

Beverly Black

Basic Static

That Other Nashville Music An Incomplete Directory of Nashville New Music Bands

Compiled by Pete Wilson

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We mean in this article to give the Vanderbilt student a sort of guide to local new music bands, a reference work he can look at when he sees a poster tacked on a telephone pole and wonders whether the band mentioned is likely to interest him. Thus, we picked 15 new music bands, or at least bands that are watched by the new music crowd, on the separate bases of merit, interest and familiarity (or unfamiliarity) to Vanderbilt students, and listed them. The bands that actually exist today, though, are only a part of the Nashville scene; the great bands of the past are just as interesting, and have contributed many of the members of the fifteen bands listed. We can't look at anywhere near all of them, of course, but we just gotta tell you about some of them. And we need to give you some background on the Nashville new music scene.

Punk rock came to America in 1977 through the newspapers and the family television set. Johnny Rotten and his Sex Pistols, in their energy and anger, inspired a lot of young American bands who soon collectively came under the label "new wave." That punk caught on in America was no surprise; after all, the Pistols themselves had been influenced by such pioneering New York American groups as the New York Dolls, the Ramones and Richard Hell. But the new wave of rock didn't catch on right away in Nashville, at least not publicly. Only a few people were listening to British imports and old Stooges records, and messing around in the garage. They didn't know each other, in many cases, and they weren't able to play for other people. At least not at first.

In 1979, a band called the Hots formed and began playing around some. They were a power pop outfit, with imaginative songs and a definitely new wave approach. Soon, they were joined by another band called Cloverbottom, who had the audacity to advertise themselves as a "new wave band" and began getting gigs around town. Once they opened for the Hots at the Exit/In, a pretty prestigious club; they also opened for the visiting ex-New York Doll David Johansen, a new wave idol, there. Something was starting to break; bands were forming. And then, literally, the doors opened.

On New Year's Eve, 1979/80, a local pub called Phrank 'n' Stein's came under the management of Rick Champion, who was managing Cloverbottom. Rick's club became the center of the new wave scene; such bands as the Ratz, File 13, the Electric Boys, the Hots and Jap Sneakers played there constantly. Rick, going against common club practice, booked a different act each night. Sometimes two acts. The isolated punk and new wave fans now had a mecca, and they all seemed to want to be in a band. Bands would practically walk up to Rick, tell him "We're a band" and play that night. The scene was open --anybody could play, almost no talent was really required, and fans and bands were often indistinguishable. Everyone would come to everyone else's shows, get inspired and try his hand at guitar, bass or drums. Lineups for the bands were incredibly liquid. The scene was burgeoning and unstructured.

The contributors to this article know their stuff. Allen Green leads Suburban Baroque and publishes Nashville's first new music fanzine, GRAB! Andy Anderson, a VU law student, publishes Nashville Intelligence Report. Regina Gee is the business manager at Vanderbilt's WRVU, and David Minuk, a student at Middle Tennessee State University, has been hanging around the scene for quite a while. Special thanks go to Allen for his invaluable help with the introduction.

New wave acts even got into other places. The scene got some of its best publicity when the Electric Boys, who included two of Jason Ringenberg's current Nashville Scorchers, highlighted a bandshell concert in Centennial Park that drew over 1000 curious people. That show was the first effort of Rick's Gatsby Productions.

Eventually, though, Phrank's shut down. Jap Sneakers and Cloverbottom played the last show, on Nov. 30, 1980. The scene suffered immensely at that point; a lot of bands folded, fans no longer had a place to go. The bands had to work harder to get an audience. Most importantly, though, the division between audience and musicians began to get stronger, as there was no longer one place where everyone in the scene congregated. Soon, Cantrell's became the number one new music venue, but old-timers (if you can call people in their 20s old-timers) lament the supportive, friendly atmosphere of Phrank's, where you could see all your friends and you knew everyone you saw.

Other venues have come and gone. Rock City, where Cloverbottom played early in their career, is long gone; Murfreesboro's K.O. Jams is also defunct. Spanky's, a considerably more appealing club visually than dingy, run-down Cantrell's, seemed for a while to be developing a good crowd and becoming an important new music center, but it closed its doors too. Every once in a while, other clubs, such as Elliston Square, the Gold Rush, the Bluebird Cafe and the Cannery, feature new music acts, but the scene remains pretty much limited to Cantrell's, except for some Exit/In shows (often shows by out-of-town groups with locals opening).

A few landmarks and mainstays of the Nashville scene need to be mentioned here before we get to the band entries, where they'll be mentioned. First, the Alternative Jams. In early 1981, Cloverbottom (always in the thick of things) had scheduled a show at Cantrell's on the same evening as Charlie Daniels' revered Volunteer Jam. Sharp-thinking and wise-assed organizers booked in Louisville's Babylon Dance Band, local favorites the Ratz, and Barry Feltz's punk band, which at that point was in the process of changing from File 13 to No Art but ended up going on stage as a parodic trash band called the Nashville Dolls (after the New York Dolls), and called the show the Alternative Jam. It was a success, and one was held each year from then on. The Jam has been somewhat prone to problems; the day before the 1982 Jam Cantrell's was closed by the Metro building codes department for "structural deficiencies," and the show had to be held in a tent in the back of the club. This year, Rick

Champion decided to move the show to the Exit/In. A legal fuss between Rick and Terry Cantrell, the abandoned club's owner, ensued, and Rick wound up changing the name of the show to Modern Music Mania.

Other historic shows include a benefit concert for Nashville's premier new music fanzine, *Nashville Intelligence Report*, in May 1983, and a benefit for Vanderbilt's WRVU radio station in February of that year.

The scene has been documented fairly well so far: *N.I.R.*, which Vanderbilt law student Andy Anderson began publishing in May 1982, has a "local news" section that covers the ins and outs of bands pretty well, and carries features on and interviews with both local and visiting national bands. *GRAB!*, the first Nashville "alternative music" zine, was a funny and informative newsheet, but ran only a few issues in early 1982. Lately, Rick Champion has begun publishing a news-and-opinion sheet called *The Peacock Parade*.

Quite a few Nashville bands have put out singles and even albums independently or on small labels, starting with Cloverbottom's groundbreaking independent "Anarchy in Music City" EP. But there still hasn't been a compilation album that really captures the Nashville scene at its best. It's been tried three times. Jack Emerson, who started a label called Praxis Records while still a Vanderbilt student, put out an EP called "Never in Nashville" in late 1981, featuring the bands USR, No Art, Factual and Cloverbottom. A concert was held at Cantrell's by the bands after the record appeared. The record is an interesting part of scene history but somewhat anonymous. Probably the best document of Nashville's early new music scene would have been a live album of various shows at Phrank's, crude as it would have been.

Certainly the next compilation wasn't it. *The London Side of Nashville*, a project of independent producer Neil Jefferies recorded at Pollyfox Studios, was pathetic. It included bands that nobody really cared about too much and that didn't belong (including the Raves, from Atlanta!), and Jefferies screwed over the bands involved by editing tape and dubbing in instruments without the bands' permission or knowledge. It did have cuts from bands that needed to be recorded, such as Factual, the Hots, the Most and Russian Roulette, but overall it was pretty bad.

WRVU's *Local Heroes* cassette compilation was better. It wasn't intended only to capture the new music scene, of course, but cuts by Factual, Civic Duty, Practical Stylists, the White Animals, the Basics (a.k.a.

Committee for Public Safety



Beverly Black

Basic Static), Jason and the Nashville Scorchers, the Wrong Band, Bill Lloyd and Will Rambeau and the Delta Hurricanes made for a pretty engaging tape. For this tape the individual artists turned in their own finished recordings, avoiding hassles in the studio. The tape would have been better, of course, if all the songs were new; such songs as the White Animals' "Don't Care" and the Scorchers' "Hot Nights in Georgia" were already quite available.

On to the bands. Rick Champion told me when I was researching this article that he considered the five most important early Nashville bands to be Cloverbottom, the Electric Boys, the Ratz, File 13 and Actuals. All these bands brought to the attention of the new music scene musicians who today are still playing, mostly in other bands. These bands, and some that they spawned, would form one hell of a family tree if you wanted to construct one. Members of bands have broken off and recombined in an almost incestuous fashion; a dozen or so certain musicians have behaved a little bit like modular units that -- presto! -- become bands when you stick them together. Which is great -- that's an open kind of scene, and one where musical ideas bump into each other and make for new ones.

