

# arts & entertainment



## Jackson Browne continues growth in 'Pretender'

By Michael Zangari

There was a brief time in the late 60s when you knew that every new album by a major artist would be a killer. It was a strange, productive time, for what ever reason. No one asked questions though, they just put on their headphones, sat back and smiled.

Anymore, it's hard to really anticipate a good new album by anyone.

That's why Jackson Browne's new album is such an over-whelming relief. It is a fine album by a fine artist, and I'd be hard pressed to ask for anything more.

*Pretender* is Browne's fourth album and unlike a host of rock stars who burn out after a good initial album, he has continued to grow musically.

What makes this growth important is Browne's sensitivity. He has managed to keep his music personal without falling into the disco-oriented overproduction that has marred almost every release in the last year.

### Taylor victim

James Taylor is a victim, Janis Ian is another. Much of the jazz that is coming out is also being affected. It's a sad business making music to make money.

If there have ever been any complaints about Browne's music, it is that much of his work sounds the same. It's a charge that is hard to put down. Browne has got such a distinctive voice and style, that he is recognizable immediately.

Musically, *Pretender* is much stronger than his last album. It is much mellower, if that is possible, with a heavy dependence on keyboards, mostly piano.

It's a strong musical base that allows Browne to do what he has always done best—work with strong lyrics.

On *Pretender*, Browne seems to have more of a fascination with his own past. This introspection on his part works well.

It's been a rough year for Browne. His wife killed herself earlier this year, and the traditional road pressures have worn him down.

Stand-out cuts on the album are hard to single out, but "Daddy's Time," a song to his father explaining that he now sees a lot of what his father had said and was sorry for treating him poorly, is a strong candidate for the best cut and emotionally well done.

"Your Bright Baby Blues" and "Here Comes Those



Photo courtesy of Asylum Records.

Jackson Browne maintains a high level of personal power and musical ability in his new album, *The Pretender*.

Tears Again" present two different, but equally strong, views of a love found and lost. They are honest and somehow basic.

"The Pretender" is, however, the most interesting cut on the album.

### Browne reflects

In-it, Browne seems to be reflecting on his career and the direction it has taken for him. Much of the autobio-



graphical melancholy is brought to focus on that song. If the song were to stand alone it might be disturbing in relation to a die-hard Jackson Browne and music fan.

The song itself is disturbing from any other angle. It is harsh in its lyrical musing.

With the over-all quality of the album "The Pretenders" thrust in regards to Browne's career desires in minimized.

It still serves as a powerful comment on the state of music and life and that's what Browne is all about.

*I'm going to be a happy idiot  
And struggle for the legal tender  
Where the ads take aim and lay their claim  
To the heart and soul of the spender  
And believe in whatever may lie  
In those things that money can buy  
Thought true love could have been a contender  
Are you there?  
Say a prayer for the pretender  
Who started so young and strong  
Only to surrender* —"The Pretender" by Jackson Browne

## Haggard rumors hurt local Jaycees

By Carla Engstrom

Honest folks, Merle Haggard was actually born in a converted box car.

He left home at 14 because there wasn't enough to eat. He really did turn 21 in prison, according to Haggard's promoter, Rick Dorfmeier.

Dorfmeier told of an incident in prison when Haggard got into a conflict with a prison guard. Haggard probably was playing the devil's advocate, Dorfmeier said.

The guard got so mad at Haggard that he threw open the cell door and said, "Run for it, I'm going to shoot you." Fortunately for Haggard, he didn't run.

The 39-year-old musician played guitar before he was in prison, but took it up seriously while serving time.

After he got out, he started playing in honky-tonk bars and finally got a break. For a long time he was lead guitarist for country-western singer Buck Owens, Dorfmeier said.

Haggard ended up marrying Bonnie Owens, Buck's former wife.

### Disappearance hurts

The Lincoln Junior Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring the Merle Haggard show. The chamber probably is the one most hurt in its advertising efforts by the disappearance stories circulating about Haggard, according to Dorfmeier.

"But it won't hurt his (Haggard's) respect if the real story gets told," Dorfmeier said. "He's one of the few people in the business that actually respects the people in the show."

Haggard received "bad press" coverage from AP and UPI news services, and *The Lincoln Star* and *Journal* printed it.

When asked if Haggard actually was interviewed by AP

or UPI, Dorfmeier replied, "Merle Haggard gives interviews as rarely as a chicken."

Although Haggard has done an interview with *Penthouse* magazine, a college journalist has a better chance of getting an interview with Haggard than does a UPI or AP journalist, Dorfmeier noted.

One of the Lincoln papers carried a story which said Haggard was going to be off the touring circuit for eight to 10 weeks, and another reported two months, Dorfmeier stated.

### 'Report hurts'

"All the dates that were given were after our date (for the Lincoln show) here," Dorfmeier said. "It hurt us."

The concert is confirmed for Nov. 20 in Peshing Municipal Auditorium.

Haggard and his crew travel in two commercial type buses and he's on the road most of the time.

"He tries to keep down to 80 shows a year, but usually does 125 to 150."

Haggard was on the road for six months solid and exposed to the public all the time Dorfmeier said.

"He just wanted to crawl under a rock where nobody knew him."

Haggard disappeared by telling musician Fuzzy Owens he was going to get a fiddle and kept on going, Dorfmeier said.

### 'Folk singer'

"Merle is associated with country music, but he considers himself a folk singer. Merle does a lot of hurtin' songs and there's a true story behind it, that's why he calls them folk songs."

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