

# Alice flails American wonderland

Review by Jim Gray

The album cover is a glossy reproduction of a green snakeskin in the shape of a wallet, studded with a gold and rhinestone medallion. Attached to the inside right spread of the cover is a giant reproduction of a billion dollar bill, covered with snakes, Medusa, status symbols and military artillery.

It, obviously, is Alice Cooper's new album, *Billion Dollar Babies*. And its trappings are spectacularly flashy all the way—but well done and clever.

What's inside the grooves of the recording isn't bad either. Even compared to Alice's former triumphs—*School's Out* and *Killer* not withstanding—*Babies* is solidly within the Cooper tradition of Weird Rock. And it manages to bring the whole thing off with a modicum of style, something David Bowie and other camp-followers haven't managed.

To begin with, the album is probably the group's best attempt at a concept album. It starts with a theme—the group's sudden and tumultuous rise to fame and riches through depravity. Alice and company take this theme and explore various aspects of rich depravity, never abandoning its central premise.

Side one starts with a solid Top 40 Hollywood and Broadway style rocker "Hello Hooray". It's the group's success story complete with circus freaks and hula hoops, as Alice screams "I've been waiting so long to sing my song."

The Broadway style continues through the second cut, "Raped and Freezin'", the story of a young hitchhiker picked up and raped in the Mexican desert.

The ultimate in depravity screams at the listener in "Elected," a second hit single, following Alice's imaginary quest for the presidency, acting the

"yankee doodle dandy in a gold Rolls Royce."

Strong guitar work and menacing dual vocals by Alice and Donovan Leitch make the title cut "Billion Dollar Babies" a classic, churning through ghastly images of dogs infected with rabies and heads that fall off.

Following the heavy, sullen images of the first



Alice Cooper and friends

cuts, Cooper then throws a curve in "Unfinished Sweet", a detailed chronicle of a trip to the dentist's chair. A pseudo-James Bond spy riff in the middle of this cut clearly displays the versatility of the Coopers' lead guitar and bass work. Sound effects end side one with a humorous tone and the Rotten Tooth Fairy satisfied.

Side two comes back to direct treatment of the band's rise in "No More Mister Nice Guy" and "Generation Lanslide". Both are important for the album's thematic development, but are of doubtful individual worth. The former because of vindictive shallow lyrics and pretentious treatment. The latter because it catalogues images much like a bad Bizarro Don MacLean, confusing the issue to say the least.

"Sick Things" brings side two back up to par, however, heaping well-deserved blame on the Coopers' audience in a Bela Lugosi snarl.

Cooper then throws in a shocker—"Mary Ann" is a nice, quiet 1890-ish ballad in melodic style, quite apart from the macabre images of the rest of the album. But even here there's a touch of the odd, as masculine Alice laments "I thought you were my man."

Finally, Alice adds the *piece de resistance*, the final gross-out. "I Love the Dead" is about... well, it's about necrophilia. Enough said.

In total impact the album is less-than-comfortable. It makes an almost too-close touch to the perversity of middle america, which is partly what makes Alice popular—and *Billion Dollar Babies*, a success.

*Billion Dollar Babies* is the American Dream gone perverse. It makes no bones about it—depravity it is. Depravity at its best. It wouldn't be a bad album to buy—even if it means making Cooper and company two-billion dollar babies.

## Shaneyfelt: CSL evades political arena

Expressing concern that the Council on Student Life (CSL) might be moving into the political arena, Chairman Don Shaneyfelt cast a tie-breaking vote against a motion which would have sent three CSL representatives to talk with state legislators about the UNL financial aids situation.

The motion was made by CSL member Chris Harper at the March 22 meeting.

Harper's motion would have established a three-member committee to discuss UNL financial aids with the Unicameral committee considering LB396. The bill would encourage state investment officers to reinvest funds in federally insured loan programs.

"I see a real justification for CSL to become involved, (directly with the state legislature). Financial aids probably affects more students than does any other matter CSL deals with," Harper said.

Ely Meyerson, another CSL member and Student Affairs dean of administration, disapproved of Harper's motion because "the council doesn't want to walk into a buzz saw."

According to Meyerson, CSL is not qualified to lobby on the matter because the level of federal funding and the criteria for administering the funds for next year remains unknown.

The council, however, did pass a motion to send letters of concern about financial aid to University lobbyist Ann Campbell and ASUN's Legislative Liason Committee. In the letters, CSL asked Campbell and the committee to lobby for financial aid.

"Legislative liason is the logical group to ask if you want students to talk with senators," CSL member Sam Brower said. "They (liason committee members) are registered lobbyists and have some expertise."

In other business, CSL approved a proposal to establish two coeducational floors next fall in Abel Hall.

The proposal, prepared by members of the Abel and Sandoz Halls' governments and staffs, would establish coed living units on the seventh and eighth floors of Abel. Men would live in the north wings and women in the south.

The original proposal included a 24-hour visitation period in floor lounges and corridors. However, members of the housing office staff refused to support the visitation policy, according to Michale Whye, one of the proposal's authors.

"The housing staff said that Schramm (Hall) and Centennial (Educational Program) have been trying for years to get extended visitation periods," Whye said. "They (housing office personnel) said it would look strange if two floors in Abel just suddenly got 24-hour visitation."

Authors of the proposal have changed the proposed visitation period to conform with current RHA visitation policies, he said.

According to Whye, the modified proposal still offers advantages over the current dormitory living situation. Men and women would share the same floor government and "would have to interact. By introducing the opposite sex to these floors you're making them more liveable."

Meyerson said: "I'm not against this proposal per se, but I question whether all of the supportive reasoning (included in the proposal) is sound. To the best of my knowledge, hard data has proven very little about coed living."

The report cited evaluations of coed dormitories at the University of Maryland, Kansas State University, UNL and other schools.

"I don't think the data itself is bad," CSL member Mike Berns said, "but you have to be careful about choosing facts to back up your point when coming before the regents. You can't have anything they'll be able to knock down."

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