For example, I was calling Andy Frost, sound man for Radio One, to try and find out a few things about that group. His sister, Donna Frost, who's in a new band called the Paper Dolls, was able to tell me a few things, and I found out that they once had had a drummer named Al Casey, who was now playing with her brother, "Beaver," who had been in the Bunnies, in a new band. Just out of curiosity, I asked her who else was in that band, and found that Richie Owens, formerly of the Dayts, whose current band I had tried to track down in an earlier call, was in it. Surprise! It was called the Nuclear Subs. The guitarist was someone named Bob whose last name Donna couldn't remember. "Bob Nuclear Sub," she called him. Anyway. Let's talk about the roots of the band scene, and all that.

The first two Nashville new music bands, as I said, were the HOTS and CLOVERBOTTOM. The latter, composed of Johnny Hollywood on bass, Rock Strata on guitar and John Elliot and (later) Bryan D'Beane on drums, is covered in the current band section; the former broke up in the summer of 1982. The Hots started playing their sophisticated power pop in mid-1979, led by a young guitarist named Steve Anderson, but closed down operations for a while the following winter. Popular session drummer Boo Boo McAfee was in that early incarnation. They reappeared in 1980 without Anderson, who had left to form ACTUALS, and were now led by guitarist-singer Andy Byrd and keyboardist-singer Kathryn Pate. Popular at Phrank 'n' Stein's, and good enough to play shows at the Exit/In and the Tennessee Theater downtown, the Hots lasted long enough to get a couple of cuts on *The London Side of Nashville*. Andy, who has worked in studios and on sound for bands, has produced for PRACTICAL STYLISTS; Kathryn was part of CHAIN OF COMMAND, a short-lived techno-pop band, and later joined Andy and drummer Bryan Talbot (veteran of many groups) in a studio project that never got off the ground. Dale Brown, who later joined Ed Fitzgerald's CIVIC DUTY, was the Hots' bassist in their later days.

The band Steve Anderson joined after the Hots was one formidable outfit. ACTUALS included Robb Earls on synthesizer and vocals, former Cloverbottom member John Elliot on drums and electronic percussion, and Gary Rabasca on bass. This band lasted until the end of 1980 and grew very popular; as a freshman I saw them raise the Good Woman into a dancing frenzy. They were able to generate more excitement than any electronic-based group since. Anderson left this group, too, and they brought in guitarist Ross O'Shea and formed FACTUAL. In the summer of 1982, Anderson reappeared and formed ACTUEL with Rabasca (who had left Factual) and drummer Soren Berlev. Actuel was never as good as Actuals but was fun to listen to all the same. They moved to New York in the summer of 1983 and supposedly are working with Grace Jones' manager.

FILE 13 helped usher Phrank 'n' Stein's into its modern era. Let Rick Champion of Phrank's tell it: "There was the Belleview Crew -- they hung out at Phrank's. They had this self-appointed, group-accepted leader, Barry Feltz. Clad in black leather and chains, they'd line up at the end of the bar and Barry would make a grand entrance." Calling himself "Cheetah," Barry was the vocalist, rhythm guitarist and guiding light of File 13, which also included Mike Orr on bass (later replaced by Gary Privette), Chaz Orr on drums and Skot Nelson on guitar. "Barry wanted to be the essence of Johnny Rotten in Nashville; however, Barry wasn't all that rotten himself. He was an asshole to the other band members on stage, which was distracting." Still, Rick says, File 13 was a "damn fine band"; in true punk style, they could barely play, but got better and better. After a strange appearance at Alternative Jam I as the NASHVILLE DOLLS with beloved scene pretender Billy Stickers playing bass in



Beverly Black

Johnny Hollywood, now of Cloverbottom

"their version of ultimate trash," File 13 turned into NO ART. Randy Hunnicutt played drums; Privette came back to play bass. No Art got on the "Never in Nashville" EP but by late 1981 were gone. Skot and Chaz joined MODERN EMOTIONS that fall; Barry and Gary went on to MOURNING AFTER with Mike Orr. Barry played drums and sang in this band; their high point was opening for the Stray Cats. According to Rick, they "worked hard on developing a sound that never jelled," and the group broke up early last year. Barry has now ended up in BURNING HEARTS, which is "sort of his version of heavy metal pop." Instead of wanting to be Johnny Rotten, Barry seems now to want to be Roger Daltrey or Loverboy. He may end up best known in history for his short tenure as drummer with the original JASON AND THE NASHVILLE SCORCHERS. Mike Orr has replaced Johnny Hollywood as guitarist for Factual and Gary Privette is in a new band called PROJECT HOPE.

Another band that played Phrank's a lot was the RATZ. They started playing in the fall of 1979, but "went public" in 1980, and were led by guitarist-vocalist Les Rat (mundanely known as Shields). They released a popular single, "Call It Quitz"/"Mental Block," independently. Ratz guitarist Joey Offbeat and bassist Randy Rodent have recently resurfaced in a band called POP MECHANIX; Bone Brown, the drummer, is now in Factual. At one point in their early period, Warner Hodges of the Scorchers played drums while Bone was injured. The Ratz were a fun powerpop/punk band. They broke up in the fall of 1981, and in a few months Les, changing his last name to Most, formed the MOST, a short-lived pop outfit that appeared on *The London Side of Nashville*. The Most were notable mostly because current Nashville Scorchers road manager Ronnie Douglas, who earlier had played with an amateurish punk outfit named JAP SNEAKERS, played drums for them. Les may have hit his high point in fall of 1982 when he formed GO JIMMY DUB, an odd little studio trio based at Middle Tennessee State University (Les's school) that put out a cassette, *Where Do You Get Your Coconuts?* (also known as "Triple XXX Sex"), featuring soft ballads and heavy primal rhythms. They made only one live appearance, at the N.I.R. benefit in May 1983, and dissolved last summer. Les reportedly is assembling a new band to perform a cross between "Bauhaus and Lords of the New Church."

One of Rick Champion's favorite regular Phrank's bands was the ELECTRIC BOYS, and his interest has been borne out -- the Scorchers, of whom half were in the Electric Boys, have become the first Nashville new music band to sign with a major label. Guitarist Warner Hodges

and bassist Jeff Johnson of the Scorchers led the Boys, though Johnson at that point sang and played lead guitar; Greg Herston played bass and Mike Cribb was the drummer. Interestingly, Scorchers drummer Perry Baggs sat in on a few dates with the band. "The Electric Boys sanctified the ground upon which Phrank 'n' Stein's lay," Rick wrote for me. "It was here that Warner Hodges revealed his passion for the rock expression that country music could relate. It was also here that Jeff Johnson expressed himself as the wearer of Nashville's 'James Dean of the 80's' crown while showing the local crowds what it really meant to be punk in everyday existence. "The Electric Boys were the highlight of the first show by Gatsby Productions, a project of Rick's -- the famous summer concert in the Centennial Park bandshell -- and headlined a July 4 show at Phrank's, which became the first Nashville "punk jam." At that show, Warner and Jeff played together with Barry Feltz and Skot Nelson of File 13 and Johnny Hollywood and Rock Strata of Cloverbottom.

The Electric Boys lasted from early 1980 to that fall. Greg Herston and Jeff joined the fairly popular RESISTORS; Warner was in a band called the PRESS, among other projects. In late 1981 Jeff and Warner became part of Jason and the Nashville Scorchers and made their names. Cribb dropped out of the scene a while and then came back with NEON BUSHMEN, a fairly uninspired sextet that put out an EP called "Aborigi d'Lights" and later broke up. Cribb says he's gotten together a new Neon Bushmen and is working in the studio now on a completely different kind of sound. Good luck to him. Herston played in Factual for a short time, at the same time as he was working with the Resistors, and moved to Los Angeles when the Resistors went there to seek their fortune. He quit the band and came back home in May of 1982, but rejoined them, now known as the DAYTS (it seems someone in L.A. had thought up the name "Resistors" too), in early 1983. The Days lost their popularity, became pretty much a cover band, and eventually broke up, and Greg was free to spend all his time with Basic Static. Richie Owens, the Days' leader, is now in that band of Nashville veterans called the NUCLEAR SUBS; Days guitarist Norm Rau is in something called the P.O.W.'s.

Two other popular early bands were X04 and USR. X04, who began in the summer of 1981 and were led by former Civic Duty member Tim Wilson, played mostly instrumentals. Their music was innovative in its use of synthesizers. Their debut show at Springwater featured random video footage (yardwork, space shuttles) on televisions onstage with the band, and ritualized destruction of records by Air Supply and Stars on 45. Later shows featured slides of Kirlian photography. X04 played in the second Alternative Jam and broke up in the spring of 1982. Tim left town; guitarist Mike McCurdy faded from sight; percussionist Bryan Talbot, who had played in Cloverbottom as Bryan D'Beane, went on to join PARADOX, CHILDREN OF NOISE, and the studio project of Andy Byrd and Kathryn Pate. He finally came around in a circle and joined the resurrected Cloverbottom last December.

