of narrative action, engages the audience with a seductive string of magic moments. During segments filmed in The Band's Shangri-La recording studio, supposedly a converted brothel, Scorsese as a wise-guy interviewer, gets the normally tight-lipped Bandmen to talk about their early days on the road, playing to crowds of "one-armed hookers" under a shower of beer bottles in a bombed-out, roofless nightclub owned by Jack Ruby.

A raging guitar battle between high-speed pickers Robertson and Eric Clapton; poetry readings by Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Michael McClure, giggling incoherence by pianist and vocalist Richard Manuel and stories from drummer Levon Helm about the "Wolcott Rabbit's Foot Medicine Show," help transform "The Last Waltz" from a dirge to the end of an era into a celebration of American musical culture.



EN MARTIN SCORSESE FILM

THE LAST WALTZ

"THE BANDS" AVSKJEDSKONSERT

The Band
Rick Danko
Levon Helm
Garth Hudson
Richard Manuel
Robbie Robertson

Eric Clapton
Neil Diamond
Bob Dylan
Joni Mitchell
Neil Young
Emmylou Harris
Van Morrison
The Staples

Dr. John
Muddy Waters
Paul Butterfield
Ronnie Hawkins
Ringo Starr
Ron Wood

When The Band staged a farewell concert in San Francisco they invited along some old friends—Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Neil Diamond, Eric Clapton—and a new one, director Martin Scorsese. The movie he has created, reports Robert Palmer, may be the most compelling rock film ever made

The Band's Last Stand

THE BAND—FOUR CANADIANS and an Arkansan who have been playing rock 'n' roll together since 1960—called it quits as a performing unit toward the end of 1976. They decided to stage a final concert Thanksgiving night in San Francisco and invited some friends and former associates—Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young and Neil Diamond, among others—to join them. The result was the *Last Waltz*, which one critic called "the indoor rock spectacular of the 1970s."

Martin Scorsese, director of *Taxi Driver* and *Mean Streets*, was putting the finishing touches on *New York, New York* when he heard about the *Last Waltz*. In just three weeks he assembled a crew of crack cinematographers—including Academy Award winner Laszlo Kovacs, *Close Encounters* photographer Vilmos Zsigmond and *Taxi Driver* photographer Mi-



Lead guitarist Robbie Robertson also produced the film

chael Chapman—and was ready to make the first rock-concert film with the look and feel of a top-drawer Hollywood musical. But he didn't stop there. He interviewed The Band, drawing out stories from their 16

years on the road, and he filmed them in additional performances on a Hollywood soundstage. *The Last Waltz*, directed by Scorsese and produced by The Band's Robbie Robertson, may be the finest rock film of all time.

Ironically, the film will be the first time many of the Band's fans will be able to associate the five musicians' names with their faces. For despite the Band's involvement in two of the most widely publicized rock tours in history—Bob Dylan's first rock 'n' roll tour in the mid-1960s and his comeback tour, co-starring The Band, in 1974—and despite the fact that Band songs such as "The Weight" and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down" have become contemporary classics, the group has always kept a low profile, submerging individual personalities within a single corporate identity.

Robbie Robertson, whose barbed guitar solos reflect the steely determination one often senses in his eyes, does most of The Band's talking. When he was 13 he was already playing professionally around Toronto. When he was 15 the rockabilly singer Ronnie Hawkins recorded two of his songs, and the next year he joined Hawkins' backup band, The Hawks. Within a year the other members of The Band were Hawks, and they were playing almost every night in country dance halls, supper clubs, small-town armories and beer joints throughout the American South and Midwest, driving from job to job in Hawkins' Cadillac with a trailer full of equipment behind them. After they quit Hawkins, played around Canada as Levon and the Hawks and then linked up with Bob Dylan, Robbie became a somewhat reluctant Band leader. He wrote most of the songs on the group's first album, *Music From Big*



Garth Hudson used to give his Band mates music theory lessons

Pink, released in 1968, and has written almost every Band song since.

Bassist Rick Danko, 33, who sings many of The Band's leads in a high, quavering, unmistakable tenor, grew up in the tobacco belt near Simcoe, Ontario, where he learned to play mandolin and fiddle as a teenager and then got swept away by the groundswell of early rock 'n' roll. Richard Manuel, the pianist, had his own band—the Rockin' Revols—in Stratford, Ontario, before he joined The Hawks. Garth Hudson, who plays organ, synthesizers and saxophones, studied classical music and played accordion in country bands around London, Ontario. With his high forehead and imposing beard he looks like a 19th-century singing master, and indeed he joined The Hawks only after they agreed to pay him for lessons in harmony and music theory. Levon Helm, the group's feisty Arkansan and one of the finest drummers in rock, was a 14-year-old guitarist when he began playing around the Mississippi-Arkansas Delta. Before he headed up to Canada to join the Hawks he led a band called the Jungle Bush Beaters.

RECENTLY IN LOS ANGELES, three members of The Band were at Village Recorders, a plush, softly lit recording studio where pop and jazz sessions go on day and night. They were working on the three-record soundtrack album for *The Last Waltz*, which includes Robertson's new "Last Waltz Suite" as well as concert material. Danko was touring with a band of his own at the time, promoting his first solo album. Helm, who still lives in Woodstock, New York—the other four musicians have moved to Malibu—was home putting together a tour with the all-star group that accompanies him on his first solo album. The shy, bearded Manuel, who also does his share of lead singing, was in the studio working on a vocal while Hudson listened studiously. Robertson, who was supervising the session, took time out to talk.

Robbie is young for a rock 'n' roll veteran. He was 32 when *The Last Waltz* was filmed, which means that he had been playing with Danko, Helm, Manuel and Hudson for half his life. "When you're on the road that long," he tells Scorsese in the film, "the numbers begin to scare you." In Los Angeles he did not seem scared, just tired; he was working late every night on the album and keeping daytime office hours as producer of the film.

"We were 16 years on the road," he said, lighting the first of a series of cigarettes and settling into a chair in the studio's cluttered office. "Eight downtown and eight uptown. There wasn't much difference—different class hotels, different class transportation. The first part was dangerous, but we were young enough that we would go anywhere, do anything and really not know any better. The second part was dangerous too, but not in the sense of somebody

sticking a knife in your throat. It's more dangerous on a head level. It can spoil you and suck you right in."

After so many years together The Band hardly needs an excuse for quitting the road. But Robertson's explanation is not entirely convincing. Ever since they made their *Big Pink* album and began to think about touring on their own, the musicians in The Band have gone their own way. To begin with there was their music, a country-tinged but hard-rocking evocation of American history that reaffirmed traditions of culture and place when most rock musicians seemed bent on destroying them. The year of *Big Pink*, 1968, was the year of LSD, Haight-Ashbury,



Richard Manuel once played Southern Ontario as a Rockin' Revol

psychedelic light shows. When The Band played its first engagement as The Band in 1969, they demanded that the light show be turned off. "There was a whole movement going on that we didn't feel part of at all," Robertson remembers. "All of a sudden parents became the enemy, the people who did all the harm. As far as we knew, our parents weren't different from anybody else's, and they were doing their best."



Bassist Rick Danko grew up in the tobacco belt near Simcoe, Ontario

The Band made eight albums in as many years, and although they never really related to the rock mainstream, they carved out a niche of their own. The brown-covered album released in 1969, *The Band*, remains their masterwork. With everyone switching instruments frequently—Helm from drums to mandolin and guitar, Manuel from piano to drums and so forth—the sound is mercurial and curiously archaic, like a 19th-century tintype. The songs are some of Robertson's best. The almost muddy sound quality was deliberate. "It was a homemade record," Robbie says, "and we got used to listening to it in a certain way. When it came time to mix it, they put all the usual sizzle and echo and limiting on it and it struck us as a distraction. So we just didn't do it." *The Band* is the only 1960s rock album that sounds like it was recorded in 1880. Subsequent Band albums had a slicker, more inviting surface, but even when they strained to be contemporary they sounded like the voice of experience.

The Band's live shows, too, were anomalies. "Our whole thing was to go out there and play as good as we could," Robertson recalls, lighting another cigarette. "Other people were going out and pulling out their hair and screaming, with lights going on and off. What we were doing was probably fairly boring, but that's what we did." *Rock of Ages*, The Band's live album, is anything but boring. But the group did not perform live very often. When they were not touring—and the hiatuses lasted as long as two years—the members of The Band lived quietly in Woodstock, making music with friends and living up to the retiring image perpetuated by the title song of their third album, *Stage Fright*.

Reclusiveness probably cost the group money and success. They rarely performed or gave interviews to promote an album release, and they never had a sizable pop hit after the first two albums. The later records did not always please critics either, and Robertson admits that several were completed hurriedly to meet contractual commitments, with some of the musicians contributing less than they should have because of drinking, drugs and other personal problems. But there was first-class music on all the albums, and the music won them new friends, including Martin Scorsese. Jonathan Taplin, who produced *Mean Streets* and served as executive producer for *The Last Waltz*, was The Band's road manager from 1968 until 1971. Soon after the group decided to stop touring he got Robertson and Scorsese together. "When I first met Scorsese," Taplin says, "he was working as a film editor on a movie called *Elvis on Tour*. So I knew he was into rock 'n' roll. We always talked about it, and a lot of *Mean Streets* is set to rock 'n' roll. But I didn't really know how much he liked The Band. His understanding of their music was so deep it was astonishing."

Robertson agrees. "Marty has that rock 'n' roll background. He's got a lot of old country in him, but he's really a young American rebel. There are a lot of great people, but he was the one to do it with, the one who really knew it. Would you like to meet him?"

LATE THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON Martin Scorsese was in his office on the MGM lot, talking softly and very rapidly into a telephone. He's a short man with a craggy profile and a quick, impulsive manner. His office walls were covered with posters from musicals, comedies, whodunits, science fiction, all kinds of films. Stuffed looseleaf binders were stacked on his desk, and when he finished his telephone conversation Scorsese began waving one around. "I wrote scripts for all the songs in the show during the three weeks before the concert," he said, speaking just as softly and just as fast as he had on the phone. The mild, high quality of his voice seemed to mask an almost feverish intensity, not surprising in a director who would plunge into a project like *The Last Waltz* directly after working 22 weeks straight on *New York, New York*. He let the script fall on his desk and opened it.

