

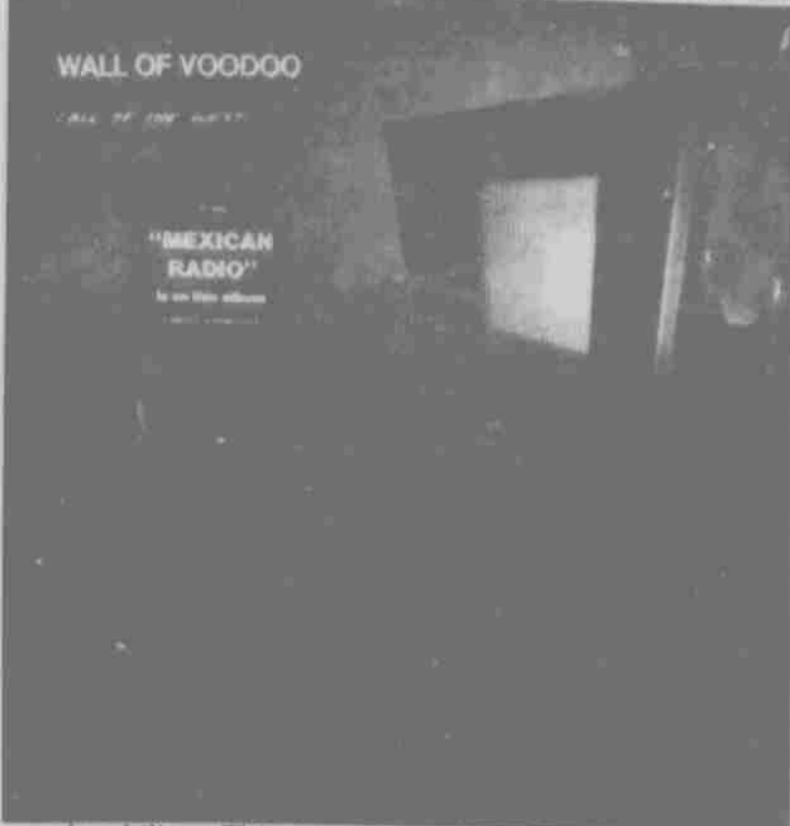
Voodoo...

Continued from Page 8

The name of the album, the band's third, is *Call of the West*. It seems to be somewhat of a departure from the band's attitude during the first two albums. Wall of Voodoo fans will note that this new album has a certain feel for

puts on everyone.

The song that best represents the Wall of Voodoo sound, however, would be the "Mexican Radio" cut. Here we have the solid beat found on almost all the songs, accompanied by the sporadic rhythms of other percussion instruments. The



marketability. This is most obvious in a couple of cuts that really stand out. The cut that has been released and is getting considerable airplay is one titled "Mexican Radio." Along with "Tomorrow," the group could be making a play for some commercial success. It is important not to overlook the fact that even with the added sugar, both of these songs provide an important part of the album's overall listenability.

A lot of the songs on *Call of the West* have one or more messages for the listener to grab at, but not all run for this purpose. One song, called "Hands of Love," uses Ridgway's vocals as another instrument to develop a more full sound. The effect is a rich, easy-moving piece of music.

In another song, Ridgway becomes almost a balladeer when he tells the story of a man moving to the west (*Call of the West*) and learning of the conflicts society

guitars lend a sort of new wave twang and are assisted very successfully by the synthesizers.

Some of the other cuts may seem cluttered at times, but the effects are worth the effort. Wall of the Voodoo works hard to make the album work and any success they find will be well deserved.

The hardest thing to get over on this album is the sound of Ridgway's voice. It may vary from a Devo sound to that of Dan Aykroyd singing new wave. But don't let the sound of the vocals throw you. They combine almost perfectly with the twangy guitars to produce a sound that not too many bands have. Yet, this is nothing like what you may have heard from Rubber Rodeo. It's a completely different sound, and it works very well for Wall of Voodoo. *Call of the West* is a bargain at any price.

—Todd R. Tystad



Most importantly, he has proven that musical integrity can sell records — you don't need to sing mushy love ballads or record duets with Sheena Easton. You can survive on talent alone.

Skaggs has shown that you can have a sell-out without being a sell-out. His previous album, *Waiting for the Sun to Shine*, went platinum, without a single pop cut, without any embarrassing appearances on "Dick Clark's Rockin' New Year's Eve," without any Las Vegas-style review. Just straight-ahead country music. His latest album, *Highways and Heartaches*, continues in this vein. It is not as effective as *Waiting for the Sun to Shine*, yet it is still a fine release.

Skaggs' music is deceptively simple — it is a brilliant hybrid of rockabilly, bluegrass and country music. Yet it sounds so natural on vinyl. This album has flow, something lacking in so many country music albums. It also has character. After side two is over, we actually know something about Ricky Skaggs the musician. It's not an attempt to make money, it's an attempt to express a feeling — and a successful attempt at that.