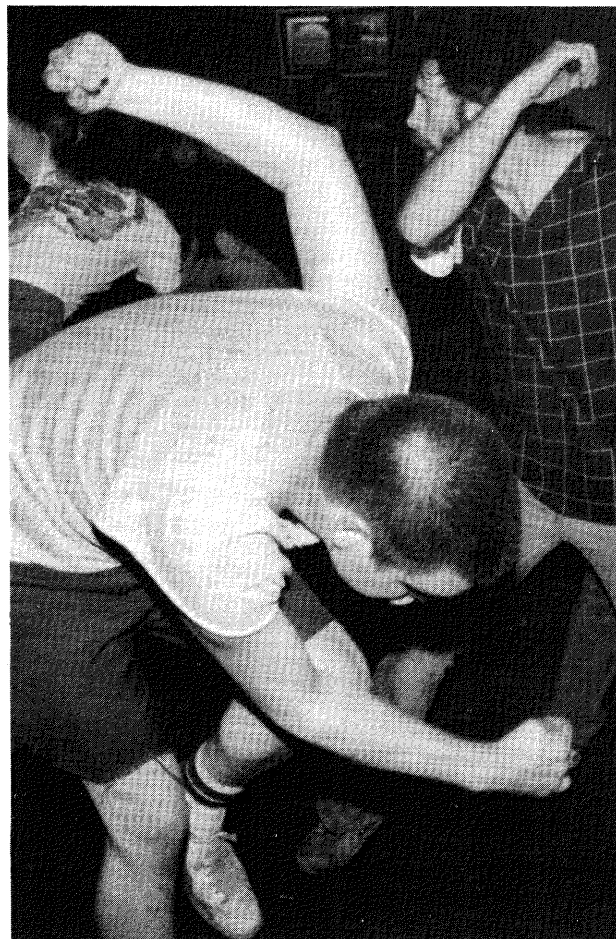
USR, a political punk band with tinges of heavy metal who played from early 1980 to early 1982, were notable mostly for leader Tom Holzemer's versions of that mainstream musical gimmick, the rock opera. The most popular was one called "United States Rapture," also known as "Networks," also known as "Amikon." USR had a cut on the "Never in Nashville" EP. Tom Holzemer went on to songwriting of a more commercial nature, but reportedly wants to reform the band. Drummer Tom Gregory apparently is interested but bassist Kevin Smith doesn't care much.

MODERN EMOTIONS, which featured Skot Nelson and Chaz Orr from No Art, performed neo-psychedelic rock before it was particularly fashionable, although they looked more like the New Romantics of England. Strong dance beats, Bill "Cheek" Smartt's sax runs, and biting lyrics made this band exciting. They broke up without having played much, in early 1982, partly because of conflicts over whose material would be used. "Cheek" and Chaz Orr helped form YOUNG GREY RUINS in fall of 1982, along with hulking vocalist Sam Matthews, guitarist Shannon Liggon and bassist Barry Nelson. YGR were voted "best new group" of 1982 in the *N.I.R.* Readers' Poll, and broke up after a last gig at the *N.I.R.* benefit show in May 1983. "YGR were an exciting band when they first started, with a then-very-in psychedelic sound similar to Joy Division and the Psychedelic Furs, and originals with somber themes -- 'Grey Day,' 'Crucify Me,' etc.," Andy Anderson, the editor of *N.I.R.*, says, but "their sound never progressed from their beginnings, their lyrics were very depressing, and people just got bored seeing them so much." The Ruins broke up when Cheek moved to Atlanta. Remnants of the Ruins went into SHADOW 15 and PROJECT HOPE.

CHILDREN OF NOISE were another offshoot of Modern Emotions, in a sense; ME guitarist Jennifer Thompson formed the group with vocalist Bo Behan. They wrote the songs and led the group through several incarnations, with two different bassists (one, Lewis Lowery, is now in SUBURBAN BAROQUE) and three different drummers, including the omnipresent Bryan D'Beane and Jason Cook, a young Eng-

tishman who would later join the hardcore band Pavlov's Dog. "When they clicked, Children of Noise were truly a wonder to behold," Andy Anderson writes. "Jennifer could have played in R.E.M., the way she made her guitar sing out, and Bo was one performer who never failed to send shivers up and down my spine; with her singing and presence on stage, she reminded me of a female John Lydon [Johnny Rotten in the Sex Pistols]." CON attempted a summer 1983 tour after firming up their lineup and achieving a cult following in Nashville, but such hassles as van failure and financial troubles drove them apart. Jason and final bassist Paul Wolf left and Bo and Jennifer couldn't find any new members in town. They've moved out of town to start a new band, and their whereabouts are unknown.

The last really seminal band in Nashville would have to be COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC SAFETY. A fledgling hardcore punk (that means lightning-fast, loud, raucous noise generally with yelling instead of real singing) outfit from Franklin got together with an MTSU student to start the first hardcore band to get anywhere in Nashville. David on vocals, Michael on guitar, Pat on bass and Mark on drums (punks have little use for surnames) got together in the summer of 1982. Again, let Anderson, a fan of the band, tell the story: "Their first gig at Spanky's was a notable one -- their 'Wake Up You Boring Fuckers!' posters got them in trouble with Metro, and their short 30 minute set of tunes such as "Radio Sucks" and "So What," with every other word seeming designed to offend, got them barred from ever playing at Spanky's again. They moved down to Cantrell's, however, and continued playing music their way, attracting a small but loyal following. CPS just got better and better as time went on, and it was their presence that showed that there was enough interest in hardcore in Music City for bands like Black Flag, D.O.A., Minor Threat, Channel 3 and the Meat Puppets to include the city on their tours. CPS at the end of their first year had accomplished a lot; people respected them and they had exposed a lot of people to hardcore music and thought. Their popularity was partially their undoing, however, as their songs were misinterpreted and people began to treat them as a new fashion and dance trend, rather than the true free spirits they were. Band members began to quarrel among themselves, gigs in town were fewer and fewer, road trips or recording (which might have gotten them national attention) never panned out, and so CPS broke up at the end of the summer of 1983. A pity; they were the only Nashville band whose every gig promised something new, exciting and unexpected. Isn't that what rock and roll is all about?"



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Robb Earls, *Factual*

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THE BANDS

I want to thank Andy Anderson, Regina Gee, Allen Green and David Minuk for giving me information on these bands and for describing their music and background. Initials of the person who wrote critical or descriptive comments on each band follow the band's entry. Often, information other than that provided by the person whose initials appear is included; the initials in such cases refer only to opinions presented in the entry.

BASIC STATIC

Tom Littlefield, vocals-guitar
Doug Lancio, guitar
Greg Herston, bass
Hunt Waugh, drums

Basic Static was formed and began playing out around town around the beginning of 1983. The band grew out of Tom and Greg's songwriting efforts and quickly gained a following. At first, Basic Static was a very tenuous proposition, since Greg was also in the Days, who at the time were a very popular band with a large following. The Days never really developed their songs or style, however, and Greg gave up on them to commit himself to Basic Static full time.

Basic Static have become a very popular band on the local scene; I'd pick them as easily the best new band of 1983. They've never had a headline show in town, but part of the reason for their rapid rise has probably been their ability to deliver consistently high-energy sets that frequently blow the headlining group away (a perfect example of this was last year's Bow Wow Wow show at the Exit/In). Besides playing the Modern Music Mania (loosely known as Alternative Jam IV) this year, they have joined the ranks of Nashville bands who have taken their act on the road, opening for such notables as the Fixx, the Romantics and X. Musically and lyrically, Basic Static are a pop group pure and simple. The band's strength lies in their ability to write songs that are highly per-

sonal, yet easy to identify with. Add to this their powerful and polished delivery and it's easy to see why people are excited about Basic Static. They'll be recording some product in the future, possibly to appear on Jack Emerson's Praxis label. A song recently played on KDA mostly as promotion for Basic Static's opening for Bow Wow Wow, "She's a Boy," was actually recorded years ago by Littlefield and Herston with Jeff Johnson on guitar and John Elliot on drums. aa

DISCOGRAPHY: One cut, "Born to Die," on WRVU's *Local Heroes* cassette compilation.

CIVIC DUTY

Ed Fitzgerald, guitar-vocals-songwriting
Judi Fitzgerald, vocals-percussion
Mark Brown, guitar
Chuck Allen, bass
Beat Zenerino, drums

Ed Fitzgerald started out in summer of 1980, with a gig at Phrank 'n' Stein's, as basically a solo act with sidemen backing him up. Some of his sidemen had done sessions around town; one had played with Captain Beefheart and another with Larry Coryell. One early Civic Duty member, synthesizer player Tim Wilson, went on to play with X04; another, Dale Brown, had been in the Hots (he eventually got religion and dropped out of the scene). Ed played all over -- Phrank's, Cantrell's, the Good Woman, the Exit/In, Flannigan's (though he doesn't seem to have been too thrilled with that gig), Belmont on the lawn, Rand Terrace and the Mainstreet Music Emporium in Murfreesboro. Out of town gigs include the 688 Club in Atlanta.