"This is 'Cripple Creek.' Drum and guitar are important instruments. Lighting black, curtain up, headlights, camera 7 drift in, camera 6 on Levon, camera 5 on guitar." The script went on for page after page. Every line of The Band's compact, tightly structured songs had been translated into visual ideas—lighting, angles, camera movement. "Their songs gave me the feeling of an expanse, a vision," Scorsese said. "And the way they came out in concert—we would watch the footage and not be able to watch it again for a day and a half. We would come home drained. But listen, I made a film about my parents, *Italian-American*, and of all my films, *Italian-American* and *The Last Waltz* are my favorites. I hold this film as closely as that."

The film that has emerged from Scorsese's passion for The Band's music is as sharply drawn and fast-moving as a Robbie Robertson song. The musical performances chosen from the five-hour concert are intense and involving, and the director has provided a gloss on the songs' meanings by intercutting conversations with members of The Band. In one memorable sequence Levon Helm talks about his early exposure to travelling tent shows and notes that in the South, country and blues and church music all blended together. Scorsese asks him what the blend was called and Levon smiles and says, "rock 'n' roll." From this, Scorsese cuts to Muddy Waters leading The Band through "Mannish Boy." The connection may not please purists—Waters is a bluesman, not a rock 'n' roller—but the song and Muddy's strutting performance are the very essence of rock 'n' roll. "That transition," Robbie says, "gets right to the point."

So does the rest of the concert footage. With seven cameras Scorsese achieved an intimacy and richness that previous rock films have hardly hinted at. When Bob Dylan is cueing a transition from one song into another The Band visibly tenses. When Eric Clapton is soloing and his guitar strap snaps, Robbie immediately covers for him with a guitar solo of his own. The moment was so adroitly handled that the concert audience missed it, but with a camera on Clapton and another on Robertson, Scorsese got it all.

The key cameras, stage left and stage right, were manned by Laszlo Kovacs and Bobby Byrne, who have worked as a team for years and are past masters at covering each other's shots. Each was capable of going it alone. During most of Waters' "Mannish Boy" Kovacs' camera was the only one in operation. ("There's a reason nobody shot a rock concert in 35mm before," says Scorsese. "With these cameras you usually shoot for a few minutes and then stop and reset the lights. People told us the cameras would burn up.") But that one camera was enough; Kovacs' footage of Waters' performance is as sensitive and detailed as anything in the film. "Laszlo was like Muhammad Ali," says Robertson. "He went all 15 rounds. After the concert he just grinned and tapped the magazine of his camera and said, 'I don't know what the other fellows got, but take a look at what I got.'"



Arkansas-born Levon Helm, the drummer, lives in Woodstock, New York

In most rock films musicians play and film makers

document the event. *The Last Waltz* is different. It represents a real collaboration between a creative film maker and creative musicians, and one suspects that any negative reviews by film critics will seize on just this point. Scorsese's *New York, New York* failed with many critics—and with some audiences as well—because it was neither fish nor fowl. It was, as Scorsese notes, "a mixture of Hollywood fake, which I love, and so-called reality. Of course it isn't really real."

Director Martin Scorsese assembled a crack crew in three weeks

But somehow the troubled love affair between Robert De Niro and Liza Minelli seemed almost too real for the stagey production numbers that framed it. Parts of *The Last Waltz* are similarly jarring. The transitions from concert footage to some Band performances shot on a Hollywood soundstage are particularly abrupt, not because one misses the concert atmosphere, which does not intrude very significantly in the film, but because the energy and focus of the music are so different. "You should accept the many different things in the film and understand that it has its own way of going about things," Scorsese says. "It's meant to take you on a musical voyage." It does just that. The Band's music and personalities dominate the film, and if too many seams are showing, it's because the music's integrity would not have been well served by clever transitions. Whatever film critics think of *The Last Waltz*, though, The Band's audience—the rock 'n' roll audience—is going to love it.



Director Martin Scorsese assembled a crack crew in three weeks

document the event. *The Last Waltz* is different. It represents a real collaboration between a creative film maker and creative musicians, and one suspects that any negative reviews by film critics will seize on just this point. Scorsese's *New York, New York* failed with many critics—and with some audiences as well—because it was neither fish nor fowl. It was, as Scorsese notes, "a mixture of Hollywood fake, which I love, and so-called reality. Of course it isn't really real."

But somehow the troubled love affair between Robert De Niro and Liza Minelli seemed almost too real for the stagey production numbers that framed it. Parts of *The Last Waltz* are similarly jarring. The transitions from concert footage to some Band performances shot on a Hollywood soundstage are particularly abrupt, not because one misses the concert atmosphere, which does not intrude very significantly in the film, but because the energy and focus of the music are so different. "You should accept the many different things in the film and understand that it has its own way of going about things," Scorsese says. "It's meant to take you on a musical voyage." It does just that. The Band's music and personalities dominate the film, and if too many seams are showing, it's because the music's integrity would not have been well served by clever transitions. Whatever film critics think of *The Last Waltz*, though, The Band's audience—the rock 'n' roll audience—is going to love it.

People, etc.



Robbie Robertson's Saga Comes To A Climax With A 'Last Waltz'

By Steve Dougherty
Constitution Staff Writer

A kid ran away from his Canadian home in Cabbagetown when he was 16, taking to the road with nothing but a guitar, a rock 'n' roll band and a hunger to discover America.

Nearly 20 years later, he finds himself in a rich man's hotel, responding to questions about his life and the crafts that helped him survive an odyssey on an endless North American highway that has devoured countless other pilgrims in this restless age.

Jaime Robbie Robertson, The Band leader whose starring role in a new million-dollar motion picture has earned him accolades from the national press as a new found "matinee idol," de-

veloped a reputation long ago as "one of the dirtiest, most inventive guitarists around," as one critic put it.

He also happens to be author of a body of songs that is among the most varied, intelligent and engaging that anyone working in the rock idiom has created to date.

With a gift for imagery, phrase, theme and character that might have made this guitar player a novelist if he hadn't been smitten at an early age with an incurable case of rock 'n' roll fever, Robertson has created a collection of songs that is peculiarly, wonderfully American.

Robertson discovered and recorded in song an America strewn with "drifters and rounders," drunkards and

thieves, hobos, healers, gamblers and heroes. His songs are set in frontier towns and urban alleys, the decks of river ships and front porch rockers. His songs are alive with the sights, sounds and smells of cacophonous city streets, hobo jungles, rail yards and medicine shows.

He writes of moral dilemmas and tragic ironies, of forbidden fruits and just desserts. There are Biblical myths and drunkard's dreams, rites of passage and odes to joy, tales of historic betrayals and forgotten heroics.

And all these gems have come to us wrapped in the rich and vibrant, autumnal tones of a sound Robertson and his fellow Bandmen have made their unique contribution to popular music

during the last decade.

But after 18 years on the road, Robertson and the three other Canadians and one Arkansas cotton-picker who struggled for eight years in relative obscurity as the Hawks before conquering the world as The Band, are suffering the roadhouse blues.

On Thanksgiving Day 1976, The Band took to the stage at the Winterland Auditorium in San Francisco to conclude two decades of touring with a "Last Waltz" concert that featured appearances by some of rock's brightest lights and a performance by The Band that many observers considered their finest in years.

It was an evening Robertson wanted preserved. He got Hollywood director

Martin Scorsese to film the concert. United Artists agreed to distribute the \$1.5 million movie and Warner Bros. Records, with whom The Band has a new recording contract for six studio albums, decided to release a tastefully packaged three-disc live recording of the event.

As producer of the "Last Waltz" concert as well as the film and recording of the same name that grew out of the event, Robertson has spent more than two years transforming what began as a dream into a reality.

Stopping in Atlanta recently "to show people (I) care about the project," Robertson said, "It's overwhelming to



Staff Artwork—Jere Warren and Vernon Carne

Robbie Robertson: Leader Of The Band

See BAND, Page 5-B

Band

Continued From Page 1-B

me that this thing actually came together."

Sprawled on a couch in his suite at the Hyatt Regency one morning, Robertson looked little like the fellow who used to growl like some radical yeshiva student from the album covers of The Band's first releases in 1968 and '69. And his relaxed, easy manner belied none of the chaotic menace that his guitar playing creates.

At 34, Robertson is tall and slender with signs of some cosmic amusement emanating from dark-hooded eyes that are set deep in a handsome, somewhat haggard face whose high, almost Oriental cheekbones and wide sensuous mouth led one national magazine to describe him as "a Mick Jagger with brains."

"It's definitely something I'm proud of," Robertson said of "The Last Waltz." "Every time I see the film, I'm knocked out. There's the film and the record. The package is right there. The project is a reality. All these people got together, and we did it.

"It's amazing," Robertson said. "It still surprises me that it actually came together. But I'm straight on the project as it is. It's very satisfying to me.

"It's the first real collaboration between film and music. It's not like guys with shaky 16mm cameras hoping to get lucky.

"The high caliber of the thing is what's great. Marty (Scorsese) got the best guys in the world to work on this; the best DPs (directors of photography) in the world, guys who never collaborate on projects, who never worked together before and who certainly never got out and ran their own cameras, like they did during the concert.

"I think they did it because they liked the challenge of it," Robertson said. "They know that music films have been an embarrassment to the industry. They wanted to try and contribute something really excellent to that genre — to make a real film, not a hope-for-the-best, shot-in-the-dark affair.

"They wanted to do it in a mature manner. And they

liked the challenge of a one-shot deal. Take one, and that's it. What they came up with, I think, is a classic of its kind."

Bob Dylan once made the bizarre observation that Robbie Robertson was "the only mathematical guitar genius who does not offend my intestinal nervousness with his rear-guard sound." What Dylan was getting at is that Robertson plays guitar like he's ringing a bell with a machine gun.

Rock critic Greil Marcus credits him with creating some of "the most menacing piece(s) of rock 'n' roll ever made."

Started In Clubs

Robertson first started playing in clubs in Cabbagetown, the working class Toronto neighborhood where he grew up, at the age of 13, having picked up the "chaotic and fast" guitar style he found on the "three-minute race riots" released as records in the '50s by black rhythm-and-blues masters Howlin' Wolf and Bobby Bland.

Robertson's been playing electric guitars for more than 20 years, and he's not sick of it yet. "You're always finding something new," he said. "Every day you pick it up, it's new. It goes wherever it goes.

"A while ago, I never dreamed I'd ever write something like the 'Theme From The Last Waltz' (a haunting instrumental performed by The Band with a harp guitar, mandolin, electric stand-up bass and pipe organ). I never dreamed I'd ever do anything like that — and on a harp guitar no less. But it just came up.

"Who knows where those things come from. It just keeps on going. Every time you pick up a guitar, something subconscious happens.

"It's kind of infinite, that well."

Robertson has been writing songs for nearly as many years as he's been playing guitar.

