

Cult favorite Stewart's music remains consistent

Review by Michael Zangari

Considering the time it was released, an eight minute song about Polish partisans and the invasion of Russia that you couldn't dance to, could hardly hum along with and had nothing to do with meeting, keeping, loving or losing a lady, was as unlikely a hit as possible.

Yet there it was, "Roads to Moscow," highly literate, emotionally intense, tastefully done with a great deal of depth, and as mysterious as the man behind it.

The man was Al Stewart an English folk artist who quickly became a cult favorite with his first American album, *Past Present, and Future*, came back strong with his second, *Modern Times*, and is currently riding high on the charts with his *Year of the Cat* LP.

However, Stewart like so many recently discovered artists, is not exactly a new comer to the industry. He has four previous albums, dating back to *Bedsitter Images* (1967) all available as imports.

Stewart's music has remained consistent through the years. Although the time span between the imports and domestic albums is fairly large, there are no songs that would be out of place transposed to other, more recent albums.

Stewart's vocals merit a completely separate discussion.

His gentle accent and careful phrasing are certainly among the most interesting being done. However, Stewart's real power lies in his lyrical poetry, which often has no rival in a time when lyrical de-emphasis and bumping booties are the rules rather than the exceptions.

From the beginning, Stewart's best materials have been first person narratives, although a real historical insight has been shown in recent releases.

Stewart's early albums are no exception. Although rawer, they have the additional benefit of being more personal.

The title track from the import album *Love Chronicles* is just that—a chronicle of first love through infatuations break-ups, physical encounters and finally the last affair that just might last. It is a monumental effort, taking nearly a side of the album.

It moves through it's several phases in much the same way the Gordon Lightfoot classic "*Canadian Railroad Trilogy*" does and ends with as much power.

A surprisingly restrained Jimmy Page, adds the lead guitar on this track with very nice results.

Love Chronicles is a strong LP with two other standout cuts on the flip side. "Old Compton Street Blues," a sympathetic song about a young girls eventual drift into prostitution, and "The Ballad of Mary Foster" a song dealing with a trapped existence of a house wife.

Orange, another import is similarly strong. "News from Spain" is about the disbelief accompanying a love break-up with a curious notation at the bottom of the lyrics saying "Sadly you can't choose the people you fall in love with".

The album standout, however, is "Night of May 4th" "Night" is another Stewart epic. It also deals with the strain of a relationship. In it the couple have reached an impasse, and tensions at a party cause them to "almost dare" each other to go off with another partner for the evening.

It ends with the Stewart-male taking another woman home and the woman spending the night with another guy. The results are emotional and strikingly realistic. Stewart makes interesting comments about the illusion of freedom and emotional detachment. It is very draining. Rick Wakeman does the organ parts on the album, and again the results are subdued and very tasteful.

The remaining two albums, *Zero She Flies* and *Bedsitter Images* are strong, although the latter's use of over orchestration is often distracting.

Zero She Flies, however, contains an off-beat adaptation of a poem by Pete Morgan called "My Enemies Have Sweet Voices".

It is contained in an irresistible funky acoustic blues complete with a fine and powerful harp part and some scat rhythm in the background.

Bedsitter Images is consistently good. No power cuts dominate, although "Manuscripts" is close.

The imports also showcase Stewart's considerable acoustic guitar talents with one and sometimes two instrumental tracts per album. It leaves you wishing that his American albums would include similar tracts.

Stewart, who calls Bob Dylan his last idol, has reached a point where he stands alone. He is the only exciting thing to happen in folk music in the last five years.

Hopefully, he will continue to carry that heavy crown in the coming years.

out on the weekend

Sheldon Art Gallery Continuing exhibits Poets' reading at 3 p.m. Sunday (Gallery). Paintings from Sales-Rental Gallery (Art Shop). Arthur B. Davies, Painting, Prints and Drawings. Photographs by Christopher James. Faculty exhibition.

Film and TV

Foreign Film: *The Nonconformist*, 7 and 9 p.m. Sunday.

Sheldon Film Theatre: *Loose Ends* 3, 7, and 9 p.m. Saturday.

ABC TV *Roots* Friday-Saturday

Union Program Council

Walpurgisnacht-all night-Nebraska Union, Friday.

Warrington Colescott-Artist in residence, prints, Nebraska Union Lounge, Friday.

Lincoln Community Playhouse

The Me Nobody Knows, 8 p.m. Friday-Sunday and 2 p.m. Sunday.

Music

McCoy Tyner, jazz pianist, Nebraska Wesleyan University, 8 p.m. Sunday.

Al Stewart/Wendy Waldman concert, Pershing Auditorium, 8 p.m. Sunday.

stuart HELD OVER! DAILY AT: 1:15-3:15-5:15 7:30 AND 9:30

SILVER STREAK

A FIVE WELLES Production
A MURPHY BRIDGES-PIVOT FILMS PRODUCTION
Starring GENE WILDER JILL CLAYBURGH RICHARD PRYOR
AN AFTER HILLYER FILM "SILVER STREAK" A MILLER/BALES-COURTNEY PICTURE
Produced by MED BOFFY-CLIFTON JAMES and PATRICK MCGOOGHAN
Directed by HEAVY LUNARON
Color by DE LUXE

AT 7:30 & 9:15 475-5969
CINEMA 1
201 N. 13th

CLINT EASTWOOD IS DIRTY HARRY

THE ENFORCER

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STREISAND KRISTOFFERSON

A STAR IS BORN

CINEMA 2

tonight at: 7:05-9:00
TOMORROW SHOWS AT: 1:55 4:30-7:05-9:00

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TODAY AT: 5:35 - 7:35 - 9:35
SAT. AND SUN. AT 1:35 - 3:35 - 5:35 - 7:35 - 9:35

THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN

A TRUE STORY

Charles B. Pierce's

IN 1946 THIS MAN KILLED FIVE PEOPLE... TODAY HE STILL LURKS THE STREETS OF TEXARKANA, ARKANSAS!

TODAY AT 5:25 - 7:25 - 9:25 MATINEES
SAT. AND SUN.

"THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN"

United Artists

TODAY AT 5:15 - 7:15 - 9:15 MATINEES
SAT. AND SUN.

"CARRIE"

SISSY SPACEK SAT. AND SUN. JOHN TRAVOLTA and PIPER LAURIE

SHeldon FILM THEATRE Sheldon Art Gallery, 12th & R Sts.

LOOSE ENDS

A film by David Burton Morris & Victoria Wozniak

a bold and unique piece of artistry. It grabs strength from acting, forceful dialogue, authentic probing camerawork and, most of all, from middle America—the large chunk of this country who live day to day, toil at meaningless tasks and who constantly concoct schemes to escape from their abysses.

Wednesday through Saturday—January 26, 27, 28 & 29
Screenings at 7 & 9 p.m.
Friday & Saturday matinees at 3 p.m.