Only in May 1983 did Ed get together the group he considers the first "real" Civic Duty, a band that was more than a backup group. This band has stayed the same, except that drummer Ken Coomer was replaced in December by Beat Zenerino. Ed is a strong guitarist with a distinctive singing voice; some have compared him to Lou Reed. He sings duets with his wife Judi, and their voices blend very well. There's a touch of Talking Heads in Civic Duty's music, and some psychedelic influences as well. I find it hard to put a label on their music -- let's settle for "clean progressive intellectual rock." They don't rock very hard and one thing that has bothered me in the past is that their energy level is not high and they tend to distance themselves from their audience. They do not connect. They themselves admit that their live performance is weak, however, and I have heard that the last time they played out, with their new drummer, they were much improved. They have always done good work in the studio. rg

DISCOGRAPHY: Two cuts, "Johnny Panic" and "Living with a Tiger," on the Rock 106 *Homegrown* compilation album

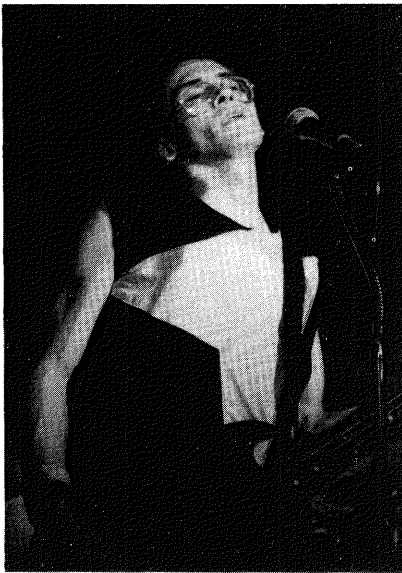
"Ed Fitzgerald/Civic Duty" 12-inch EP (Telephone Records)

One cut, "New China," on WRVU's *Local Heroes* cassette compilation
"Long Way to Heaven"/"Red Wing Bird" single (Telephone Records).

CLOVERBOTTOM

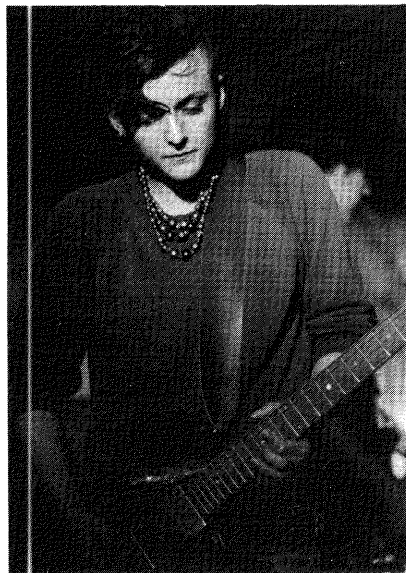
Johnny Hollywood, bass-vocals
Rock Strata, guitar-synthesizer-vocals
Bryan Talbot (a.k.a. D'Beane), acoustic & electric percussion-synthesizer-vocals
John Elliot, synthesizer-acoustic & electric percussion.

One of the first Nashville new music bands (the other being the Hots), Cloverbottom were the punks of the two, introducing primitive, amateur sensibilities and an energetic, rambunctious approach to the young and restless of Nashville. The band became widely popular in late 1979 and 1980 as a trio: Johnny, Rock and Elliot. Their origins were a bit more complicated, though. According to their first manager, Rick Champion, he, Johnny and Rock met working in the warehouse of Gusto Records, a catalogue record company that owned a lot of country and rockabilly going back to the 30s and 40s. Johnny and Rock, discovering they shared tastes, decided to form Nashville's first "new wave" group, and Rick helped them out, getting them gigs. The essence of Cloverbottom, Rick says, has always been the songwriting team of Johnny and Rock. In their earlier days they played a gig or two with a drummer that Rick describes as "a hippie who was into health food," and had a keyboardist named Jim Christopher, who had been a roadie with the Eagles and later moved on to be Billy Joel's piano tuner. One of the worst moments of Rick's life was a night when Jim's wife Vicki sang with the band at Phrank 'n' Stein's for one horrible set and then got mad and left before the second. By the time Cloverbottom's independent EP "Anarchy in Music City" -- the first independent new music vinyl in Nashville -- came out, though, Johnny, Rock and Elliot were the



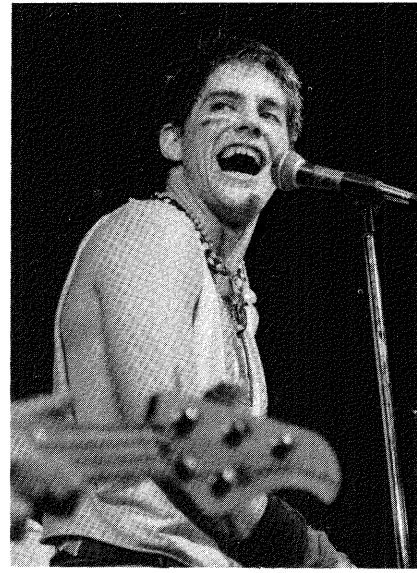
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Lewis Lowery, Suburban Baroque



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Shannon Liggon, now of Shadow 15



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Kevin Gray, White Animals

band.

Cloverbottom opened for the Hots and David Johansen at two different shows at the Exit/In in 1979 and went on to be one of the most popular bands at Phrank's when Rick was managing it, though they also played at other places, such as the now-defunct Rock City on Second Avenue. They helped start the wave of fans and bands that descended on Phrank's in 1980 with their shows and posters, labelling themselves proudly as a "new wave band" when new wave was still a dirty word in Nashville. (Now it's an antiquated word, but that's different).

Bryan D'Beane (a.k.a. Talbot) replaced Elliot in February of 1980 and remained as drummer till Cloverbottom faded out of sight in late 1981, soon after their appearance on the "Never in Nashville" compilation EP and at the showcase show for that record at Cantrell's. Johnny joined Factual and Bryan went into X04. They've reunited occasionally for kicks. Once Johnny and Rock got together with drummer Bone Brown of Factual and guitarist Rick Wiseman (The Works, Jap Sneakers) and did a reunion show at Cantrell's. The present reincarnation of Cloverbottom, which came about after Johnny left Factual because of hearing problems (he's promised to wear earplugs when Cloverbottom rehearses), includes both former drummers, and the raucous but precise punk sound they've had in the past will be augmented by some synthesizer work and electronic percussion. (Elliot practically introduced electronic percussion to Nashville when he was with Actuals.) **pw**

DISCOGRAPHY: "Anarchy in Music City" EP (Toolbox Records; actually independently released)

One cut, "Battery," on the "Never in Nashville" compilation EP (Praxis)

FACTUAL

Robb Earls, synthesizer-vocals

Skot Nelson, guitar-synthesizer

Mike Orr, bass-synthesizer-vocals

Bone Brown, acoustic & electric percussion.

A band with a complex history. The first members -- Earls, percussionist John Elliott, bassist Gary Rabasca and guitarist Ross O'Shea -- were basically an older band, Actuals, without that band's leader, Steve Anderson. O'Shea replaced him and even played some flute. The band started up around the end of 1980. After a year or so, Bone Brown, formerly of the Ratz, replaced Elliott. Johnny Hollywood, late of Cloverbottom, came in on bass and vocals in early 1982, after a short time during which Greg Herston (Basic Static, the Resistors) filled the slot. Skot Nelson, who had been in Modern Emotions, replaced O'Shea on guitar (also doing some synth work) in mid-1982. Just recently, Johnny quit because of hearing problems and joined Cloverbottom, and Mike Orr, who'd been in Mourning After less than a year before, replaced him. Orr will also be playing some synth and singing. Factual's musical quality and integrity has remained constant: they're always experimental and always danceable. Seldom do the two come together as well. Both their single and their mini-album stand apart from most of the rest of Nashville's local releases in freshness and originality. Factual maintain a heavy schedule of regional (and beyond) touring, and have attracted a sizeable following throughout the East Coast. National success seems not far away if they can maintain the level they have achieved.