"I first got connected with Ronnie Hawkins (the rocking hillbilly with whom Robertson and all the current members of The Band began serving their apprenticeships in 1959) when I was 15. I wrote a couple of songs — 'Someone Like You' and 'Bob A Lu' — and Ronnie recorded them."

'A Song Comes Out'

Asked how he went about composing the more than 50 tunes he's recorded with The Band, Robertson said, "The songs are all different. They come in different ways. Some of them I compose alone on the piano; others come out of collaborating with the other guys. At that particular moment, something works out, and a song comes out.

"I've always felt a little too touchy about getting too into (my songs)," Robertson said. "I've always had the feeling that it might inhibit me to study them. Sometimes I have no idea at all what I'm doing. A song just comes, and I want to follow it through. So I don't want to look too closely, to be too careful or to over-intellectualize it, or it might inhibit the inspiration that brought it.

"Most of my songs are musical storytelling," Robertson said. "You could call some of the albums song

cycles Sometimes one song inspires you to write others. Something moves you, and you can't express it all in one song. So an album can be variations on a theme."

Robertson said the bohemian life he's led since he went out on the road with Ronnie Hawkins didn't create much of a scandal in Cabbagetown.

'Dreams Were Small'

"It was accepted as much as anything is accepted," he said. "People didn't dream big there. The dreams were small dreams. They didn't expect me to become a doctor or prime minister or anything.

"By the time I started playing with the Hawks, I was just glad to be able to play, to travel around and get paid for it. We didn't think about going out and 'making it,' about being bigger than anybody else. We just thought about making music."

Of the genesis of The Band, Robertson said drummer Levon Helm had "come up from Arkansas with Ronnie. The whole original band was from Arkansas. I replaced one of the Arkansas guys.

"We were playing the club circuit up north (in Canada). It was easier than in the beer halls and joints we played in the South. We didn't have to work as hard. During the first year or so I was with them, the other guys were all in their own bands and playing the same club circuit. Garth (organist Garth Hudson) was from London (Ontario), Rick (bassist Rick Danko) was from Simco and Richard (vocalist, pianist Richard Manuel) was from Stratford. They all had their own bands, and they'd usually open a show for us. Anyway, within a year, we had stolen all the guys from their own bands."

"I never dreamed I'd ever do anything like that — and on a harp guitar no less. But it just came up. Who knows where those things come from. It just keeps on going. Every time you pick up a guitar, something subconscious happens. It's kind of infinite, that well. Robertson has been writing songs for nearly as many years as he's been playing guitar. I first got connected with Ronnie Hawkins (the rocking hillbilly with whom Robertson and all the current members of The Band began serving their apprenticeships in 1959) when I was 15. I wrote a couple of songs — 'Someone Like You' and 'Bob A Lu' — and Ronnie recorded them."

Off On Own

Following their years as Hawkins' back-up band, the Hawks went off on their own as a group of journeymen rockers, emerging in the mid-60s as master musicians doing studio work for bluesman John Hammond Jr.

When '60s saint Bob Dylan recruited the Hawks for his world tour in 1965-66, rock critics anointed the then-anonymous ensemble "the best band in the world."

Robertson and friends then capitalized on their underground fame in 1968 by releasing an album called "Music From Big Pink," a collection of songs recognized then and now as one of the all-time rock classics.

Now, with 18 years of touring behind them and more recording work to come, The Band can boast of a greater longevity than any other group still functioning in the rock 'n' roll world.

"Besides liking each other and getting along, our enjoyment of making music together really is why we've stayed together so long," Robertson said during his Atlanta visit. "Each of us could do something the others couldn't do. It wasn't a big chore to hold it together. It just came natural.

'Best Music'

"We never worried about having a hit single or anything. We never thought about that too much at all. We did



The Band: (L-R) Richard Manuel, Rick Danko, Robbie Robertson, Garth Hudson And Levon Helm

n't think about that kind of music, of getting something on the Hit Parade. We weren't aware that that was what we were supposed to do. We just got together to make the best music we could, music we enjoyed.

"It's possible that I'll miss performing," Robertson said. "But The Band isn't disbanded. We'll still record and probably perform together. We just won't do any tours is all.

"It would be only natural that I'd miss touring after doing it forever. But right now I'm looking forward to not doing it. Not that I hate it or anything . . . It's just that there are many other things I'd like to pursue now. I have a lot of experiments with music and other media I'd like to explore."

In its review of "The Last Waltz," Time magazine said Robertson stole the show from a galaxy of more familiar pop stars such as Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and Neil Diamond. "Robertson," Time said, exudes "sex and charm on screen (in a way) that can be matched by only a few movie stars."

A Temptation?

Is Robertson tempted by big-screen glamour?

"I've been offered several parts in films since making 'The Last Waltz,'" he said. "But I never really thought about it, about going into acting. I suppose if something came up that I really liked, a film that was right, I might do it, but I'm not looking for some new career or anything.

"I've been a film buff for a long time, and it was a real education working with Marty and everybody. But I've got no business thinking I can direct a film. Everybody wants to direct films. I'm more interested in the writing side of it, of taking something out of mid-air, something that doesn't exist and making it exist.

"I might be interested in scoring a film sometime," Robertson said. "They asked us to do the soundtrack for 'Easy Rider,' but in the time

we had allowed us, we just didn't think we could do it properly. If the right film comes along, I'd consider doing the music."

In the meantime, he said, "We'll be working on a new album. I've got about seven or eight songs ready for that. So I'm going to be busy for awhile. That's all I really need.

"It doesn't matter to me where I live as long as there are facilities around so I can work and keep busy with music."

A Martin Scorsese Film

THE LAST WALTZ

It Started as a Concert

Featuring: Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Emmylou Harris, Van Morrison, The Staples

Dr. John, Muddy Waters, Paul Butterfield, Ronnie Hawkins, Ringo Starr, Ron Wood

It Became a Celebration

A MARTIN SCORSESE Film

The Last Waltz

GA

Production Design by BOB LEVIN

Executive Producer: JONATHAN TAPLIN

Produced by: ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Directed by: MARTIN SCORSESE

Director of Photography: MICHAEL CHAMMAN

Cinematography by: MASZO KONIACI, A.S.C. and VILMOZ SZEMOHO, A.S.C.

© 1978 UNITED ARTISTS

Un film di Martin Scorsese

ULTIMO VALZER

Un film di MARTIN SCORSESE

Ultimo Valzer

(The Last Waltz)

Inizia come un Concerto...

con The Band: Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson

con: Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Emmylou Harris, Van Morrison, The Staples

Dr. John, Muddy Waters, Paul Butterfield, Ronnie Hawkins, Ringo Starr, Ron Wood

...Diventa una Celebrazione

Direttore della Fotografia: BOBIS LEVIN

Produttore Esecutivo: JONATHAN TAPLIN

Prodotto da: ROBBIE ROBERTSON

Diritto da: MARTIN SCORSESE

© 1978 UNITED ARTISTS

Una Pellicola di Martin Scorsese

EL ULTIMO ROCK

Empieza como un Concerto

con The Band: Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson

con: Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Emmylou Harris, Van Morrison, The Staples

Dr. John, Muddy Waters, Paul Butterfield, Ronnie Hawkins, Ringo Starr, Ron Wood

Se Convertirá en Celebración

El Ultimo Rock

© 1978 UNITED ARTISTS

The Band's forrygende afsked med Bob Dylan og alle vennerne!

Martin Scorsese's

THE LAST WALTZ

The Band's sidste koncert

DET BEGYNDTE SOM EN KONCERT...

con The Band: Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson

con: Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Emmylou Harris, Van Morrison, The Staples

Dr. John, Muddy Waters, Paul Butterfield, Ronnie Hawkins, Ringo Starr, Ron Wood

OG BLEV THE LAST WALTZ

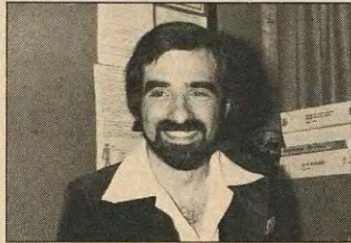
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A Martin Scorsese Film

THE LAST WALTZ

© 1978 UNITED ARTISTS

THE LAST WALTZ



Martin Scorsese
Regains His
Touch, and a
Concert Becomes
a Legend

...In Which
Robbie Robertson
Becomes a
Matinee Idol,



By Chris
Hodenfield

LATE ONE AFTERNOON at Martin Scorsese's house, Robbie Robertson greeted the day with a hang-over and a ghoulish laugh. Tall, thin and pale, he propped himself up with cigarettes and coffee. Beneath the blear and sleep was a dramatic countenance—the sullen eyelids and confident grin of the man holding cards. His voice sounded like a coal car rolling out of the mines; it sounded like a lot of years. "It's just a too-much-fun headache," he said.

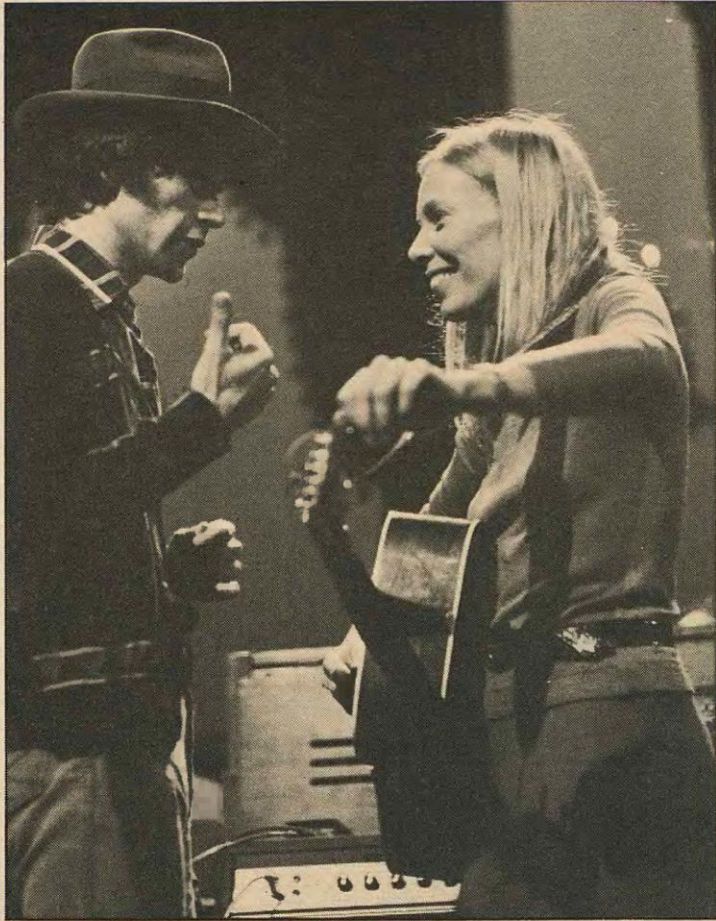
Many afternoons of late he has awakened at the movie director's house. It's been a regular bachelor pad since their marriages broke up. They have spent a year of nights working on their movie, *The Last Waltz*. Robertson, guitarist and songwriter for the Band, is now a movie producer. He comes off well in the picture, of course. Smashing, even. A potential matinee idol. Some United Artists executives saw the first footage and immediately offered him second lead behind Sylvester Stallone in *F.L.S.T.* He bowed out.

