

West, Bruce and Laing concert



Photos by Gail Folds

Chase follows up on dynamite debut

Review by Larry Kubert

After an almost unbelievably successful debut year, many groups might tend to sit back on their laurels. Not so with Chase.

Cornering several awards in the latest *Down Beat* Readers' Poll—first in Pop Album of the Year, second in the Rock/Pop/Blues Group category and leader Bill Chase, for whom the group is named, placed second as Pop Musician of the Year and fifth in the trumpet category—as well as approaching the 400,000 mark in sales of their initial album, *Chase*, the nine member group is just kicking into second gear.

Utilizing a four-trumpet plus guitar, bass, organ, drums, vocalist arrangement, Chase's second album on the Epic label, *Ennea*, is every bit as good, if not better than their first one.

Although there's more jazz on *Ennea* than on the group's first album, Chase hasn't sacrificed its rock sound. It has simply tempered and improved.

Leader Bill and the other three trumpeters are a driving force throughout the record, not letting up for a moment. Especially pleasing is a four-way trumpet battle on "Woman of the Dark." But the brass doesn't dominate the group's sound, when the organ or guitar comes in, you know it. . . because they are mighty good.

There have been some slight personnel changes in the band, but this hasn't hurt. G. G. Shinn has replaced Terry Richards as lead vocalist. Shinn's gutsy voice has more color and excitement to it than Richards' did. Richards was good. . . but Shinn is better.

Drummer Jay Burrid has left the band although he does play on a couple of the cuts, but he has been replaced by Gary Smith, who more than adequately fills Burrid's shoes.

One side of *Ennea* is devoted to Greek mythology. The suite, entitled "Ennea," is based on legendary Greek gods; including "Cronus (Saturn)," "Zeus (Jupiter)," "Poseidon (Neptune)," "Aphrodite (Venus)" and "Hades (Pluto)."

Bill Chase does some fine trumpet work on "Cronus" and "Poseidon" and Jerry Van Blair's flugelhorn solos on "Aphrodite" are beautiful and contenting.

Shinn's vocals on this side are more than satisfying; whether they be soft or rowdy. On "Hades," Shinn's gruff voice and laughter personifies lecherous evil.

On the other side of the record are several songs which are standouts.

Shinn and company rip into Steven Foster's "Swanee River" until it overflows its banks. And on "Night," trumpeter Ted Piercefield takes the mike and is downright exciting.

But probably, the finest cut of the whole album is "Woman of the Dark." It starts off with only Bill playing, then slowly builds and builds as the band joins in, until the whole group is wailin' as hard and high as they can.

As already mentioned, there is a superb four-way trumpet battle between Bill, VanBlair, Piercefield and Alan Ware mid-way through the cut. This song has got to be a "must hit" single.

*Ennea* is just plain and simple. . . pure, honest excitement.