Musically, Factual feature a steady 4/4 beat throughout their entire repertoire. Skot's guitar has a unique moodiness to it. Mike's bass work is firmly rooted and Robb's synth textures run the gamut from searing highs to roaring lows and all points in between. Robb's voice, though better on vinyl, has a pleading quality that stands in healthy contrast to Factual's rhythmic simplicity and textural complexity. **ag**

DISCOGRAPHY: One cut, "Wound in Time," on the "Never in Nashville" compilation EP (Praxis)

Two cuts, "Dance of the Izods" and "Sleep on the Edge," on the *London Side of Nashville* compilation LP (Pollyfox)

"Your Way"/"Think to the Beat" single (Faction Records)

Factual mini-album, also called "Faction 02" (Faction)

HARDCORE (PAVLOV'S DOGS and the WAX DOLLS)

Hardcore punk is not Pat Benatar. Most people realize that. It is not the Sex Pistols, either, which may surprise some people. It is the distillation of rock and roll: a faster, leaner sound than '77 punk, more raucous and sometimes literally amusical, with shouted lyrics and mercilessly pounding beats. Committee for Public Safety were the pioneers of hardcore in Nashville, but ran out of steam after a tour of the Northeast. In their absence, other bands have appeared, but none have come far enough to merit their own space, so they are listed here together.

Pavlov's Dogs (formerly Social Tension) are the heir apparent to the CPS hardcore throne. They are: Robert Perry, vocals; Jeff Cease, guitar; Pat Albert (formerly of CPS), bass; and Jason Cook (formerly of Children of Noise), drums. Hardcore requires talent if a band wants its message to reach beyond its medium. Perry says the band have been working hard to better themselves, and they are good enough indeed to be leaders in the local music scene. They're youthful, energetic, and speak to their high-school-age peers. They will play all-ages (no beer) shows only. Their purpose, according to Perry, is to open people's minds to the society around them. The focus of their songs is, as it is for the L.A. hardcore bands, on society, but they also do politically oriented songs and regard highly Washington, D.C.'s introspective, anti-decadent Minor Threat. They have only been around a few months but are already able to draw a good-sized crowd to Cantrell's matinees and parties around town. Vanderbilt students are recommended to attend, but they must go with open minds and hearts -- this is definitely not music for those of the average Vandy student's socioeconomic class. Frat boys doing the Worm will not be welcome.

The Wax Dolls -- Paul Booker, guitar; Scooter, vocals; Rick, bass -- are also a young band. They perform all original music in a clear, sharp manner not unlike the Stooges. They have been around only six months and presently lack a drummer but have managed to do some promising shows. They recently had a gig at Cantrell's with Pavlov's Dogs and Knoxville's Arbitraries. Around 50 people attended the afternoon show, which ended with a jam version of (what else but) "Louie Louie," a 30-year-old song which marked the birth of punk 20 years ago when the Kingsmen did it. The excitement that this song can generate in the right hands indicates that rock music can continue to be a vital force in society.

Briefly, Baptist Youth (of Murfreesboro), featuring Brett Hawkins and J.T. Leathers, are making a comeback after an absence of several months. These bad boys of thrash were known for their scathing indictments of *Andy Griffith's* Howard Sprague. Rest assured that the Youth will restore bad taste and good times to the local music scene.

Fellow Travellers, also of Murfreesboro, will bring their garage/psychodelic sound to town as soon as they can find a suitable drummer. Keith Grayson (bass) and David Minuk (guitar) promise to fuse the raucousness of 1966 rock 'n' roll with the urgency of today's music. Anyone who wishes to join this band is welcome. **dn**

IN PURSUIT

Emma Grandillo, bass-vocals

Jay Joyce, guitar-vocals

Bobby Johnson, drums

In Pursuit are very new to Nashville, but they're coming on strong. Emma and Jay are the founding members and songwriters. The two were in and out of many new music bands in Cleveland and surrounding areas before they decided to start their own band. They moved to Nashville to write and record and here met up with Bobby Johnson. Everything clicked, and the band has developed a really tight and powerful sound, which Jay describes as "not real trendy, dealing more with reggae and funk rhythms" than the traditional rock sound. The band played some gigs last fall to a good response, and were featured at this year's version of the Alternative Jam, Modern Music Mania, on Feb. 4. In Pursuit have been working on a 4-song EP and visiting some Nashville studios to record, so while they don't have anything out now they should real soon. **aa**

JASON AND THE NASHVILLE SCORCHERS

Jason Ringenberg, vocals-guitar-harmonica

Warner Hodges, guitar-vocals

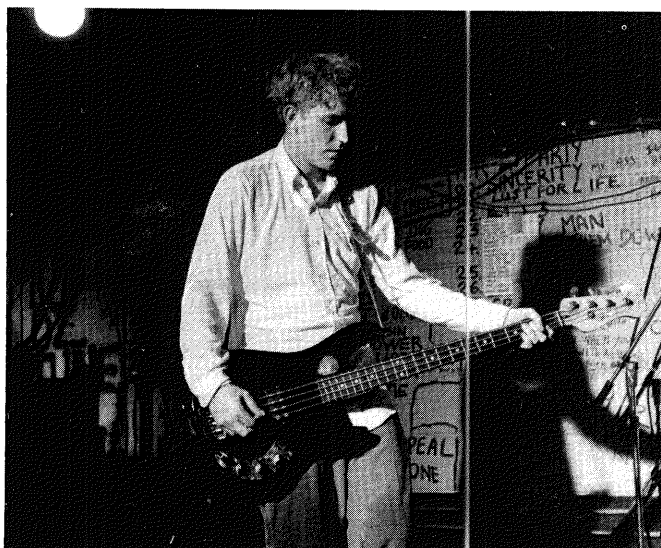
Jeff Johnson, bass

Perry Baggs, drums-vocals

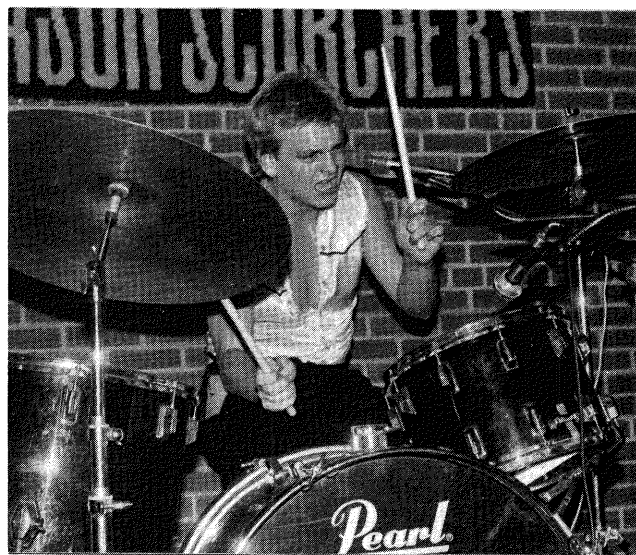
Jason and band play a brand of new music that mixes country sensibilities with rock power in a way that almost no rockabilly band has been able to achieve. They aren't rockabilly, either; "country punk" would be a better label, if it didn't sound so gimmicky. And the Scorchers are the best new music band in Nashville, in my opinion. In EMI America's opinion, too: they just signed the Scorchers to a contract and rereleased their *Fervor* mini-album, formerly on Scorchers manager Jack Emerson's label Praxis. The Scorchers are thus the first Nashville new music band to really make it.

Jason Ringenberg came to Nashville from an Illinois hog farm about two and a half years ago, 20 years old or so and a lover of both country music and rock and roll. He met Jack Emerson at Springwater, having been told that Jack shared his interests in country and rockabilly, and a friendship jelled. "The next thing I knew," Jack told me, "we were playing in a band together." The first Nashville Scorchers were a group that