Scorsese's is an unassuming house, perched over a valley; ominous movie posters are framed everywhere (Robert Donat is billed in the bathroom as "Phantom Lover or Evil Genius?"). Robertson was getting a crash course on movies from Scorsese, who once taught film in college. Stacked in the corner were sixteen-millimeter prints of art movies and tough-guy flicks. Plus this: Cream's *Farewell Concert* film. They'd kept a lot of nights together.

For years Scorsese has kept rock & roll hours—or was it grave robbers' hours? After suffering his own last waltzes last year and savoring naught but the dregs of gossip and unappreciative reviews, Scorsese spent many, many frazzled, sleepless nights waiting for dawn and watching the all-night movies turn into kiddie programs. As for starting up his next movie, *Raging Bull*, he felt only "terror," and would continue to feel so until the first screenings of *Last Waltz* proved that he'd had good instincts after all. So it was worth those till-dawn sessions at sound labs that ran up much of this movie's \$1.5 million cost.

Scorsese and Robertson are the same age and boast that they grew up on the same jukeboxes. Both seem to have a strong sense of destiny. Both embrace the romance of a dangerous life. Like delinquent saints, they offer their work to the audience as a hard-boiled religious experience. Robertson knows how to unpeel a poetic phrase, but Scorsese, with his knack for bloodcurdling declarations, can make any can-of-beans act seem like a curtain scene at the opera. (Scorsese: "Robbie tells me when he gets out there and does a song, it's like a round in a prizefight. Of course, my next film is about a prizefighter, Jake

Martin Scorsese (top) and Robbie Robertson; waltzing celebrities Neil Diamond, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Danko, Morrison, Dylan, Robertson



Robertson, Mitchell: kissing the road goodbye, removing your hat, taking stock.

LaMotta. And I feel everything I do is like a round in a prizefight, whether it's a conversation, a film, or—you know?"

In Robertson's opinion, this \$1.5 million, year-and-a-half-long production was more than a Thanksgiving Day concert at Winterland, cracking the hymnbooks with wise and famous cronies like Muddy Waters, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Paul Butterfield, Van Morrison and Neil Diamond. It was kissing the road goodbye. It was removing your hat and taking stock.

"We just didn't know the next time when people like this were gonna get together, for whatever reason," Robertson explained earnestly. "I was a little nervous about letting it slip by."

As the cast of supporting characters grew, so did Robertson's original concept of a home movie, until he figured he had to enlist a real filmmaker. Rock music on film he had seen before, and it was all "Horrible.... That's another reason to do this. I watched music on television and in movies, and I asked myself, 'Is this the line of work I'm in?' Because if it is, I find it embarrassing, obnoxious and very poorly done—so less than listening to music in my imagination."

Scorsese he'd met years before when his old company manager, Jonathan Taplin, produced *Mean Streets*, a street-punk drama orchestrated by a jukebox. Scorsese had just escaped a grueling, twenty-two-week shoot on *New York, New York* and was living on nerves and smelling salts.

"I hit on him at the worst possible time," grinned Robertson. "He had the play thing coming up [directing Liza Minnelli in *The Act*], then the little film he was going to do with Steve Prince [*An American Boy*]. I just told him what was going to happen, and he said, 'Holy Jesus!' I told him, 'I realize

you're in a bind; if there were anybody else, I'd ask them. I have to come to you.' He said, 'I can't afford to pass it by.' There was no 'Let me think it over.' It was 'When do we start?'"

"It was such a relief to do it with him, since he was already ninety percent there. He knows the music as well as I know it. Obscure songs on the fourth album, fifth song on the second side—he knows the words to the third verse."

Instead of the usual rock movie crew with hand-held sixteen-millimeter cameras, they called out Hollywood's best technicians, a full complement of wide-screen professionals headed by cameraman Michael Chapman, who lit up some of the interview scenes like outtakes from *Taxi Driver*, his last movie with Scorsese. The Winterland stage was dressed up like an antebellum ballroom, and on the sidelines was a recording engineer. It was enough hoopla to make some guests nervous, and some ask what to wear.

One guest wore an indecently large lump of coke in his nostril, and the picture had to be doctored to remove the cocaine booger. He will remain nameless here, because you'd only miss his number for staring at his nose.

Dr. John, on the other hand, wore a smoking jacket, beret and pink bow tie. He looked like Dizzy Gillespie's valet. His "Such a Night" was very friendly, and you could feel it.

One staggering aspect of the concert footage is that the viewer feels as privy to the onstage emotions as any musician there. The big-time cameras picked up all the looks, eyes and glances. The coverage is nearly perfect and puts to shame all those murky rock movies of the past that showed, for instance, guitarists writhing to solos from another part of the soundtrack. When he was an editor on *Woodstock*, Scorsese became known as the "King of the Triple Screen." But *The Last Waltz* doesn't need any fancy montages. He worked with a 150-page script and had the lighting cued almost to the chord changes. The sound, laid down on a full studio twenty-four-track machine, was mixed by Rob Fraboni onto four-track Dolby stereo sound for the theaters and sets a new standard. It's nice to have the new sound technology used for something more than a calamity movie.

Future rock moviemakers will have to duplicate this extraordinary sound quality, but even if they use more cameras than on *Ben-Hur* and round up more stars than there are in heaven, they would still have to find the emotional pitch that makes this one an inspiring farewell *goombah*.

It is balanced by just enough interviewing, backstage and in the Band's rehearsal clubhouse, Shangri-La. Garth Hudson remains the enigmatic forehead—hasn't he always looked like a 1949 Hudson? Richard Manuel sounds like a rumble in the alley. Robertson stands ready to mop up any comers, even Clapton.

Scorsese took them to a movie sound stage for a few numbers—"The Weight," with the Staple Singers, and "Evangeline," with Emmylou Harris—to fully unleash the snaking cameras, just as he'd been doing all those months on *New York, New York*. Scorsese came to admit that his big-band picture is really a prelude to the rock picture. Both pictures move from gritty realism to sound-stage gloss, and it is the grit that is memorable.

Onstage with Ronnie Hawkins, they are relaxed as hell; Hawkins acts as if Robbie's guitar solo is so hot that he has to fan it with his cowboy hat. Robertson recounts the Hawkins promise upon their first partnership: they wouldn't get much pay, but they would get more pussy than Frank Sinatra. Later, Richard Manuel reveals that, as far as women went, he just wanted to break even.

Closing with Dylan, the Band does not look so relaxed. Dylan, shrouded in a white hat and curls, sings "Forever Young" and with scant warning, drifts into "Baby Let Me Follow You Down." It sounds less a lover's plea than a call for bruises and pillage.

There was in fact some cantankerousness about *The Last Waltz* from Dylan—a man who likes to control all that he touches—as to whether he gave his permission to be in any film. He did not want to compete with his own movie, *Renaldo & Clara*, a tour fantasia shot in a style that harkens back to the rough cuts of the Sixties. (In the Hollywood movie he comes off as a clouded phantom; in his own movie he's rather splotchy.) The argument seemed to be that he wanted his own movie, distributed by his brother in Minnesota, to hit first in certain cities.

But after all, it was Dylan who took them at the midpoint of their sixteen-year career and put them on wheels of fire. With this crowd the land of Woodstock became holy turf. Dylan's old manager, Albert

Grossman, took the Band, secluded in a big pink house after eight years of barhopping, and made sure their noble and enigmatic reentry into public life.

However, the release of *Music from Big Pink* in 1968 aroused only a few piddling tour offers. Then bassist Rick Danko broke his neck, and in the healing time the Band's reputation was spread by the likes of Eric Clapton and George Harrison. So when Bill Graham corralled them at Winterland in April of 1969, it was hailed as a second coming.

They played the Woodstock festival ("Looking at the audience," Robertson remembers, "was like looking into purgatory"), but were not in the resultant film because Grossman had ruled against any cameras within spitting distance of their stage.

"Albert enjoyed saying no, too. We kinda followed his instincts. We were never that out front in telling people how we felt about it. It wasn't our business. But with Marty we were able to do it."

With Marty they made shiny their last stand. But Robertson gets just a little tippy in explaining that this was no plate-throwing divorce case:

"For us, it was a much bigger decision than that. We weren't moving apart at all. But this *thing*—we'd spent half our lives on the road. *Half our lives*." A significant look appeared beneath the droopy eyelids. "I mean, our whole upbringing. Every thing—the rules, the street—that's where we got it from. We felt like a debt, a very warm spot. We felt it was incredibly cruel and dangerous, something that could eventually just call your number." He suddenly snapped his fingers. "We had come to a point: we could tell something was going to happen. Something wrong. Something.... And this isn't talking about the guys individually, this is talking about the Band as a train itself. It was us, saying goodbye to the road.

"You could say, 'Big deal, saying goodbye to the road?' For us, it was a big thing. Sixteen years." Confidential voice: "Goodbye to anything after sixteen years is strong...."

"This could be a gloomy situation. We could just not say anything. Or, we could do it like a New Orleans funeral. But people can't resist the soap-opera element. 'Saying goodbye to the road, New Orleans funeral'—it all sounds romantic. But it doesn't give you that *People* magazine satisfaction: 'The dirt—let's get some dirt on it.'"

Okay, I said. Let's go all the way. You could break up in the manner of Sam & Dave, amid hairy stories of backstage knife fights.

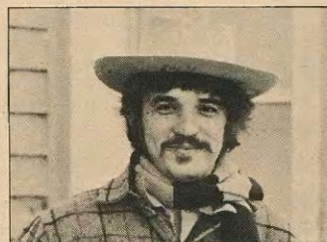
Robertson seemed interested. "I thought about it already. Sam & Dave. It's either Sam & Dave or the Mills Brothers. We just don't want to be out there until people say, 'Listen, we've heard you a million times. You're old men, go home.'"

