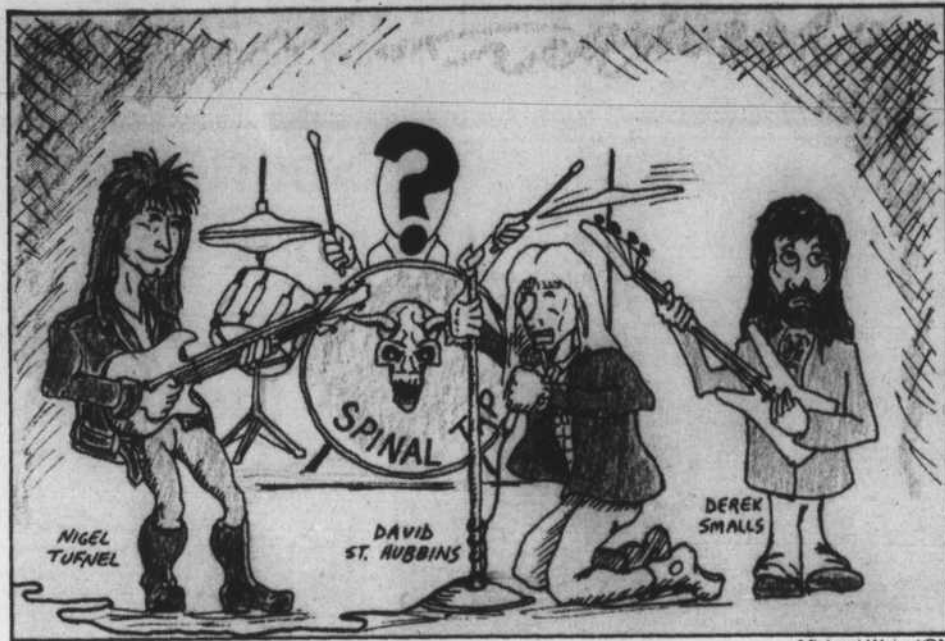


VIBES



By Paul Winner
Staff Reporter

Hello, Cleveland . . . After a seven-year absence, the legendary British rockers of Spinal Tap are on the eve of releasing their 13th album, "Break Like The Wind." After reuniting at ex-manager Ian Faith's funeral, the boys found they weren't doing much lately and decided they'd better get back together in order to pay the bills. Apparently Faith owed them a great deal of cash. Nigel, David and Derek auditioned hundreds of drummers to fill the ever-vacant spot left open by the previous members. The only requirements were both to know and study the Mahavishnu Orchestra and Black Sabbath, and to be totally inflammable.

— *Spinal Tap newsletter*

Soul diva Whitney Houston is rumored to be with child these days. It seems the only public company she's been keeping has been with other soul diva Bobby Brown. . . . Every little step he takes, indeed.

— *Rolling Stone*

In a surprising bid for artistic credibility, teen dream Debbie Gibson took over the role of Eponine, the angel with the dirty

face, in the Broadway production of "Les Miserables." The only snag in the show was the fact that hundreds of 12-year-old girls were ticked because she didn't do an encore of "Shake Your Love."

— *Newsweek*

Hard-core West Coast rappers Cypress Hill have loaned their names and support to the National Organization for the Reformation of Marijuana Laws. NORML execs were apparently pleased with the acquisition, since previous celebrity Will Smith had to back out of the deal. The news sent a shock through the hard-core rap community, for apparently, they were surprised that a group of ex-gang members would support something completely illegal. Well, duh.

— *Much Music Fax*

Protesters gathered outside of singer Paul Simon's final concert of his reunited Graceland Tour in Johannesburg, South Africa. Simon escaped from the fracas with only a shoulder wound from a thrown rock. Rumor has it that Art Garfunkel was vacationing there during the alleged incident. Hmm . . .

— *Much Music Fax*

Folk group's overdone album leaves listener feeling flat

Reviews



"Still Feel Gone"
Uncle Tupelo
Rockville Records

When Soul Asylum extinguished its own punk fire and moved on to twang, it set in motion a trend of country/rock fusion that would be the staple of countless bands to follow (both in and outside of Minneapolis). Uncle Tupelo, a St. Louis trio that writes folk songs within the framework of rock, is one of the many acts to successfully mimic SA.

