

**FM 102 KFMO**

**TURN IT UP!**

# Busboys' premise wears thin

American Workers  
The Busboys  
Arista

By Ward W. Triplett III

The Busboys, an all male, all-minority band from Los Angeles, seemed to have it

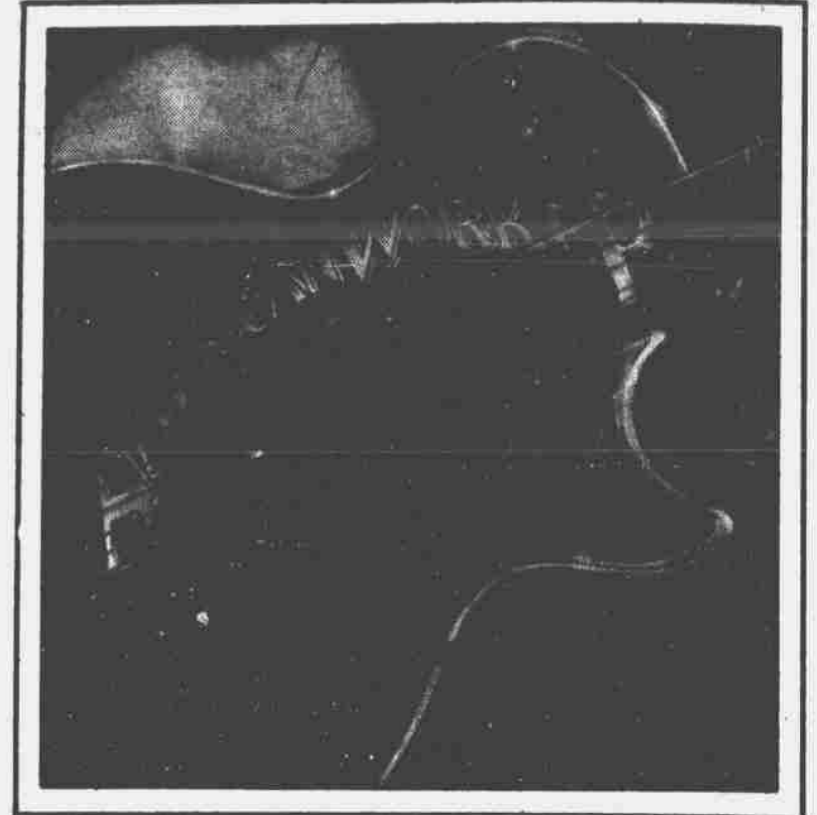
## Album Review

all going their way last summer.

Their debut album was moving up the hot 100, interviews with the lead singer and writer Brian O'Neal were frequent, and after appearances on late-night variety shows met with overwhelming applause, the Busboys appeared to be on the threshold of something great.

It all didn't pan out. The novelty of watching five black men and a Chicano play bubblegumish rock wore out, as could be expected. The album peaked in the '80s on billboard's final poll; it seems the band couldn't get away with songs like "There Goes the Neighborhood" and "Johnny Soul'd Out" after all.

The Busboys took an extremely long time for a new group to produce a follow-up, as "American Workers" was released just last month, 21 months after "Minimum Wage Rock and Roll" was put out. The band, obviously aware of its self-imposed limbo, has taken several steps to see that attention either



grows or dies right now.

Firstly, the Busboys called in a producer, after doing it all themselves last time. Now working under Pete Solley, the band's second move was to drop any hint of bubblegum from their repertoire. The third was to remove the racial undertones of "Minimum Wage," and replace that with a working man's class view of America.

The first move seems to work out fine. You can tell that this is the same band from one track to another, which you couldn't in "Minimum Wage." Solley has the band pointed in a single direction.

But that is also the problem - or perhaps the solution. The Busboys have found a key to success that apparently calls for them to be black artists playing the best of the popular white

artists - sacrificing any individual identity.

While that matter, in itself, is worth discussing (much less serious complaints, have been leveled toward black artists playing black music), "American Workers" exhibits little of the band's originality.

