

Styx fresh, eager; 'Lady' one of all-time great rock anthems

As FM programming becomes more and more commercially oriented, I find myself turning to the AM airwaves often, in search of that infuriating but honest crassness that is the hallmark of a hard-core Top 40 station.

When fitted out with genuinely obnoxious disc jockeys and insinuating theme jingles that install the stations' call letters in the pantheon of broadcasting, the Top 40 station can become the object of a real love-hate relationship that will keep the listener hooked far longer than is healthy.

David Ware omelet

The real hooker, of course, is the music. You can cringe from the lyrics and say many rude things concerning the recycled chord progressions, but many of the songs are short and catchy despite their hackneyed natures, which is exactly what they were designed to be.

Utter commerciality has its perks, and one of these is that if executed properly, it does not hold the faintest trace of boredom during its allotted three minutes. The auditor is free, even encouraged, to be properly disgusted by what he has just heard, but for the moment, he is held in a sort of hypnotic thrall by the bopping, choogling beat coming out of the tinny speaker of the transistor radio.

No escape

We can't escape AM radio; we may as well acclimatize ourselves to it. Which, by remarkable coincidence, brings me to a listing of a few of the more palatable singles releases currently getting more than their fair share of airplay.

My favorite out of the current crowd is an impressive straight rocker from a group called

Styx. Entitled "Lady," the song starts out with a vaguely disquieting pastoral intro, serving as an odd setting for the first line, "Lady, when you whip me I'm smiling. . ." With such a killer first line, one is alerted that this peaceful meandering will not last for long, and by George, it doesn't. The song shifts gears and is metamorphosed into one of the great rock anthems of all time. Sounding at times like the Hollies, Grand Funk, The Who, Uriah Heep, and the Dave Clark Five, Styx nevertheless manages to sound fresh, eager and out to make a lot of money off this record—which I hope they do.

Coming in close for a solid second place is one of the most underrated female vocalists around today, Linda Ronstadt, who has managed with "You're No Good" to score the big commercial success that has eluded her since her days with the Stone Poneys. Deserting her first love, country music, for a more blues-based form, she proves herself to be as biting a critic of men as Carly Simon, which is saying a lot in my book.

Brave Scots

My third choice is "Pick Up the Pieces," from the amazing Average White Band. Why anyone would even give a cursory listen to pseudo-funky bogus soul groups like the Ohio Players when there are acts like these brave Scots to be heard is beyond me, but there's no accounting for some people's tastes. "Pick Up the Pieces" is a nice, tightly-constructed synthesis of brassy soul styles that is not only musically competent, but also has an authentic soul ring to it that is missing from much of the current black "soul" records.

After these three, I have no real favorites, save possibly Grand Funk's latest essay in exposed cheek, "Some Kind of Wonderful." I cannot explain my momentary lapse from sanity except to lamely offer the excuse that I have been known to listen to the Guess Who, which must have affected me in some way.

As I finish this column, a local radio station which shall remain nameless out of decency on my part is playing Frankie Valli's latest formula schlock. With that bleak vista facing me, I'm going out to buy a record.

American poet, Galway Kinnell will visit the UNL English Department today through Friday and read his poetry Thursday, according to Mordecai Marcus, associate professor of English.

In addition to the poetry reading at 3:30 p.m. in Andrews Hall 229, Kinnell will visit classes, work individually with students and meet with the department's faculty.

Kinnell, who holds degrees from Princeton University and the University of Rochester, has taught in Europe and Iran.

Marcus said Kinnell writes in the Walt Whitman tradition—"he is interested, in a spiritual sense, in man's relations to nature."

His published volumes of poetry include *Book of Nightmares*, *What a Kingdom It Was* and *Body Rags*. His novel, *Black Light*, was published in 1966.

Poet's residency begins today

Foreign film—French thriller

The Union Foreign Film Series returns to France this week with the showing of *Ten Day's Wonder*, a movie thriller from one of France's leading directors, Claude Chabrol.

Chabrol is recognized as a master of the elegant murder mystery and *Ten Day's Wonder* is taken from a work of a novelist whose name should be well known in America—Elery Queen.

The movie was made in 1971 and stars Orson Welles (playing another of the sophisticated villains roles that he patented during the '60s, with Michel Piccoli and Anthony Perkins).

Showings are at 3, 7 and 9:15 Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in the Sheldon Gallery Auditorium. Admission is by Foreign Film Series ticket.



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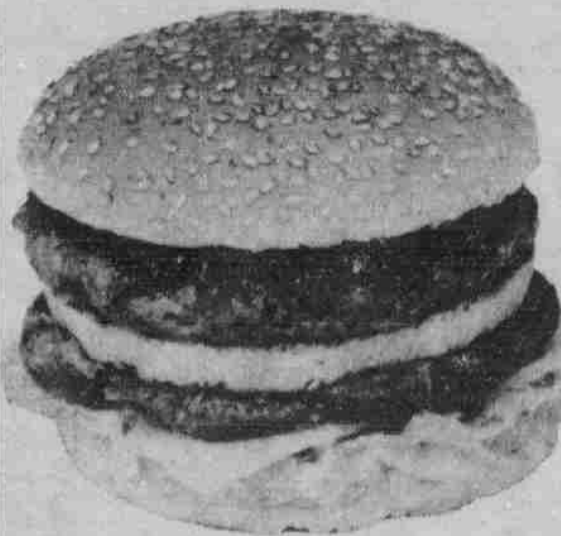
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