

arts and
entertainment

Guitarist lacks versatility, dominates Hot Tuna album

By Jeff Taebel

In the years since Jack Cassady and Jorma Kaukonen left the Jefferson Airplane to work permanently as Hot Tuna, people have said that these two musicians, along with whoever their drummer might happen to be at any given time, play some of the most exciting, instrumentally dazzling hard rock available on the market.

Certainly the early work of Hot Tuna was somewhat supportive of these claims. Their debut album was decorated by the nimble acoustic guitar work of Kaukonen, and, despite the fact that his style incorporated elements from the work of other artists, he still was able to breathe new life and originality into some old standards.

album review

The electrically oriented *Burgers* also was a big success for the band, exhibiting their songwriting capabilities as well as their instrumental prowess.

Unfortunately, all the qualities that distinguished their early work seem to be missing on their current release, *Double Dose*, a two-record live set that has to be one of the most numbingly excessive albums of the year.

The first and foremost problem with Hot Tuna on this set is that they are completely dominated by Kaukonen, who does all the singing, songwriting and most of the playing. As a matter of fact, it almost seems like this is a Kaukonen solo album. The problem with this dominance is that Kaukonen simply is not versatile enough to carry the whole show for four album sides.

His vocals are uninspired and his voice

doesn't have much range, but these deficiencies are concealed by the fact that many of his songs only require his lyrics to be intoned over a repetitive chord progression, representing a token attempt at a melody.

Kaukonen also has better moments as a guitarist. He was indeed an innovator on the guitar with the Airplane in the late 60s, but his playing has progressed little in the past 10 years. If anything, it is less imaginative now than it was back then.

His unique guitar tone and use of special effects with the Airplane was what helped set him apart from other guitarists of the psychedelic era. Now, while his style still is unique, it is highly repetitious, and his incessant overuse of the wah-wah pedal and phase shifter muddle the sound of his guitar, rather than accentuate it.

Joining Kaukonen on this sinking ship is Jack Cassady, the agile bassist, who along with Phil Lesh of the Grateful Dead, helped create an entirely new approach to rock bass playing. Cassady always has stood out on studio efforts of the Airplane and Hot Tuna, but for some inexplicable reason, his playing on the live albums recorded by each of those bands is quite simple and predictable, as if he doesn't want to strain himself. The fact that he doesn't solo or even really get cooking at any point on this record means that there is no one to challenge Kaukonen's dominance, allowing the music to become mired in his self-indulgence.

Cassady and Kaukonen are joined by San Francisco session keyboardist Nick Buck, whose playing is mixed well into the background, and yet another in the long parade of Hot Tuna drummers, named Bob Steeler, whose playing is mediocre at best.

The album opens, appropriately enough, with a side featuring Kaukonen alone on acoustic guitar and vocals, and, although his playing is predictable and his vocals are bland, this side probably is the most

successful, simply because it is the most musically concise. Its highlights include a fine version of the Rev. Gary Davis' "Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning" and a remake of "Embryonic Journey" from *Sur-realistic Pillow*.

The next three sides are all electric and, with a few exceptions, contain pounding, redundant exercises in cliched rock playing that end in feedback screechings reminiscent of high school garage band jams. By far the best of the electric sides is side four, on which the band almost pulls things together with "I See The Light" and "Watch The North Wind Rise." However, the band settles back into its familiar doldrums by closing the side with dull,

plodding versions of Kaukonen's "Sunrise Dance With The Devil" and Muddy Water's "I Can't Be Satisfied."

It is interesting to note that this album was produced by Felix Pappalardi, because Hot Tuna sounds rather like Pappalardi's old band, Mountain, on this release, as far as their onstage excesses. However, Mountain in their worst moments at least seemed to have a more spirited attitude towards their music than Hot Tuna does here.

Maybe the solution would be for Hot Tuna to give Kaukonen an extended vacation, let Leslie West take over on guitar and vocals and invite Corky Laing to be their next drummer. The results of such a recombination couldn't be any worse than *Double Dose*.

Expressionism and sensitivity basic to harpsicord—Hinshaw

By Charlie Krig

Harvey Hinshaw, harpsicordist. The UNL School of Music faculty member's name has a musical alliteration when combined with his instrument. Both are featured tonight in a free recital at 8 in Kimball Recital Hall.

Hinshaw said his interest in harpsicords goes back to his early music studies with Alice Ehlers at the University of Southern California. During the 1960s he was accompanist at the Unitarian Church in Lincoln and he practiced there. He bought his own harpsicord in 1973.

UNL has four harpsicords. Hinshaw said he has been practicing his selections so he will have the right touch for the harpsicord. That takes concentration because he also teaches piano and the two instruments require different techniques.

"You can't make loud and soft with touch on the harpsicord, at least not with any major change," Hinshaw said. "You can't get the wide variation in tones like you can when you hit the piano keys with different strengths. For the harpsicord you have to adjust tremendously to get subtle differences in sound. For example, you can use much arm touch on the piano. Harpsicord work is practically all finger work close to the keys."