Robertson lit up another cigarette. "You know, the story behind *The Last Waltz* is frightening. It's all a coincidence, but... many, many last waltzes within *The Last Waltz*. I feel like getting this project done with."

More than that he wouldn't say. He offered a painful grimace and a laugh that could've been a bowling ball rolling around in a hollow wash tub. He sure had a stylish way with that cigarette. Even Bette Davis would ask for lessons.

THE LAST WALTZ

A Portrait of the Band



as Young Hawks

By Robert Palmer



'The Last Waltz' blends concert and sound stage footage with director Martin Scorsese's interviews with members of the Band. They discuss the group's history, including its early-Sixties beginnings as the Hawks, backup band for rockabilly trouper Ronnie Hawkins. Robert Palmer played saxophone in many of the same Southern clubs as the Hawks and relived that era with Robbie Robertson as work on 'The Last Waltz' was being completed.



THE LONG BLACK Cadillac ground to a stop in the Delta Supper Club's dusty parking lot and gave a shudder, as if it were glad to be rid of the weight of the trailer it was pulling. The six young men who got out, squinting in the bright Arkansas sun, were dressed for the road, in blue jeans and plaid or cowboy shirts. The older one, Ronnie Hawkins, was in his late twenties, beefy, filling his tight clothes, his hair teased and greased with a spit curl hanging down over his forehead. The others were kids in their late teens, gangly, miming the by-now-ritualized attitudes rock & roll cool. They looked around at the West Helena afternoon for a minute, sizing up two locals who were giving them the eye from a weather-beaten Chevy pickup truck, and then Hawkins led them into the club and over to the bar, not to drink, though they could hold their own at that, but to look.

Ronnie felt along the wooden bar until he found a jagged seam. "Well boys," he said in his rangy Ozark drawl, "here it is." The seam ran all the way down the bar and all the way through the thick wood. It seems that one night a Billy Bob or Jimmy Lee from the country around Helena had gotten into a fight and been evicted from the establishment. Being smashed on rotgut whiskey and not about to take that kind of treatment, he stumbled to the back of his pickup, pulled out his chain saw, burst through the front door of the club and let

the thing rip. All the good old boys went scrambling out the windows and the door, but Billy Bob didn't even see them. He just went straight for the bar, lowered that whirring blade, and sawed the bar in two. That was the genesis of the famous chain-saw story, which musicians all over the South heard and told, even if they didn't believe it. "Yep," said Hawkins, almost reverently, "this is where it happened. See, here's where they glued it back together."

It was 1961, and Robbie Robertson, who'd replaced Fred Carter Jr. as lead guitarist in Hawkins' backup band, the Hawks, just a few months earlier, was still walking around this fabled country in a daze. He was seventeen, but he'd been around, playing rock & roll in his native Toronto since he was thirteen, writing a couple of hot tunes and going to New York when he was fifteen to watch Hawkins record them, getting that call when he was sixteen—"We need us a guitar player, come on down"—and riding a Greyhound from Toronto all the way down to Fayetteville and then to West Helena, on the Mississippi River, smack in the middle of the delta. It was blues country. Those grav-

Robbie Robertson (left) was the first Canadian to join the Hawks; Rick Danko (above), smitten by rock & roll in his early teens, was the second.

ely voiced singers and storming black metal guitarists Robbie had been hearing on the radio, on clear Toronto nights when he could pull in John R.'s show on WLAC from Nashville, actually stalked these dark bottom lands, cypress swamps, clusters of board and tar-paper croppers' shacks and cotton fields baking in the sun.

Robbie knew the music; along with James Burton, Dale Hawkins, Roy Buchanan and a few other punks, he was one of a handful of white guitarists who were playing it. But the music was one thing; the place was something else. Levon Helm, the intense, wiry drummer who was to initiate him into its mysteries, met him at the Helena bus station and took him out to the Helm farmhouse, which was built on stilts to keep it dry during spring floods when the Big Muddy overran its banks. Levon's dad, a cotton farmer, told tales that made them split their sides laughing, and his mother cooked food that made them split their sides eating. Later, with Levon at the wheel, Robbie had a look at the town. There were black folks everywhere—he could remember seeing only a few in his entire life—and even the white folks talked like them, in a thick, rolling Afro-English that came out as heavy and sweet as molasses but could turn as acrid as turpentine if your accent or behavior were strange.

By the time Robbie had been with the Hawks a few months, the original Arkansans, except for Levon, had been replaced by Canadians. Earnest young Rick Danko, who knew some country fiddle and mandolin but had been smitten by rock & roll fever when he was in his early teens in the Canadian tobacco belt, was first. Then came Richard Manuel, a smoky-voiced screamer and master of the art of rhythm piano. "The piano was used as a rhythm instrument, with solos on organ or guitar or sax," Robbie explains. "So when you stopped playing rhythm to play a solo, the rhythm wouldn't drop out—the piano was still holding it." The last to join was Garth Hudson, who'd been classically trained and agreed to come only after the others promised him a token fee in exchange for regular lessons in music theory and harmony. It seemed to satisfy his parents, who imagined a different kind of musical career for their son.

The musical director was Levon, who'd come to the Hawks from a Helena group called the Jungle Bush Beaters and liked his rock & roll hard and raw. Hawkins had had some hits in the brash rockabilly vein of the late Fifties and early Sixties—"Odessa," "Mary Lou"—and liked Levon's style, but by 1961 or '62 there were changes in the air. The band added saxophonist Jerry Penfound so it could play soul tunes like Bobby Blue Bland's "Turn On Your Lovelight." With Garth on organ they sported two keyboards and a sax; with Garth on sax they had a soul band's horn section. And despite his classical training, Garth developed a saxophone style in the classic mold. Even today, he will tell you that the art of rock & roll saxophone playing was all but lost in the late Fifties and the early Sixties with the introduction of the Otto Link metal mouthpiece and the arrival of King Curtis and Boots Randolph and their strangled, chicken-clucking sound.

"When the music got a little too far out for Ronnie's ear," Robbie remembers, "or he couldn't tell when to come in singing, he would tell us that nobody but Thelonious Monk could understand what we were playing. But the big thing with him was that

he made us rehearse and practice a lot. Often we would go and play until one a.m. and then rehearse until four. And I practiced incessantly; I could go for it until my fingers were just raw. I was interested in doing what those other people couldn't do; I really wanted to be good."

They all drove from gig to gig in the Cadillac, with their equipment in the trailer. The circuit extended from Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee up through Missouri. Then there was the Canadian part: Toronto and out into Ontario. Sometimes they would drive hundreds of miles, from warm, almost tropical weather into sheets of freezing rain or snow. Levon remembers Hawkins looking out at an icy Canadian landscape from the speeding Caddy, turning to him gravely and saying, "Son, it's as cold out there as an accountant's heart."

But Arkansas, Ronnie's and Levon's home state, was their headquarters and prime stomping ground. Across its length



Levon Helm was the Hawks' only remaining Arkansan.

and breadth they were legends, and not just for their music. Local bands did copy their arrangements note for note, and budding guitarists got both their kicks and their licks from catching Robbie at national guard armory dances or country roadhouses. "But the Hawks could eat and pop pills and fuck with the best of 'em," remembers a veteran Arkansas rocker. "Ronnie knew every whore between Helena and Toronto."

The lifestyle was decidedly fast. In central Arkansas, for example, they often played the Club 70, a big barn of a place just off the two-lane blacktop of highway 70 between the Little Rock city limits and the Jacksonville air force base. There was a brisk business in amphetamines in the parking lot. To get into the club you had to get past a bouncer who sat in a little glassed-in booth under a blue light, checking IDs. Sometimes a local with his T-shirt sleeves rolled up to his shoulders would sit down in front of the bandstand, chug-a-lug a quart of vodka, chug down a quart of beer for a chaser and dare anybody to start a fight. Sometimes a gang of tough Yankee slum kids from the air base would mock the Arkansas Razorback cheer, "Sooiee Pigs," by yelling "Sooieeee, Pigshit," and then there would be real trouble: chairs and tables flying, bottles breaking, black eyes and more money out of the till to pay off the cops. After a night of that, the Hawks would pack, get in their Caddy and drive up into the Ozarks to Fayetteville, Razorback Valhalla, where they sometimes had to wade across a floor that was literally knee-deep in beer cans in order to get to the stage. Mostly, though, they played



Garth Hudson gave lessons in musical theory and harmony.

roadhouses. "You'd just be driving along," says Robbie, "and there'd be this place, out on the road somewhere. At night people would come from all around, it would be packed. You could tell by looking at it that it was only gonna be there for a short while, that somebody was gonna torch it at any given moment. It happened a lot. We'd play in a club and go back a year later and they'd have burnt it down and built a new one."

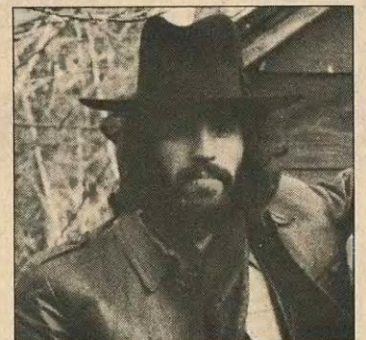
The Hawks split from Ronnie Hawkins in 1963 and worked for a time under Levon's feisty, determined leadership. And they almost became Sonny Boy Williamson's backup band instead of Bob Dylan's in the mid-Sixties.

"We were in West Helena, just hanging out and talking about the music," says Robbie. "Levon had grown up listening to Sonny Boy on King Biscuit Time [broadcast over KFFA radio in Helena] and we thought about him and said, maybe he's here. So we went down to the holler—Levon knew where everything was—and we asked some people if Sonny Boy was around. They said, 'Yeah, he's playing down at the cafe.' We went down and there he was, a big tall man in a bowler hat, white hair and a white goatee, wearing a suit he'd had made in England that was gray on one side and black on the other, and the reverse on the back. He looked kind of...fine."

"Levon introduced himself and said, 'Can we go somewhere to play some music?' Sonny Boy took us to these friends of his, this woman had a place where she sold bootleg corn liquor. Well, that stuff is outrageous. We got drunk, drunk, and we all played. Man, he played the harmonica inside out. He'd put the whole thing inside his mouth and play it. I kept noticing him spitting in this can. I thought maybe he was chewing tobacco. I was wandering around at one point and I looked in the can and it was blood, he was spitting blood. It was a gruesome sight, and I was so drunk...."