"Still Feel Gone," is Uncle Tupelo's follow-up to last year's promising "No Depression," an interesting exploration of college rock themes: alienation, remorse, alcohol, etc. By comparison, "Still Feel Gone" is a major drag, flat from the first track to the last, with only a couple of good tunes in between.

In fact, the most that can be said for the songs on "Still Feel Gone" is that they are amiable, which is a horrible thing to say about any artist's work. And unlike Soul Asylum or

even the Jayhawks, UT's fetish for multiple instruments (banjo, mandolin, accordion and harmonica find their way into nearly all the tunes) seems contrived and the electric/acoustic tempo changes have no sense of urgency. Instead the tracks just poke along at a pace that is predictable and dull, dull, dull.

The herky-jerky "Watch Me Fall" and the sometimes catchy "Still Be Around" aren't bad, despite being overloaded with drummer Mike Heidorn's staccato fills.

Ditto for "Punch Drunk," a drinking anthem that bounces between R.E.M. harmonics and the slash and burn guitar noise of Dinosaur Jr.

The best of the lot is "Postcard," which features some nice lead work by frontman Jay Farrar, whose thick, three-chord intro provides one of the album's few exciting moments. He even manages to sound like SA's Dave Pirner when he sings about "postcards from Hell."

But the rest of "Still Feel Gone" is a mess, lyrically overwrought with self-importance and musically over-produced (A band with basically folk roots should never sound slick).

For a rawer, truer sound, Uncle Tupelo's debut is a better listen. And for true art rock passion, not to mention innovation, well, there's always Soul Asylum.

— *John Payne*

Book

Continued from Page 9

pens to people.

It's this very detachment that gives his writing its impact. He refuses to force the reactions of his readers.

Underlying everything is the sneaking suspicion that merely by participating in our "consumer culture," we are supporting the exploitation of the powerless.

But he's struggling in these stories to bridge the gap between what we believe and the things we secretly know. He likely succeeds more in some stories than others.

"In The Air," then, is hard to judge as literature. It is much more an exploration of our collective cultural unconscious. It's a kind of psychoanalysis of America.

Its stories serve as a powerful prescription for the "sleeping giant" that is the United States: Take two a day while symptoms of apathy last.

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Courtesy of Charisma
Buckwheat Zydeco's "On Track" features the soul sounds of New Orleans and lyrical blues.

Accordion artist on track with cheery, spirited work

Reviews



"On Track"
Buckwheat Zydeco
Charisma Records

In this age in which "industrial aggravated techno-dance polka" is considered to be a legitimate musical classification, it's nice to run across simple music that you can inhale like a breath of fresh air.

Zydeco can do that to you, sometimes.

Zydeco is a form of music that relies on the sweet soul sounds of New Orleans and the lyrical blues that come with them. If you've ever heard of zydeco, there's a good chance you've heard the name Buckwheat right before it. This is because accordion player Stanley Dural Jr. has been using that moniker and creating joyous tunes for years in the French Quarter.

With his latest album, "On Track," Buckwheat Zydeco continues a long streak of creating albums that attempt to capture, on a disc, zydeco's uplifting and rocking spirit. It's a dying art, and one that extremely few artists attempt, but it still sounds pretty darn good.

Buckwheat's strengths lie in his back-up band and the tightness with which it plays.

Both drummer Kevin Mcnard and bassist Lee Allen Zeno construct a bubbling foundation underneath Dural's prickly accordion, creating an intriguing sound of extreme opposites. They are balanced by Michael Melchione's understated staccato guitar work, and the warm pocket created by vocalists Angie Stone and Debbie Cole.

The band jumps through arrangements with laid-back ease, as when it takes on the traditional "Midnight Special" and jams with trademark joy. The original compositions work fairly well, with the tight "Funky Filly" being one of the standouts. The only real misstep in the collection is Buckwheat's choice to cover the Hendrix classic, "Hey Joe." Hendrix through an accordion? Not a pretty thing to hear. (Well, actually, it's pretty funny.)

If there is a definite problem with "On Track," then it is the fact that music like this just sometimes does not translate well from the stage. The vibe created by musicians doing bluesy jigs comes from actually being there and witnessing what all the fuss is about. Albums do not do zydeco bands much justice.

Buckwheat is not likely to care, however. He makes albums that bubble with his spirit, if not his talent. Mark this as one of his better attempts.

— *Paul Winner*