The "copy" format is a good commercial idea, but every track reminds you of something you'd expect a top white artist to play, lyrics and all. "American Workers", is a Devo rip-off, "Last Forever" a Springsteen clone, "Opportunity" is something the Police might have recorded a few years back, "Falling In Love" is Tom Petty at best, while the Talking Heads come to mind with "I Believe."

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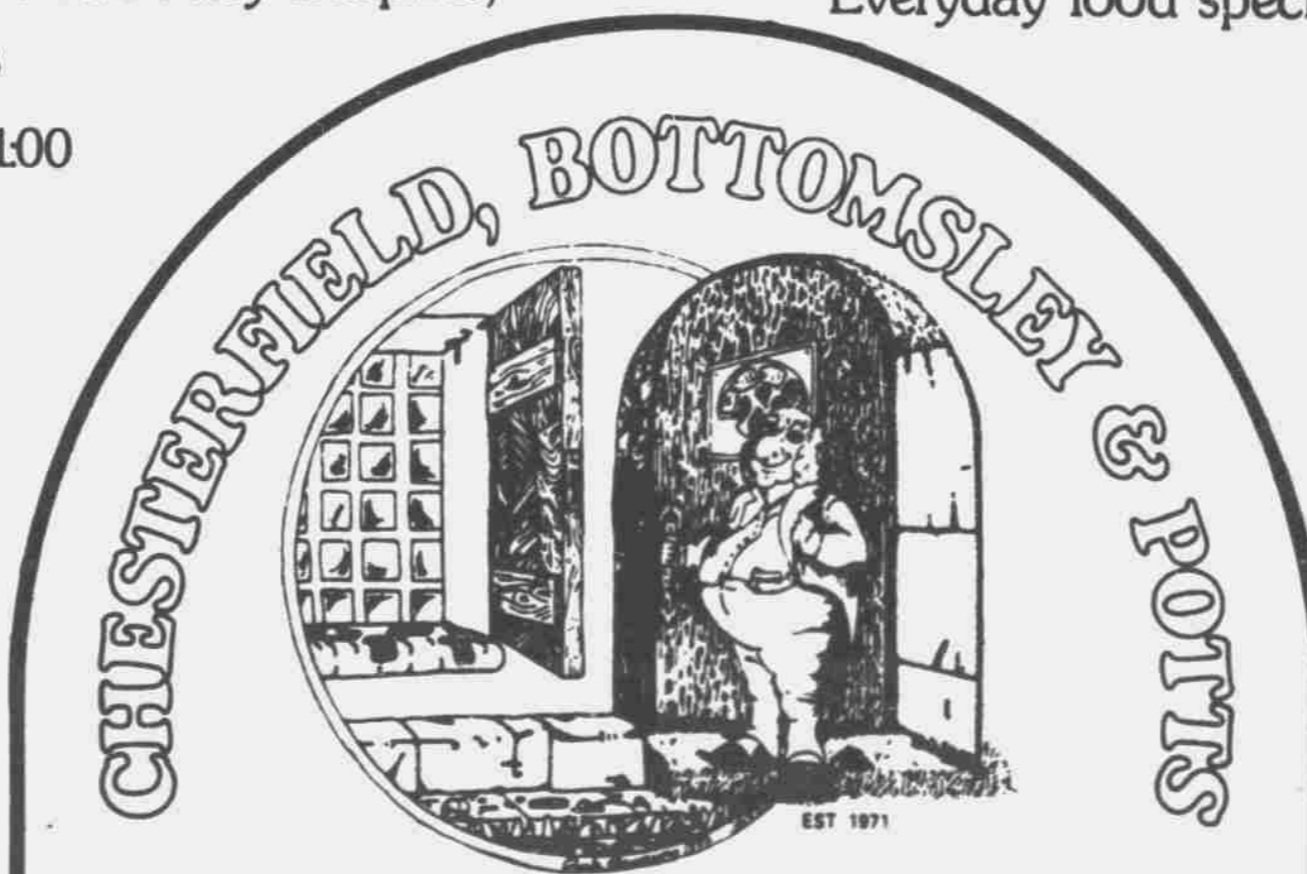
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