

Who do they think they are?

Review by Bart Becker

From all indications, Deep Purple is swaggering at the front of a long line of sassy, punk-rock bands. In the heavy metal scene they are enjoying as much popularity as any band. America's rock critics also have begun to hail their excellence (although that may be a dubious honor, America's rock critics being a mildly disjointed group.)

They always have been a slightly insolent bunch of boys. More importantly they always have been able to put their stage sound down on vinyl pretty successfully.

The new Deep Purple album, *Who Do We Think We Are!*, is no exception, beginning with the mocking title.

The first cut, "Woman From Tokyo," starts out with a riff right out of the Rolling Stones. But then it settles back into the predictable, rocker format. It's passable rock 'n roll, but so is a lot that's heard on the radio.

"Mary Long" is more of the same. The lyrics ("How did you lose your virginity? When will you lose your stupidity?") apparently are directed at somebody in particular. Again, the cut is okay, but no reason to buy the album.

It's followed by "Super Trouper," just another rock song. It sounds like much of what they've done in the past. Deep Purple has a distinctive enough sound.

What they're lacking is variety. Essentially the same riff that set their arrangement of "Kentucky Woman" apart from the rest of 1969 is still evident, with slight variation, on at least two different songs on *Who Do We Think We Are!*

Side One ends with "Smooth Dancer" which moves a little faster and harder than the rest of the side.

Deep Purple does have lyrics to their songs, but the

lyrics are a poor second to the instrumental tracks. Which is not to say that Ian Gillan's voice is poor, it's utilized as another instrument, not as a front for the band.

Side Two is considerably superior to Side One. "Rat Bat Blue" is far superior to any other tune on the album. Despite some occasionally simplistic lapses, Jon Lord's organ work is ear-grabbing. If you drool over Keith Emerson, you'll probably slobber a little about Lord, too.

"Rat Bat Blue" also stands out because the whole of Side One seems like variations on the same theme. Side Two kicks open a little more.

The second cut, "Place in Line," is a bluesy attempt. Some thought seems to have been given to the lyrics, too. They're distinguishable and appropriate, albeit a little humorous knowing from who they come: "Everybody's shuffling to keep a place in line."

At its end the song shifts gears, featuring some flash rock 'n roll guitar playing by Ritchie Blackwell and another dose of organ madness from Lord. It ends up with some good rocking.

"Our Lady" closes out the album with more heavy metal.

In addition to working as Deep Purple, three of the members are working on individuals projects. Ian Gillan, lead vocalist, has produced the first album by an English rock group called Jerusalem.

Organist Jon Lord has ventured back into the classical music of his former training and turned out something called "Gemini Suite", of which little is yet known.

And the scuttlebutt is that an album by guitarist Ritchie Blackmore will be out sometime in the nebulous future.

Opera Napoleon captures 'petulant master of Europe'

Review by Raymond Hagg

A monumental achievement. That's the only way to describe the School of Music's *Napoleon* which premiered Friday night at Kimball Recital Hall. Musically, visually and dramatically it was a success.

Only hours after the 1812 battle of Borodino, Napoleon, who already is becoming aware of his inevitable downfall, is drawn in a series of episodes through his mind of the past and of the future. The skillful contrast of these episodes by librettists Bill Wallis and Dean Tschetter gives a panoramic portrait of Napoleon's complexity—the dynamic, willful and petulant master of Europe.

Robert Beadell, given this first-rate libretto, responded by composing his finest piece in this opera. (He has two operas already to his credit. His experience in the medium shows.)

Frequently the music receded into the background, leaving the drama itself or visual effects

to take precedence. *Napoleon* derives much of its sweep from its combination of dramatic media. This is not to say it is not a singer's opera. All characters are given ample opportunity to sing in the best operatic traditions.

John Zei is ideal in appearance to play Napoleon. He has a fine grasp of the character, and is a rich and sonorous baritone. Beautiful and experienced Emily McKnight sang Josephine, Napoleon's wife, with great vocal beauty and expressiveness. Wallis sang Duroc's part with conviction and understanding. Supporting roles sung by Jon Gruett, Jeannie Dietrich, Kent Hall, Jill Eiche, Raymond Miller, Dale Ganz, Charlotte Bumgarner and Lynelle Frankforter contributed to the effectiveness of the production.