Jeff Johnson, Nashville Scorchers



Beverly Black



Beverly Black

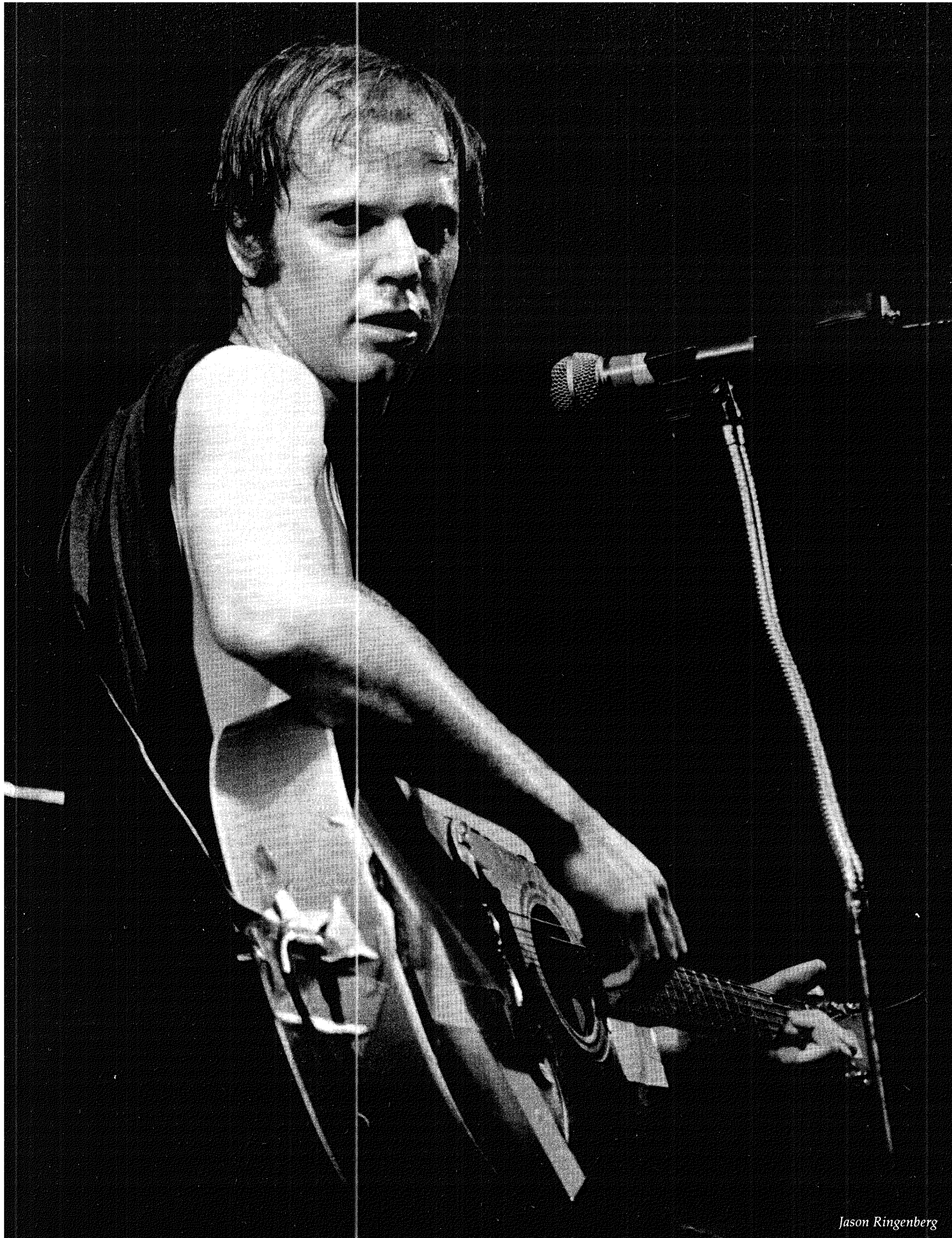
Perry Baggs, Nashville Scorchers

had been trying to get something together the whole summer of 1981, with Jason added; they included Jack on bass, Vanderbilt law student Will Tomlinson on guitar and Barry Feltz on drums. This band got gigs opening for Carl Perkins at VU (I saw them; they weren't as good as the current band, of course, but trashed "Like a Rolling Stone" in an interesting way) and R.E.M. through connections Jack had. Then Jack went back to his studies at Vanderbilt and Will back to law school; Barry kept pursuing his dreams of glory.

Jeff Johnson, who had been in the Resistors (and, earlier, the Electric Boys), got together with Jason and they started scouting out new Scorchers. Warner Hodges, who had also been in the Electric Boys, was an easy choice, especially since his father and mother had been country musicians (his father picked with Johnny Cash); he played guitar while Jeff moved from guitar to bass. "Everybody told them, 'Whatever you do, don't have Warner Hodges as your guitar player,'" Jack says. He was a rambunctious, heavy-drinking guy, but he's calmed down some now. A friend of Warner's named Perry Baggs, who worked in a bowling alley, had a "shitty-ass" (Jack again) set of drums; he hadn't played long, but he passed his audition and joined the band (he since has become a very impressive rock drummer). "He had just an unbelievable feel for the drums," Jack says, and he could sing; his father had sung in gospel choirs. This band played their first show on New Year's Eve, 1981/82, and since then they've been moving up and up and up. A record, the EP "Reckless Country Soul," was recorded in January 1982 and came out on Jack's own Praxis label; it got some national attention, but the real attention came for the 12-inch EP *Fervor*, which came out in July 1983. Robert Palmer of the New York Times called it the best EP of the year. In the meantime, the Scorchers were playing all over Nashville, especially at Cantrell's, and all over the country. The Danceteria and the Ritz in New York. At the Ritz, they were on the same bill with X (that band's John Doe and Exene are big fans). Dave Alvin of rockabilly heroes the Blasters came on stage with them when they played with X. The Music Machine and the Palomino, a generally country-oriented club, in Los Angeles. They've sold out the Rat in Boston and the 688 in Atlanta. Steve Wynn of the Dream Syndicate, Bill Golden of the Oak Ridge Boys and Steve Jones of the Sex Pistols have all seen and enjoyed the Scorchers, among others. The Scorchers have more credentials than any other new music band in town. Another little sign of success: they've got a video of their new song, "Absolutely Sweet Marie," on MTV. Only the White Animals did that before.

The Scorchers will soon be touring the country to promote *Fervor* and impress local radio people, and in six months or so will start recording another album. They're on their way. And no one deserves success more than Jason, a quiet (offstage) farm boy who came down here with a lot of doubts but managed to make it.

Musically, the Scorchers are magnificent. Warner can play country melodies and then whang out a rocking riff at the drop of a hat. Perry pounds his drums like mad, and Jason reels and rambles on stage with good cheer and showmanship, like a goofy David Byrne in a cowboy hat, equally at home with his beloved country tunes and the thrashing, rocked-up country punk the Scorchers are known for. His lyrics are fascinating, too -- full of concerns for such unpunk themes as loss of innocence, moral standards, and the best of Southern traditions. He's possessed of an internal conflict between moral beliefs and hell-bent-for-leather rock 'n' roll fervor. And that's what makes this band so fascinating. Underneath the pounding beat, they have some things to



Jason Ringenberg

say. pw

DISCOGRAPHY: "Reckless Country Soul" EP (Praxis Records)

One cut, "Broken Whiskey Glass," on *Sub Pop* (cassette magazine) no. 7

Fervor 12-inch EP (Praxis; 6 songs)

One cut, "Hot Nights in Georgia," on WRVU's *Local Heroes* cassette compilation

Fervor 12-inch EP (EMI/Praxis; "Absolutely Sweet Marie" added to the original six songs; other songs remixed or rerecorded)

MINIMALOGIC

D. Andrew C. Crowell

Greg Killmaster

C. Newman

A very strange band with a strange history and sound. The first I ever heard about Minimalogic was back about two years ago when they and Committee for Public Safety played a double bill at Cantrell's. Minimalogic put up these very small strips of computer-generated sentences promising post-industrial noise, declaring that they were not a dance band and asking "Why bother to come?" About 40 people bothered, but by the end of Minimalogic's first set only about 10 were left. They literally drove people out of the club with their songs, and took great pleasure in doing so.

See, Minimalogic belong to the "Entertainment through Pain" school of thought pioneered by such bands as the Residents and Throbbing Gristle. They're your basic minimalist noise art damage combo, something every city should have one of. They don't care if you don't like them; they like to offend people and drive them away holding their ears in pain. Anyway, the show at Cantrell's was their only live performance ever, and, while interesting, wasn't very good because of the difficulty in reproducing their ideas live (as opposed to on tape). No one heard anything much about Minimalogic for quite some time, and then last year out of the blue they released their excellent *IRRITANT* cassette. The tape shows a band learning to execute their ideas in a series of noise experiments utilizing everything from the telephone to ultra-distorted synth and guitar. It sounds like nothing else in Nashville, but has sold pretty well in stores around town. I like this band a lot; even if their ideas don't always click they're still an adventure for the ears. aa

DISCOGRAPHY: *IRRITANT* cassette (independently released)

PRACTICAL STYLISTS

Scott Sullivan, bass-vocals

Bill Lloyd, guitar-vocals

Jim Hodgkins, drums-vocals

Practical Stylists, together for about a year and a half (Scott and Jim have played together since high school), received a bit of a shock a short time ago when guitarist-vocalist David Russell quit. While Scott is the leader of the band, David's guitar was a very integral part of the group's distinctive sound. Bill Lloyd has replaced him, but the band is also looking for a second guitarist, who would probably play lead.

One of the impressive things about this band is the powerful sound they have been able to get from just three pieces; I am curious to see how much the sound will change with their new members. In addition to playing guitar, Bill Lloyd is a singer and songwriter (his song "Feeling the Elephant" is on WRVU's *Local Heroes*), and I know that he will be writing for the band along with Scott.