Hinshaw said another difference between the instruments is the type of music composed.

"You have to remember that you're dealing with music written when the piano was not born or else was just in its infancy. Piano music has a lot of shadings—rises and falls—and it's much more legato. Harpsicord music has more spaces between the notes and phrases," he explained.

"When playing the harpsicord you must make the most of the expressive possibilities so the music does not lose its effect. Some performers are too pedantic so they lose their expressionism and the music reflects that," he said. "The expression

must come out of your own fingers. The harpsicordist must be as sensitive as he can be to get the expression. It takes more concentration to communicate things on the harpsicord with the effectiveness that a piano can produce."

There are contemporary composers of harpsicord music, Hinshaw said, but most don't know the instrument well enough to produce acceptable music. He chose a 1971 composition by Daniel Pinkham, *Lessons for the Harpsicord*, for tonight's recital because the composer is better than the others.

"The others don't write idiogramatically well. They're not experienced enough with the harpsicord. Some of the modern composers don't quite understand the instrument well, but Pinkham is a good harpsicordist himself," Hinshaw explained.

He said he chose the other works for contrast between selections to maintain the audience's interest. "I like to think there's a good deal of meat in the programs I choose," he said. "Although there might be something there just for 'flash,' there also are pieces for profundity."

Hinshaw's other choices for tonight are two selections from *Intavolatura di balli d'arpicordi* by Marco Facoli, *Order no. 6 in B flat major* by Francois Couperin and *Prelude in B minor, BWV 923* and *Fugue in B minor* (on a theme by Albinoni, *BWV 951*) by Johann Sebastian Bach.

In spite of the harpsicord's heritage, old age is not affecting its popularity. Hinshaw said interest in the instrument is on such an extreme increase that people have to get on waiting lists to buy harpsicords. The resurgence has created such a demand that a master harpsicord builder in Germany has a 15-year waiting list, he said.

Hinshaw has only one harpsicord student this semester. Usually there are five or six, he said, and one time there was a record of eight. But Hinshaw is confident the harpsicord will maintain its public interest and next semester will produce a few more majors for him to tutor.

Groups yap over student fleas, scratch surface of itchy issue

A dispatch arrived yesterday from Rocky McGoan of Cicero Mechanical and Brutal, a vocational and technical college in Illinois. You might find it interesting to see the vast difference between a school like that and our own university, where such silly going-on never could happen...

"A new source of contravesty has hit the halls of Acanemia at Cicero M&B, in a dispute that has divided student groups.

"At issue is Cicero's unique Student Aid Program (SAP). In this program, Cicero students are contracted to work for a major local industry, KillZemDed Veterinary Supply Co., makers of famous KillZemDed Flea Powder.

jim williams

"Students work in the company's research labs raising millions of fleas for product improvement and testing. The company pays the college for the students' services. The college gives some of the money to the students, while the rest goes to support campus activities through the Student Organizations Budget (SOB).

"Some of the student groups are organizations of foreign students from other countries. One of the most active is the Yugoslavians and Albanians for Purity (YAP). This group holds weakly meetings whereat which they talk with their foreign tongues. They also try to keep the campus's morals up to the high standards of the old country.

"Since Cicero M&B is a technical school, there are several other groups

which are formed to study various products. One of these is the Nylon Underwear Procurement, Improvement and Repair Board (NUIPRB) which tests and analyzes this product so consumers of underwear won't get ripped off. NUIPRB spends most of the money it gets from the SOB on lab equipment such as test tubes and beakers.

"The counterattempts began after NUIPRB members finished up a grueling test session on some ladies' garments and decided to celebrate. They purchased a container of alchaotic beverages, viz a keg of beer, with their own money. But since they had no mugs from which to drink it out of, they washed some of the beakers and used that.

"When YAP heard about this drunken behavior they were outrageous.

"YAP's president went to the SOB to complain about NUIPRB's use of college-owned lab equipment for drinking.

"We can no longer tolerate," he said, "the use of student flea money for beakers."

"NUIPRB appealed YAP's action to the College Office for Organizations, Trade and Industry Executive Senate (COOTIES.) But YAP said students wouldn't support any action by the senate because they want NUIPRB to stick to its business.

"NUIPRB is an underwear organization," the YAP president said. "Cicero students don't want COOTIES in their underwear organization."

"NUIPRB has threatened to take the question to the Associated Board of College Deans, Executives and Faculty Groups (ABCDEFG.)

"This reporter thinks the whole situation is the epitomy of ridiculousity."

"I'd probably agree with Rocky—but I just can't imagine what he's talking about.



Photo by Bob Pearson

Harpsicordist Harvey Hinshaw, a UNL School of Music instructor, has been perfecting his technique for his faculty recital at 8 tonight in Kimball Recital Hall.