Highways and Heartaches achieves this heady task with some particularly striking material. Notable selections include "You've Got a

Lover," "Don't Let Your Sweet Love Die," "Highway 40 Blues" and an obscure Bill Monroe selection entitled, "Can't You Hear Me Calling."

The most compelling cut is Rodney Crowell's "One Way Rider." Skaggs pulls all his punches on this song and his band rises to the occasion as well. Bruce Barton on steel guitar and Bobby Hicks' exceptional fiddle solos are breathtaking. And Skaggs' use of the mandocaster (evidently an electric mandolin) is fascinating.

The album, though, does have its weak moments. Guy Clark's "Heartbroke" has already been done to death and really does not fit Skaggs' style, anyway.

(Skaggs even rewrote some of the lyrics which contained words he found offensive.) "Nothing Can Hurt You" is a melodramatic piece of fluff, which all of Skaggs' efforts can't save. But these are minimal faults. Record reviewers have to complain about something.

Skaggs' *Highways and Heartaches* is a fine country music album. And Skaggs is only 25, so there is more to come. If you've been yawning over Kenny Rogers or Alabama's latest, try Ricky Skaggs. He can make you proud of your country (music) again.

—Mike Frost

Skaggs 'sells without being a sell-out'

Highways and Heartaches
Ricky Skaggs
Epic

In the two short years since the release of his first major-label album, Ricky

Skaggs has done incalculable good for country music. He has established both the vitality and commerciality of bluegrass and purist music. He has injected new blood into a musical form that was growing anemic.

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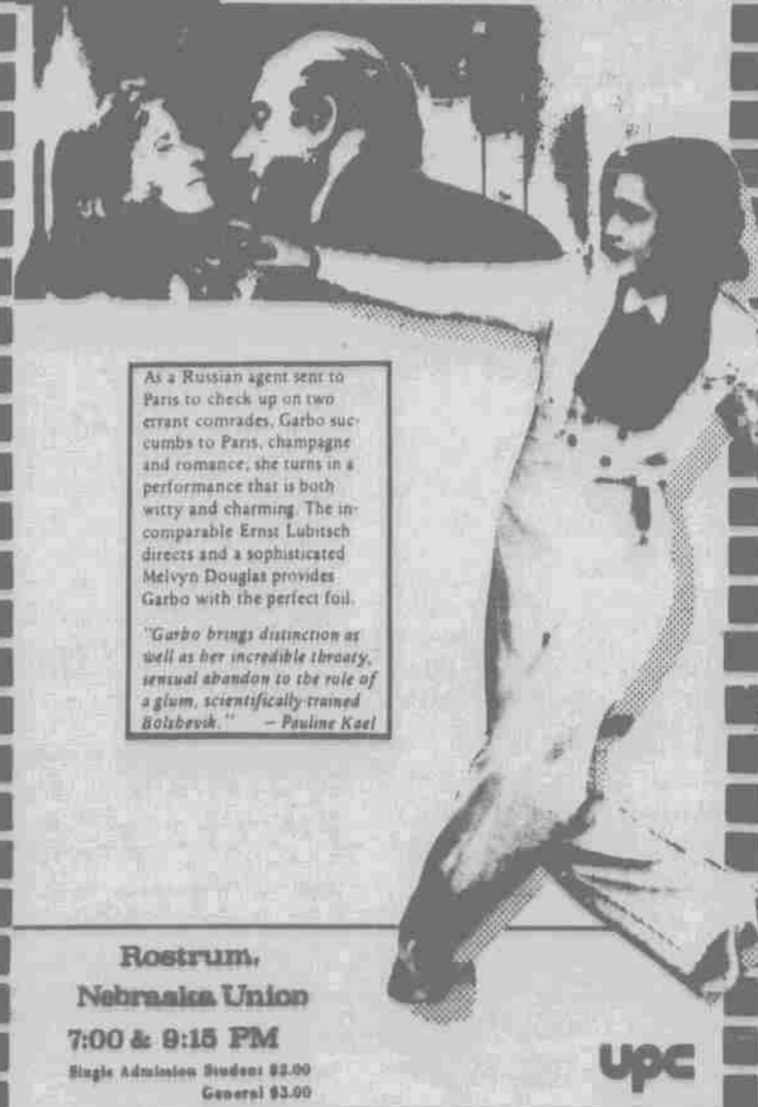
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Teacher's art on display

Two UNL art faculty members are featured in an exhibition at Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum Feb. 15 through March 20.

Jon Swindell's sculpture involves urban and rural rituals in intimate detail. Swindell was invited to exhibit in the "First International Shoebox Sculpture Exhibition" which will travel through the United States and Mexico this year.

Keith Jacobshagen's work, which depicts the vastness of the Midwest landscape, was recently selected for "contemporary American Realism Since 1960," which will travel throughout the United States and Europe this year. Jacobshagen is an associate professor of art at UNL. His paintings also appeared last fall at the Charles Campbell Gallery in San Francisco.

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