Practical Stylists have described themselves as power pop and as high-energy music, and those seem good descriptions. Referring to their energy, *Hustler* arts editor Dan Weeks has called them "the Yardbirds of pop," and comparisons have been made to the Jam and XTC. They play very tight, danceable music and pull very good crowds wherever they play. They've opened for such bands as the Bongos, the Bangles and Love Tractor, and recently played with Jason and the Scorchers at the Night Flight club in Savannah, GA, on New Year's Eve. Other appearances include the February 1983 WRVU benefit show, the May 1983 *Nashville Intelligence Report* benefit, and the recent Modern Music Mania concert (informally known as Alternative Jam IV) at the Exit/In. Their only weak point, as far as I can see, is that Scott has had to learn how to sing as he's gone along, and I know he has had trouble because he doesn't have such a good singing voice. But I think he has done wonders.

The Stylists' independent single, "General Beat"/"My Bed," was distributed around the country by Important Records and was the second-best selling single at Cat's Records for the month of August 1983. rg

DISCOGRAPHY: "Ralph"/"Swing Your Arms Around" two-song cassette (White Triangle Productions)

"General Beat"/"My Bed" single (Pyramid Records)

One cut, "Swing Your Arms Around," on the WREK-FM cassette compilation, Atlanta (this cassette may not actually have been produced)

One cut, "She's Got Lots," on WRVU's *Local Heroes* cassette compilation

SHADOW 15 and PROJECT HOPE

Two new bands arose from the ruins of Young Grey Ruins. We lumped them together merely because they're too new to have an entry each --they themselves won't be too thrilled about it.

Shadow 15 have perhaps been seen by a few more people than Project Hope. They're Scott Feinstein, vocals; Shannon Ligon, guitar; Barry Nelson, bass; and Chris Feinstein, drums. Shannon and Barry were in Young Grey Ruins. Shadow 15 have played around some since forming in fall of 1983; recently they opened for popster Chris Stamey at Cantrell's. The bass-and-guitar foundation of Shannon and Barry is dynamite. The group's sound bears little resemblance to Young Grey Ruins; instead, it's moderately fast and tight garage rock. Shadow 15 have tremendous potential, but lead singer Scott needs to loosen up on stage and get a bit more exciting. When everything goes right he sounds wonderful, as if he were yelling defiantly into an ever-increasing web of noise, but at other times Barry and Shannon threaten to overpower him. aa

Project Hope's lineup is: Chaz Orr, bass-vocals; Gary Privette, guitar-vocals; and John Knoch, drums. They've just changed their name from Party Goblin. Chaz is the one from YGR (and earlier was in Modern Emotions); Gary has been in No Art and Mourning After. The band plays primitive yet effective art rock a la Joy Division. If they don't "evolve" away from this sound, expect them to achieve a high level of musical energy. Project Hope, like Shadow 15, began operation around the fall of 1983. ag

SUBURBAN BAROQUE

Allen Green, keyboards-synthesizer-acoustic & electric percussion-vocals

Lewis Lowery, bass-lead vocals-acoustic percussion-synth

Paul Norman, electric & acoustic percussion-vocals

Allen, whose earlier band, Paradox, got a cut on *The London Side of Nashville* before playing a gig as Call My Lawyer and calling it quits, formed this band in spring of 1983. John Froeschauer played drums until last fall; Norman replaced him after Russian Roulette, which he was in, broke up. Suburban Baroque are scheduled to release a 7-song cassette this very month. They've made tremendous progress since their debut at the Cantrell's benefit show for *Nashville Intelligence Report* in May. They have no guitars, but the bass and keyboards fill the gap admirably. Soundwise, they're a semi-fusion of a variety of influences and styles; lyrics range from dumb to overly complex.

They aren't very compelling visually on stage, but their forthcoming cassette has some very bizarre tribal touches and studio gimmicks that make it worth checking out. Allen calls the band's sound "Primal Electronic," meaning that it lays futuristic electronic textures over a primitive, tribal base. aa

U.P.C.

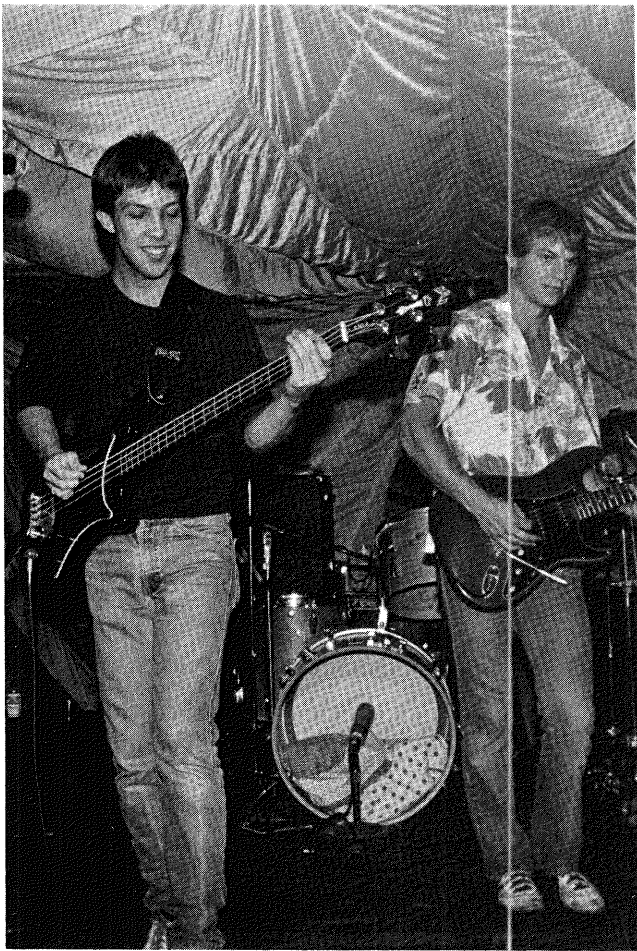
Steve Wilde, guitar-lead vocals

Phil Jones, bass

Xerino DeJohnette, drums

U.P.C. are a fairly new group on the Nashville scene. The members are all originally from Nashville and have been friends for some time, but went away in separate directions before ending up back here together again. They really got serious about being in a band last fall, and played a few of the smaller venues then, but were largely ignored by most of the Cantrell's crowd since they never played there. Deciding on a new approach, they began raising funds for recording in a very unique way -- selling t-shirts and jerseys with their logo (the Universal Product Code bars with "U.P.C." scrawled across) to their fans and anyone who believed in the band. The idea was a success, and U.P.C. were able to raise enough money to record the 6-song cassette *Girls!*, which was released at the end of 1983 and is available in most record stores now.

U.P.C.'s sound is a sort of generic funk-rock that's very dance-oriented, and their lyrics are standard pop. The music makes the band, and *Girls!* is a pretty diverse cassette all in all, with some nice production touches and a variety of influences apparent. U.P.C. have a pretty professional and polished sound that many scene fans take offense at; I just tap my feet and enjoy. They're a likeable band that should turn some



Beverly Black

Practical Stylists

heads when they finally start playing live. aa

DISCOGRAPHY: *Girls!* 6-song cassette (independently released)

WHITE ANIMALS

Kevin Gray, guitar-occasional keyboards-vocals

Richie Parks, guitar

Steve Boyd, bass-vocals

Ray Crabtree, drums-vocals

Tim Coats, sound and sound effects

Well, they're not exactly a new music band. But they've played on bills with Factual, Jason and the Nashville Scorchers, Radio One and others, and they helped the Young Nashvillians get started. They've covered a lot of recent new music songs, as well as all those 60s classics. And besides, a lot of new music sounds like it's heavily inspired by the 60s anyway.

So: Young Dr. Kevin Gray skipped out after his first year of residency at Vanderbilt Hospital to join his guitar teacher, Rob Jackson, in forming a duo they called the White Animals in the summer of 1978. They became the popular house band at Phrank 'n' Stein's. This was before Rick Champion took it over and made it the punk center. Gray and Jackson played all sorts of things on their acoustic guitars: -- old Beatles, Motown, "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," even a version of "You Really Got Me." They wanted more of a band, though, and brought in bassist Phil Doss and drummer Joe Loftis. After a while, Rob left; perhaps the increasing rock 'n' roll consciousness of the band wasn't for him. Veteran rock sideman and session man Willie Collins replaced him. The band was now a strong rock combo playing largely 60s covers. After Phrank's went whole hog into Nashville's new wave, the White Animals started playing at Cantrell's (then the Smokehouse), as well as the inevitable frat parties, and that club has remained a stronghold -- on their nights, the place is absolutely packed with a mix of local fans and preps from Vanderbilt.