"Things got a little weird there. There were all these young guys around trying to hustle us, and they were afraid of Sonny Boy—he was the only legend around the neighborhood, and it was also a known fact that if you fucked with him he would cut you. But eventually there were just too many people. So we all left and smuggled him into our motel—they didn't allow black people in there, you understand—and we just played and played, and he couldn't believe it. He'd been to England and played with the Yardbirds and some other groups, and he told us, 'They're awful. They want to play the blues so bad and they play it so bad...' Anyway, we really got on, and we made all these plans, things we were gonna do together. Then we went to play in New Jersey and we got this letter from Sonny Boy's manager or whoever he was, saying that he had passed. Tuberculosis."

Levon and the Hawks didn't spend all their time in the South, not by a long shot. They would play in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and pop into New York to see some of the Brill Building songwriter types they'd met when they recorded there with Hawkins: Neil Diamond, Doc Pomus, Leiber and Stoller. They spent some time in Chicago, where they got to know Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield and went with them to blues clubs on the South Side. They gigged regularly in Canada. It was on one of their northern swings that they met John Hammond Jr. Hammond and Mary Martin, who worked in Albert Grossman's



Richard Manuel, smoky-voiced master of the piano.

office and knew a lot of Canadian musicians, both told Bob Dylan about them.

"Dylan called when they were working in New Jersey," says Jonathan Taplin, who was the Band's company manager from 1968 to 1971 but knew their music much earlier. "Evidently, he went down to listen to them, returned to New York and called up Levon. He asked if they'd like to play with him at the Hollywood Bowl and at Forest Hills Stadium. And Levon's reply was, 'Who else is on the bill?' Because they were just beginning to hear 'Like a Rolling Stone' on the radio. They never bought albums, they just listened to the radio, so they had no idea how big Bob was. The way it ended up, just Levon and Robbie went to the Forest Hills gig, and Dylan got Harvey Brooks and Al Kooper to play bass and organ. See, Levon and Robbie wanted to be sure that he'd really sold out these big places... Then they got the other three guys to come on up."

"We'd heard a couple of his records and we knew he was really good," Robbie says



The Big Pink years: they were no longer the Hawks, a band. They were the Band.

of Dylan, "but we were a rock & roll band. We didn't play his kind of music, we just appreciated it in the same way you would listen to Big Bill Broonzy and appreciate it. But once he started wanting to change his music, it was an interesting challenge. It was easy to play with him, but it was hard getting everybody to play with him at the same time because he would break meter, and all of a sudden you wouldn't know where you were, you'd get mixed up. Sometimes we didn't know if we were playing great music or nonsense. A lot of it had to do with... Well, it was a strange experience, going around the world in a private plane and getting booed. An interesting way to make a living, but definitely strange. Everybody was telling Bob to get rid of us, that we were sent from the devil and putting this dirty, vulgar music on a pure folkloric tradition. That's what the attitude was. And then everybody just forgot about that and accepted the whole thing as if it had always been accepted."

When Dylan's first electric tour hit Memphis—*Highway 61* was on everyone's turntable; *Blonde on Blonde* was still several months in the future—some of the Arkansas rockers, hearing that this new kid Dylan was playing with the Hawks, drove up along the twisting delta highway to see them. It was an unforgettable show. Dylan did the first part unaccompanied, introducing "Visions of Johanna" and driving everybody half crazy with lines like "the ghost of electricity howled in the bones of her face." Then he brought out the Hawks, who looked pretty much like they'd always looked, street casual, not too much hair, jeans, old sports jackets. The music was loud, intense, possessed. Robbie played wrenching solos from back near Levon's drums, hardly moving a muscle. Dylan,

playing rhythm, mimed the throes of a convulsion whenever Robbie tore into a break, and everybody but the Arkies thought he was soloing.

Jonathan Taplin caught the group later in that same 1965 tour. "It was astonishing," he remembers. "They were louder than any band I'd ever heard. At that time, there was nothing like it. As it went on, into 1966, they got even more daring. I have live tapes from England with Robbie playing outrageous high-note blues guitar. Nobody was playing like that. Then, when everybody else got into that kind of style, he began to look for a new sound, a more delicate, less bluesy kind of thing. He's just a killer musician. On that record he made with John Hammond in 1964, they had Robbie playing the guitar and Mike Bloomfield on piano. I mean, it was obvious who was the better player then. But you know, they're all killer players. The funny thing is, when they became the Band, they constantly tried to play down solos, musicianship, that kind of thing, in order to be an ensemble, when in fact they were the best solo players in the music at that time. Whenever there would be a jam session, Garth was a far better organ player than anybody, and Robbie, when he'd get together with other guitar players, would amaze everybody with his riffs."

Taplin was going to Princeton and acting as road manager for the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, another Albert Grossman act, when he met the Band. Dylan was in seclusion following his motorcycle accident, but they all were seeing a lot of each other in Woodstock, getting together, trading songs, making the recordings that later surfaced as *The Basement Tapes*. "By then," says Robbie, "the give-and-take was an everyday procedure, whether we were traveling around the world or hanging out in somebody's kitchen. It was an education for all of us, and it was fun." You can hear a strong mutual fascination on *The Basement Tapes*. Dylan, the urban-folkie-turned-rocker, found in the Hawks a direct connection with the roots of rock—blues,

country, rockabilly—and the Band found in Dylan a new understanding of what rock could become. Robbie was writing songs again. "Bob taught me a certain liberty," he says. "How to tell a story in a short form without necessarily having to go from point A to point B. I mean, he broke down a whole lot of the tradition of songwriting right before my very eyes. With all the rules broken, you could go ahead and tell the truth without having to do some kind of fancy dance. But I was never too hot for the messages and the poetry, that side of it, because I just didn't come out of that school. I never thought I was writing poetry; they were songs."

The songs Robbie ended up writing came out steeped in the South's bottom lands and shacks and cotton fields, steeped in the Baptist and Holy Roller churches where folks in the throes of religious hysteria invented the duck walk and all the other classic rock & roll moves. During the first months in Woodstock the songs had come slowly, and maybe that was because Levon, who'd tired of the road shortly before Dylan's European tour and gone back to the South, wasn't with them. They recorded a lot of the music on *The Basement Tapes* without him, but they found that they needed that razorback spirit and never-say-die Confederate orneriness to be a real band. When Levon rejoined them and sunk roots in Woodstock—today he is the only member who still lives there—the transformation was complete. They were no longer the Hawks, a band; they were the Band.

Taplin helped the Band move into Sammy Davis Jr.'s old house in Hollywood to record their second album in the winter of 1968. They built a makeshift recording studio in the pool house, where Levon lived for the duration of the sessions. Once the place was set up, Jonathan went back to finish at Princeton. When he returned, the Band sat him down and played him "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down."

"It was May," he says, "and they'd just finished it the night before. They said it'd come out fast and hard and clean. It was

just the most moving experience I'd had for, God, I don't know how long. Because for me, being a Northern liberal kid who'd been involved in the civil-rights movement and had a whole attitude toward the South, well, I loved the music but I didn't understand where white Southerners were coming from. And to have it all in just three and a half minutes, the sense of dignity and place and tradition, all those things... Well, the next day, after I'd recovered, I went to Robbie and asked him, 'How did that come out of you?' And he just said that from being with Levon so long in his life and being in that place at that time... It was so inside him that he wanted to write that song right at Levon, to let him know how much those things meant to him."

To the world at large, *Music from Big Pink* and *The Band* were the remarkable beginnings of a remarkable new group. In reality, they were the crowning fruition of a career that had spanned almost a decade. Of all the rock groups making music during those heady years, the Band was the one that was most in touch with the music's history and its heartland, the one that realized most clearly how inseparably music, past and place were linked. After they completed the second album, they went out on their first tour as the Band, a tour that has been chronicled elsewhere, most notably in Greil Marcus' book, *Mystery Train*, and, perhaps, in some of the lyrics on the Band's third album, the aptly titled *Stage Fright*. When one suggests to Robbie Robertson that the tour really was the beginning of a new ball game, he nods his head. "You're right. For us it was, anyway. The first two albums were really like the fulfillment of something."

Cut to Los Angeles, early 1978. Robbie is in his small office on the MGM movie lot, taking care of detail work, fulfilling his responsibilities as producer of Martin Scorsese's *The Last Waltz*. In the office next door, Jonathan Taplin, who went on from his work with the Band to produce Scorsese's *Mean Streets*, is serving as the new film's executive producer. "The road didn't really change that much," Robbie says over a Styrofoam cup of coffee and a chain of cigarettes, "just different-class hotels, different-class transportation. I guess the first stage could have been more deadly just in terms of how physically dangerous it was. The second stage was dangerous too, but more on a head level. It really was kind of a mindfuck." And so is the movie. All those faces from the early days, the period with Dylan, the second stage. The energy in the music and its weathered, lived-in quality—every phrase, every note sighs from sixteen years on the road—are almost too intense. "We would watch the footage and not be able to watch it again for a day and a half," Scorsese said the night before. "We would come home drained."

The important thing is that the Band didn't go down in a plane crash or on the highway, or down in spirits and chemicals like so many of their contemporaries. They flirted with the edge, some members more hungrily than others, but in the end they set a date for their demise as a touring unit, arranged for it to take place where they played their first engagement as the Band, threw a party instead of a wake, got to do some of their favorite songs one last time with their favorite artists and friends, and captured the whole thing for their grandchildren. How many other rock & roll bands have been able to say as much?

... With the last **Band** Lp in Capitol's hands, word has it that it's renegotiation time. And, as of yet, no label has made a deal for the "Last Waltz" tapes, although **Rick Danko** told Points West, "We've gotten some pretty good offers." No matter what happens with Capitol, those live concert tapes, barring label infighting over the various acts, are a definitely powerful bargaining tool...

AGREEMENT dated April 25, 1977, by and between WARNER BROS. RECORDS INC. ("Company") on the one hand, and **JAMIE ROEMERSON, RICK DANKO, LEVON HELM, ERIC GARIN HUDSON** and **RICHARD MANUEL** (jointly the "Artists") on the other.

1. Company engages Artists' exclusive services as recording artists, as well as Artists' services as the producer of masters hereunder. Such services shall commence on the date hereof and continue until one hundred twenty (120) days after Artists shall have delivered six (6) "albums" (as herein defined) (in addition to "The Last Waltz" album and up to two (2) "Best Of" albums as hereinafter provided for) to Company pursuant to the terms and conditions contained herein, but in no event less than five (5) years from the date hereof ("initial period"). Artists hereby grant to Company two (2) separate, consecutive and irrevocable options to renew this Agreement, such option periods to commence consecutively upon the expiration of the preceding period (as the same may have been extended or suspended) upon all of the same terms and conditions of the initial period except as otherwise specifically set forth herein, and except that Artists shall deliver one (1) album to Company during each option period for which Company shall have exercised its option. The first option period shall continue until six (6) months following the delivery to Company of the album delivered by Artists to Company during such period, and Artists agree to deliver such album no later than one (1) year following the commencement of the first option period (such timely delivery being of the essence hereof). For purposes of computing the expiration date

RECORD WORLD OCTOBER 15, 1977

... Meanwhile, latest reports on "The Last Waltz" indicate that the **Martin Scorsese** film of the historic final **Band** concert is just about wrapped, with the accompanying album package expected to be a triple-disk set, to be released by Warner Bros.