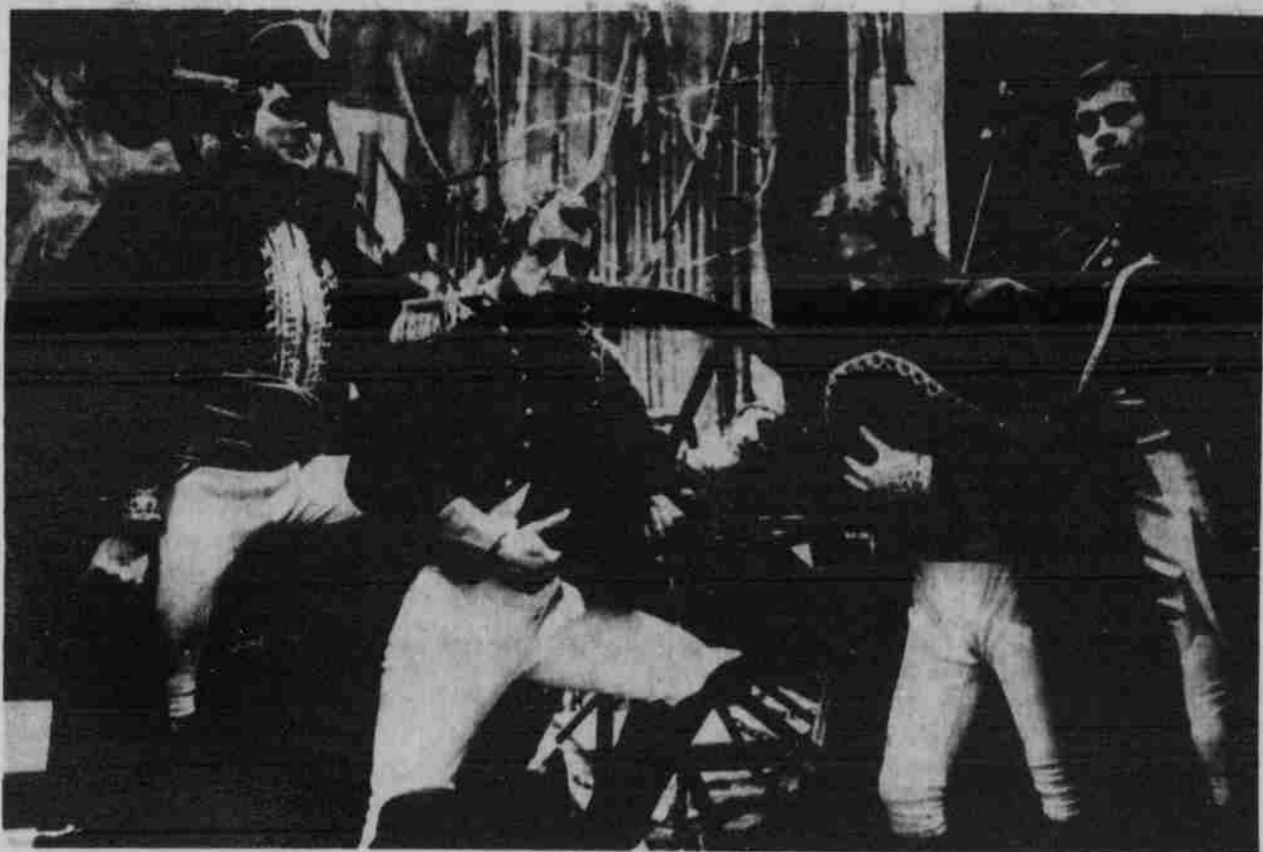
The staging, visual effects and costuming were spectacular. Enormously creative and talented Tschetter and his wife Jane (she designed the

costumes), together with a remarkable crew of technicians, should be applauded. Smooth scene changes, movements on an off stage, effective film sequences and the operation of the production's whole complex machinery were exemplary.

Finally, praise for musical continuity must go to Conductor Richard Grace. He did a magnificent job, aided by his musical staff, the orchestra and choral conductors Ray Miller and David Rich.

Fortunately, this production will be televised on KUON Saturday; we will have the opportunity to see it again and become better acquainted with it.

The first impression was overwhelming. Although all of the subtleties of text and music are not immediately apparent, certainly its gripping ending provide the necessary denouement with Napoleon's defeat.



Napoleon (John Zei, second from left) and his officers . . . suffered great losses at Borodino.

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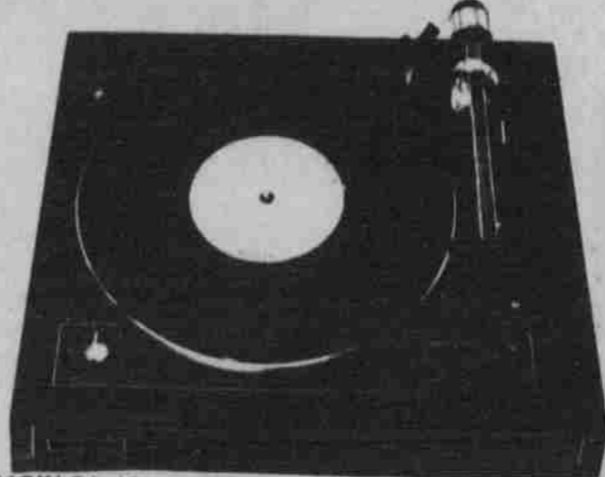
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