In 1980, after a "studio gun" replaced bassist Doss for a few weeks, Steve Boyd came in for good on that instrument, and shortly afterward Joe Loftis left to form his own band, Joe Loftis and the Pinks. He was replaced by Ray Crabtree, at that time drumming for the Double Trouble Blues Band. Finally, when Willie Collins found his tastes somewhat left

behind by Kevin and the band's increasing interest in dub (engineer manipulation of sounds with echoes, delays and reverb) and new-music techniques, and wanted to get off the road to spend time with his wife and kids, he was gradually replaced by Richie Parks, who had been in the same Double Trouble. That was about a year and a half ago. Thus the current White Animals.

They're still very popular, playing 60s-based rock and rhythm and blues with an aggressive sensibility partly derived from the new music scene, along with some more recent covers. A lot of the insiders in Nashville's real new music scene consider them a bit passe and condemn them as beach music for VU preps, but that's the result of a clash of musical thinking more than any valid criticism. Their only problem is perhaps that they have sometimes rather patronizingly adapted reggae, dub and other Third World elements into a pretty much white 60s sound, with mixed results.

They certainly make money, all right. They've played clubs and frats all over the South, and at Kenny's Castaways and the Danceteria in New York. Just lately, they've signed a contract with Variety Artists International, who are booking them all around the country. And, according to an employee of their own Dread Beat record label, they are one of the most beloved bands of college students in Virginia. They've made a bit of a splash in Germany, for some reason -- there's an EP of theirs out there. And they're the only band on an independent label, as far as Ray knows, to have a video on MTV -- light rotation, but in the stacks nevertheless.

The White Animals' new *Ecstasy* LP is their best, with their fine single "Don't Care" and a version of the song they cover so well in concert, "Gloria." That's the only cover, which reveals the band's interest in writing good new songs. They seem to be hoping to leave behind their reputation as the most exciting cover band around and just be known as the most exciting band. pw

DISCOGRAPHY: "It's Not Right"/"I'll Be Your Fool" single (independently released; put out after Willie Collins joined)

"Be-Bop-A-Lula"/"You Don't Send Me" single (independently released; put out right after Steve Boyd joined)

Nashville Babylon mini-album (Dread Beat; put out right after Ray Crabtree joined)

Lost Weekend album (Dread Beat; includes work by both Collins and Parks)

"These Boots Are Made for Dubbing" one-sided 12-inch single (Dread Beat; version of song from *Lost Weekend*)

"Don't Care"/"Boots Again and Again and Again" single (Dread Beat)

"The White Animals' New Beat from Nashville, Tennessee" 4-song EP (Germany; Pool Records -- songs are from *Lost Weekend*)

Ecstasy album (Dread Beat)

WILD FRONTIER

Tommy Dorsey, keyboards

Jan Heath, vocals-guitar

Mike Kisler, bass-"stick"

Giles Reaves, electronic drums

Wild Frontier began playing around Christmas of 1982 and have slowly begun to impress a number of people in the scene. Tommy and Mike had played together in bands at Belmont College and in a pop band named Tomboy that they'd rather forget. Tommy also does session work around town. Dedicated and professional, they built the band slowly, finding people that would fit into the way they wanted to sound. They settled on Jan, who graduated from Belmont along with Mike (Tommy's out of school for the moment), and Giles, who had drummed with Nancy Montgomery. Most of their gigs have been at Cantrell's -- they opened for Factual and Practical Stylists there -- but they have made a trip to Louisville to play. They're concentrating on recording now, and have made some demos at the Belmont College studios and a studio called the Castle. The people who run the Castle are from Belgium and are interested in promoting Wild Frontier in Europe, but so far the band haven't found anyone to put out a record there or in the U.S.

The band play light, accessible pop somewhat reminiscent of Altered Images, but without the squeaky voice. Electronic percussion gives them a strong dance beat when it's turned up loud enough. While Mike uses the Chapman stick -- a stringed instrument played by pressing the strings against the neck with the fingers, used by Tony Levin of King Crimson and by local fusion artist Andy Widders-Ellis, and capable of simultaneous bass and melody parts -- sometimes, he seldom does anything with it that couldn't be done on bass guitar. Tommy uses fairly standard textures and Jan's guitar is almost too clean. If Wild Frontier can develop a stronger stage presence, they'll be a hot act.

Yes, it's his real name. No, as far as he knows, he's not related. ag



Courtesy of Dread Beat Records

The Young Nashvillians: David, Paul, Norman, Brad, Jerry, Todd and Jon

THE YOUNG NASHVILLIANS

Jon Shayne, bass-vocals
David Leftkowitz, vocals-percussion
Paul Leftkowitz, vocals-percussion
Jerry Leftkowitz, guitar-vocals
Norman Yamada, keyboards-vocals
Brad Smith, guitar
Todd Wells, drums

I'm glad this is the last band to mention. It's always good to end anything on a happy note, and the Young Nashvillians are the most fun of any of the bands here.

Jon Shayne, home from Harvard for the summer of 1982, was messing around with his friends the Leftkowitzes on some music. Gradually, other friends -- Brad, who had gone to University School on the Peabody campus with Jon; Todd, who was going to Hillsboro High with two of the Leftkowitzes; Norman, who had met Jon at Harvard and had come to Nashville to work on a political campaign; and one Bill Hayes, who soon dropped out of the group -- got involved, and just to justify their noodling around to friends, they held a party/concert at Jon's house. It rained that day, they had to take the show off the front lawn and into the living room, and Jon was left to clean up the mud. Fortunately, his parents weren't home. They had a good time, and set about making a tape for themselves on a 4-track machine in Jon's basement. This tape was made on July 31, 1982, and they made some copies for friends.

One of Jerry's friends was Kevin Gray of the White Animals. This led to the White Animals offering them an opening slot for a gig at Spanky's in August 1982, which they accepted with some nervousness but a lot of alacrity. Since they had played all their songs in the regular set, they couldn't do an encore, but the audience did want one. The Young Nashvillians had stumbled into popularity, and shortly after the show the tape came out as a full-length album, *Metropolitan Summer*, on the Animals' Dread Beat label. This album was amateurish, clumsy but incredibly clever, the work of seven precocious kids (Paul was 15 when the tape was recorded, Todd not much older, and no one was out of college). Songs like "Shoney's Ice," "Jumper Cables," "Vanderbilt-in-France" ("Every summer all the undergrads/Go to France with money

from their dads") and "Green Hills" reflected the more whimsical concerns of the young Nashvillian with wit, and the music was a beautifully wimpy version of garage rock.

The band broke up in the fall when everybody went back to school, but last summer they got together again and played two gigs -- a homey, party-like show at Cantrell's to which many of the YN's parents came, and another opener for the White Animals at the Exit/In, where David fronted a killer version of "Jumper Cables" -- and recorded some songs for an album. Dread Beat was to put this out, but was unable for financial reasons, and eventually the Nashvillians took some initiative and created their own label. The record was thus released as *The Young Nashvillians are Here!* on BNA (that's the initials on luggage tags at the airport). It's a one-sided 12-inch with seven songs on one side and the band's autographs on the other. The one-sided pressing was an economy move -- after all, how much money can you expect a young Nashvillian to have? The album should be at local stores now (as of typesetting it is not), and those who saw the band last summer should be familiar with most of its songs: "Amelia," a love paean to Earhart; "Eagleman," a delightfully silly ode to a comics character; "Thanks but No Thanks"; "I Can't Wait for Wednesday"; "Follow That Girl"; "20/20"; and a new version of "Jumper Cables." Sadly, the summer '83 classics "No Horseplay Here" and "Vanity Fair" are lost. But the album, at least, was recorded in a real studio, Pollyfox, and overseen by engineer John Stoecker, who co-produced with the band. It'll be interesting to see what the boys did with the equipment. Jon related one anecdote: Jerry kept singing a lot of "aahs" for background vocals and the band just laid one track down after another of them. Soon Jerry was known as the Wizard of Aahs.

Jon says the Nashvillians will be working together in the future in some way. When they all graduate from their respective colleges and high schools, it'll be hard to keep up the band, but I hope they make a go of it. The beginnings of the punk/new wave scene were rooted in the assumption that anybody can learn a few chords and play music. Though the Young Nashvillians aren't punks, they exemplify that egalitarian ethic well, Norman being the only member with any real training. For wit, originality and benign youthful energy, the Young Nashvillians have no rivals. Their music is a joy. **pw**

DISCOGRAPHY: *Metropolitan Summer* album (Dread Beat Records)
The Young Nashvillians Are Here! mini-album (BNA Records) □