Cash Box/February 18, 1978

... Three albums which would fit into the "long-awaited" category are now in various stages of progress. "The Last Waltz," the LP documenting **The Band's** farewell concert Thanksgiving Day 1976, should be out March 1, while the accompanying film is now slated for release April 19. Meanwhile, **John Prine**, who has had trouble finding the right producer for his first Elektra/Asylum LP, is busy recording with his old pal **Steve Goodman** handling production. The album is now expected in mid-April. And **John Fogerty**, whose last album came out on E/A in 1975, has finished recording his new album and is now at work mastering the record.

THE LAST WALTZ

**IF THE LAST WALTZ MEANS CHOOSING YOUR PARTNERS...
...THEN WHO BETTER THAN THESE?**

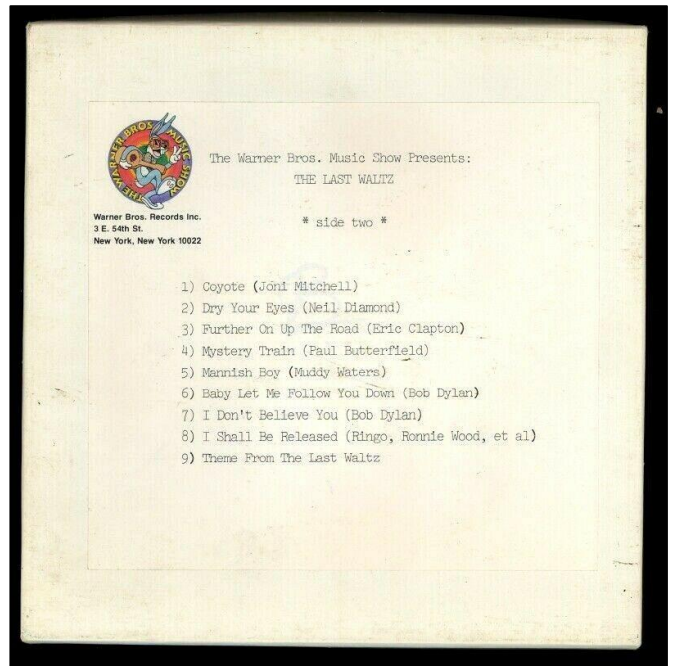
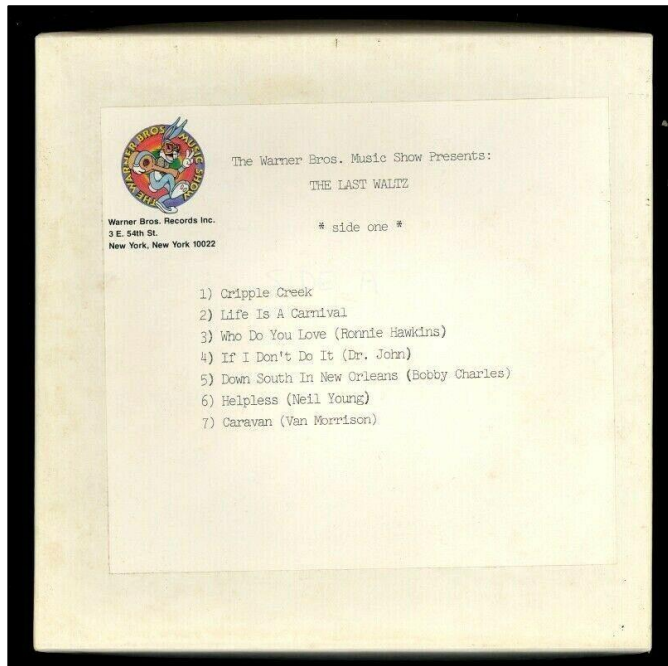
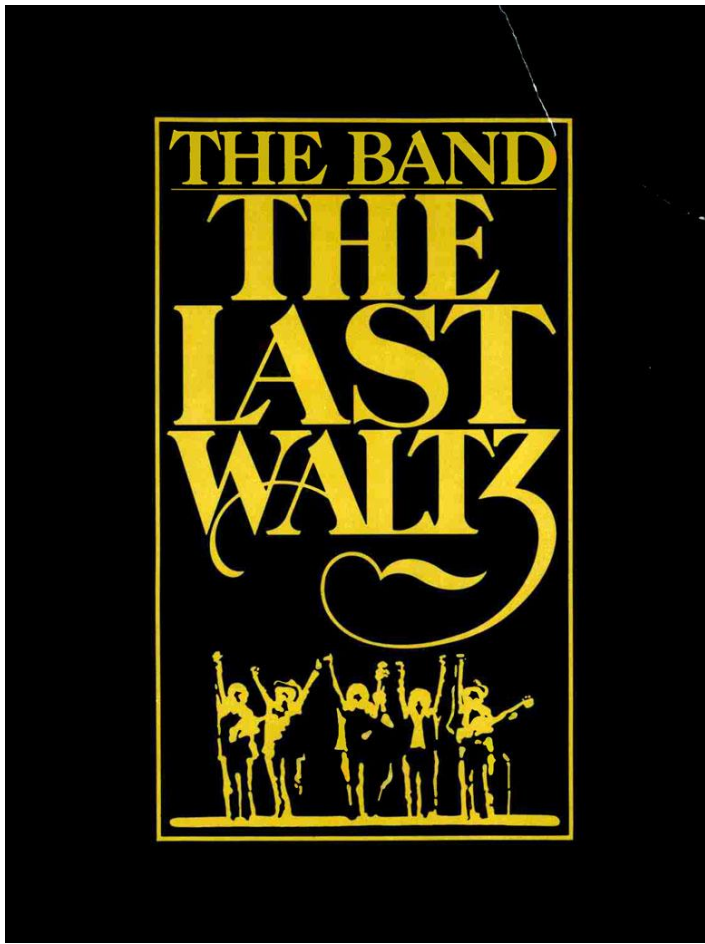
The Band—Rick Danko, Levon Helm, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel, Robbie Robertson.
Special guests—Paul Butterfield, Eric Clapton, Neil Diamond, Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Hawkins, Dr. John, Joni Mitchell, Van Morrison, The Staple Singers, Ringo Starr, Muddy Waters, Ron Wood, Neil Young.

"The road was our school. It gave us a sense of survival; it caught us everything we know and out of respect, we don't want to drive it into the ground... or maybe it's just superstition but the road has taken a lot of the great ones. It's a goddam impossible way of life.

The Band has been together sixteen years, together on the road; eight years in dance halls, in dives and bars, eight years of concerts, arenas and stadiums. Our first concert as The Band had been at Winterland, so we wrapped it up there on Thanksgiving Day. There was a dinner for 5,000, a waltz orchestra, a hell of a party and some friends showed up to help us take it home. But they are much more than friends. They are some of the greatest influences on music and on a whole generation.

We wanted it to be more than a "final concert." We wanted it to be a celebration."

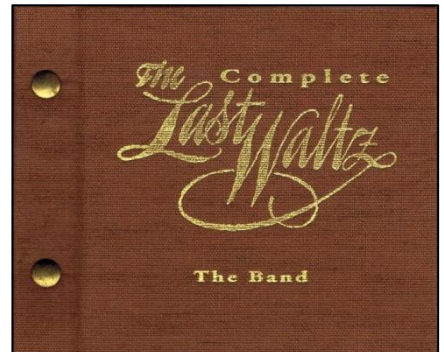
A Celebration of Music!
3-Record Set Containing
Previously Unreleased Material



Reel to reel radio show.

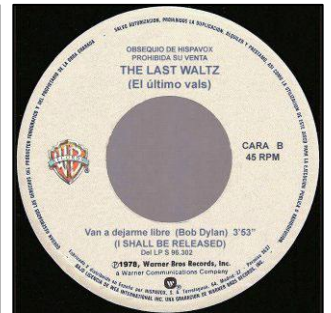
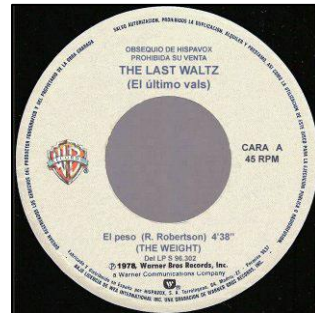
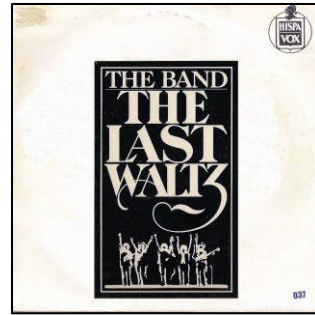
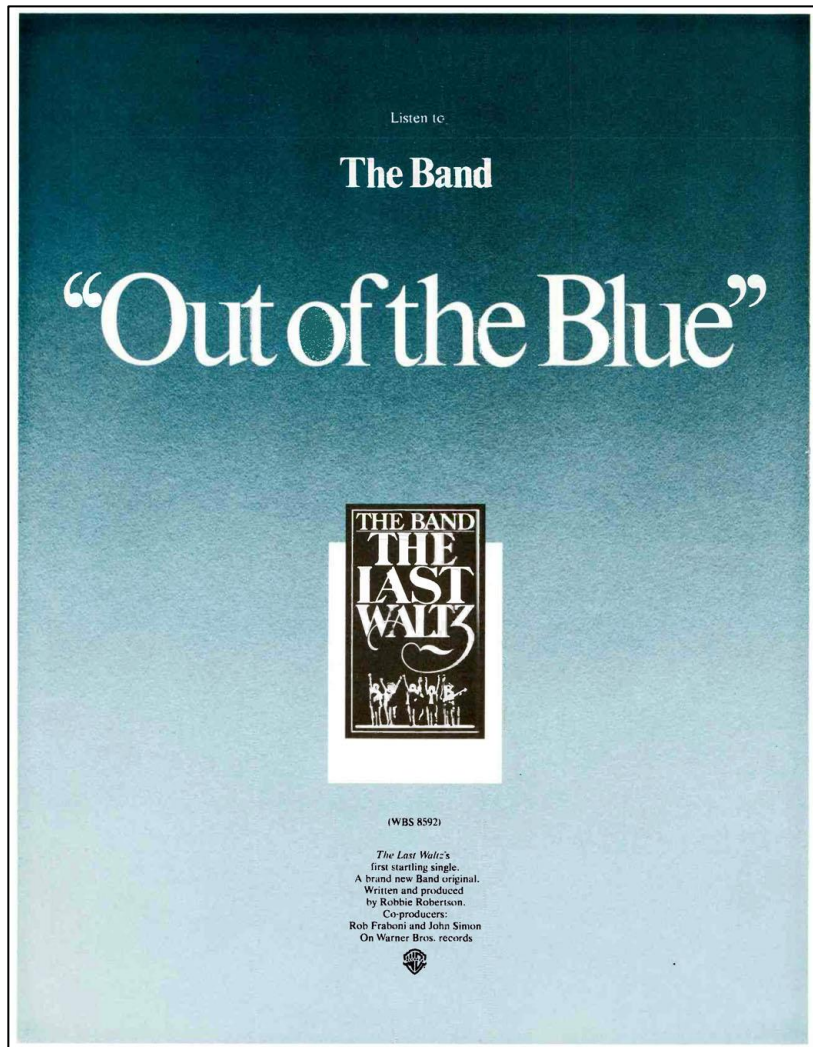


2006 bootleg DVD of the in-house video. The video is now available on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8p388131120)



1995 bootleg CD, audio taken from the in-house video.

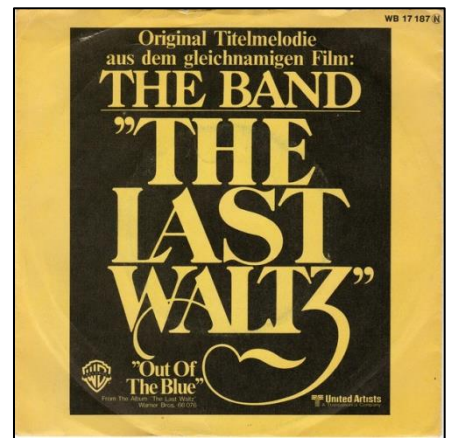
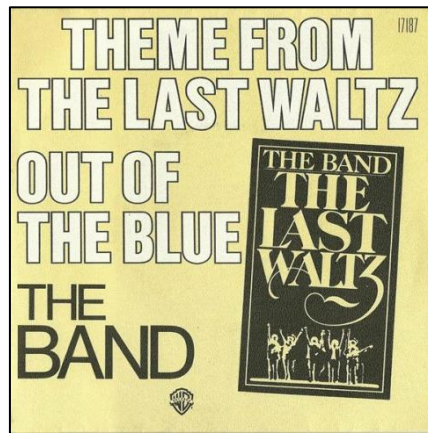
There is also a surprisingly good audience tape in circulation...



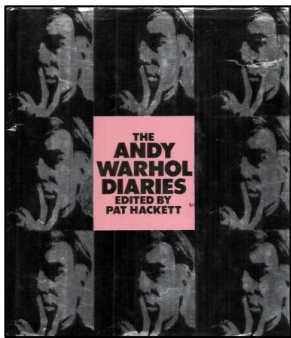
Limited edition Spanish single, only 100 copies made.



Jukebox strips.



Single from the 1990 Emmylou Harris compilation "Duets"



Thursday, May 11, 1978

Catherine and I were going up at 3:15 to Martin Scorsese's at the Sherry Netherland to interview him and Robbie Robertson from *The Last Waltz*. And Catherine was so in love with Robbie Robertson and Martin Scorsese that she had Gigi come by and do her makeup—lipstick and blush-on and eye makeup—but actually she looks better without makeup. We were late, so I gave Ronnie money (\$5) because he had to get a Checker cab, he was bringing a big painting uptown, and Catherine and I went alone (cab \$3.50).

Marty had a big suite and he's so adorable. The lady publicist who's doing *The Last Waltz* was there. Robbie Robertson didn't get there until 5:00. A kid named Steven Prince was there, he played a creep selling guns in *Taxi Driver*, and he's really like that, so he was real. Marty said that now he's doing a full-length movie on Steven Prince's face where he tells stories, he said he got that idea from me. Marty said he and Robbie were looking for a house, so I told them places to go. So that's his roommate and he's got a butler, too, and it seems like he's starting his own Factory. He must be really in the dough, because they're going to spend about \$500,000 for it. Marty was shaking like crazy. I guess from coke. We sat down and had lunch and it was funny because the publicity lady had just come back from lunch so she sat at the other end of the table, watching, so it was like a movie. I couldn't even look at her, though, I was so starving that I ate. I hadn't eaten lunch at the office because I was trying to diet. We gossiped a lot, I don't know how much of it we'll be able to print. Robbie said he knew me from the Dylan days. I asked him what ever happened to the Elvis painting that I gave Dylan because every time I run into Dylan's manager Albert Grossman he says *he* has it, and Robbie said that at some point Dylan traded it to Grossman for a *couch!* (*laughs*) He felt he needed a little sofa and he gave him the Elvis for it. It must have been in his drug days. So that was an expensive couch.

Thursday, June 1, 1978

It turned out it was Catherine's birthday. And Robbie Robertson from The Band called, wanting me to do a poster for *The Last Waltz*, and so Fred and I were going up there to meet him at his place at the Sherry Netherland to talk about it, and when Catherine found out, she said that that could be her birthday present. So we all cabbied up at 6:30, traffic was bad (\$4).

We went up to the Scorsese-Robertson suite—Marty was in Rome visiting (*laughs*) the grave of Roberto Rossellini. Robbie gave us champagne, and then it was the same thing, they always say, "Well, will you do this art poster for us and then we will sell it for you and isn't that wonderful?" And it's mixed in with hippie talk and phrases, and then everyone was too embarrassed to talk about money, so finally Fred said, "Look, man, what's in it for Andy?" (*laughs*) Yeah, he really said "man." Oh, and the butler who answered the door was that kid Marty's making the movie about, Steven Prince.



Canadian Broadcast Industry Hall of Famer John Donabie (left) passed along this photo taken in the Q107 (CILQ-FM) Toronto studio, just a few months after the release of *The Last Waltz* in 1978. Robbie Robertson came home to collect a Gold Record. Ross Reynolds (right), then president of Warner Music Canada, asked station management if the award could be presented to Robertson on Donabie's show because of the announcer's love for The Band's music. What Donabie didn't know is that he would be presented with a plaque of his own that night that read "For His Continuous Support and Promotion of The Band."



No distractions for judge it's a switch for rocker

TORONTO — Robbie Robertson, a member of the now-disbanded rock group the Band, says he takes seriously his work as one of the judges of the Canadian Film Awards.


When he arrived Sunday to help decide on the awards, he asked the hotel where he is staying to block incoming telephone calls for him.

"I'm here for a serious purpose, to see the

nominees, and I don't want to get distracted," Robertson said.

He had time, however, to attend a party for festival officials at the home of the U.S. consul John Diggins.

Among others at the party were actor Michael Douglas, actresses Susan Anspach and Jackie Burroughs and Canadian film producers Robert Cooper and David Perlmutter.



Festival of Festivals
TORONTO SEPTEMBER 14TH-21ST 1978

THE PROVINCE, Thursday, Sept. 21, 1978

This year the jury members are:

- Donald Pilon, an actor and an Etrog winner for his performance in Gilles Carle's *La Vrai Nature de Bernadette*.

- Robbie Robertson, Toronto-born leader of The Band, the subject of Martin Scorsese's recent rock concert film, *The Last Waltz*.

- Fred Schepisi, an Australian film-maker whose picture, *The Devil's Playground*, was seen in 1977's *Denman Fall Festival* in Vancouver and whose latest film, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, was given a gala Canadian premiere Tuesday night at the Festival of Festivals.

- Beverly Shaffer, a National Film Board director and winner of the 1977 Academy Award for her documentary short subject, *I'll Find a Way*.

- Naoki Togawa, an author, critic and vice-dean of the College of Arts, Nihon University, Tokyo, Japan.

The results of the jury's deliberations will be announced tonight in Toronto's Ryerson Theatre. The CBC has scheduled an hour-long special featuring highlights of the CFA ceremonies for Saturday evening at 10 p.m.



The Citizen, Ottawa, Thursday, September 21, 1978

The Band to record new album

TORONTO (Staff) — There is a new album coming from The Band, says member Robbie Robertson, but not until he's finished working on his first non-musical movie.

Robertson, attending the Festival of Festivals as a juror for tonight's Canadian Film Awards, said Wednesday the group has abandoned touring but plans to record together again.

"There's a chemistry that comes when we work together," he said. "We don't want to give that up."

The Band's lead singer, flooded with film offers after his production and performance role in *The Last Waltz*, is now working — "some producing, some acting" — on a story about carnival life.

He didn't divulge much about the project despite persistent press-conference questioning except its title — *The Carnie* — and the fact that it is being backed by a major Hollywood studio.

EDMONTON JOURNAL, Friday, September 22, 1978

The Band plans new album

TORONTO (CP) — Robbie Robertson says he and other members of The Band soon will make another album but that he will be without the rock music group when he co-produces and acts in a forthcoming Hollywood movie.

"I'm being courted by (Hollywood) studios and agents and it surprises me," Robertson said at a news conference. "I don't think about producing or acting career-wise."

He would not release any details about his forthcoming movie other than it is called *Carnie* and it is about three persons working in a carnival. He said it was "one

of many scripts I've received the past few months."

The Canadian-born musician was in Toronto to serve on the jury of the Canadian Film Awards, which were presented last night as part of the Festival of Festivals.

The Band's final concert in San Francisco was the basis for *The Last Waltz*, Robertson's first movie. He said the group will record an album as soon as time allows but "we just won't go on the road together."

"We've all worked with others and we still enjoy working together," he said.



Robbie Robertson

LA PRESSE, MONTRÉAL, LUNDI 25 SEPTEMBRE 1978

Nouvel album pour Robbie Robertson

TORONTO (PC) — Avec les autres membres de son orchestre, Robbie Robertson, le célèbre musicien d'origine canadienne, prépare actuellement un nouvel album de disques, avant de quitter son groupe pour se lancer, à Hollywood, dans la coproduction.

"Je suis sollicité par les studios et les agents de Hollywood" dit-il, refusant toutefois de donner des précisions sur le film qu'il prépare.

Il s'est contenté de dire que le film sera intitulé «Carnie» et qu'il y est question de trois personnes qui prennent part à un carnaval.

