

Au Courant

The Trend

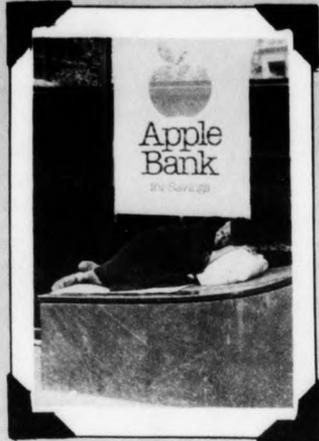
Monday, September 26, 1983



NEW YORK

NEW YORK

Skiff editor Susan Thompson worked last summer on an internship in New York. The following photos and stories give brief glimpses of some of the people she saw while she was there.



Poet-O

In a large paper "I Love New York City" bag on the bench at his side, he carries a pair of Swiss cheese fake wool socks, a sweater made V-necked after years of wear, a cup that doubles as a glass and beggar's pot, a silver bell and a 1960 postcard bearing his own winter image in late-fall Central Park.

The black horned-rims on his forehead are taped not only together, but to his freckled scalp. They are chicken-wired to his ears. It is obvious from their fixed position—not on his eyes—that they are for show. So is the paper in his lap, which he dug out of a Manhattan trash can that morning, and on which he has scrawled the first half of his well-rehearsed poem to entice the writers and artists looking for park material.

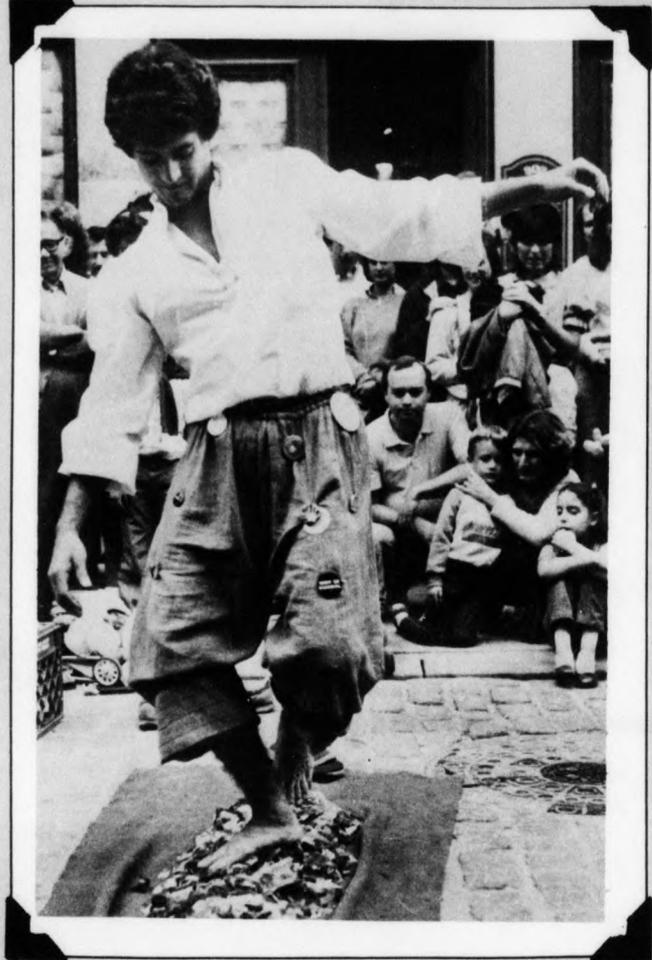
He has done this for years and is considerably better at begging than the majority of the aged and handicapped littering New York streets with outstretched hands.

They, at least, are honest. He pretends to be aspiring to something, and only after the fly is in his web—obligated to his stories, to his lies, and to the inkstains on his fat fingers, does he pull his bell and his cup from the bag, and makes victims of his confidants.

They give. They have to, because they took his stories and listened to his poem. They know that in The City nothing is free, but still resent the image he created of being different.

He says he is famous—knows Yoko Ono—and poses for pictures. He yells his words dramatically from his park bench home, making illiterate prose into poetry by the breaks in his voice.

He calls himself Poet-O.



Photos by Gene Partain

Orchestration

One day this fellow fancied himself a traffic cop, went out and bought some police-type slacks with the telltale taxicab-colored stripe down the sides, and a mugged-protective whistle. Every morning around 9:30, he walks into the street and blows a few choruses of "Stop and Go." He faces up Waverly Street first, blows once . . . pause . . . blows three times long . . . pause . . . blows twice staccato, and then turns to face down University Place to repeat the same sequence . . .

He never yells at determined jaywalkers in what must be the short man's Spanish accent, and they never order him out of the intersection, figuring he deserves to get run down if he isn't even crazy enough to have bought an aluminum badge from the five and dime to legitimize his masquerade.

Native Artist

She was a Midwestern visitor trapped on an island housing millions, all being cooked in 98% cab-exhaust air, like a pot full of miniature shrimp shrinking over an on-high stove.

She was tired of riding buses and being shoved under spotted armpits whose owners looked down at her nonchalantly and said only, "It's nay-tehah."

She wanted to walk down a slice of Fifth Avenue sidewalk, delivered from the hundred others who wanted to be on the same spot at the same moment. She wanted a familiar backyard swimming pool to jump into, but the closest thing to a pool was either her apartment bathtub or the Hudson River, and the nearest backyard was a borough away.

She wanted to hit somebody, but didn't because she didn't want to get hit back.

Then she saw the face, sprayed on an alley wall behind an authentic Italian restaurant. A long red tongue seemed to dangle right off the wall and behind several trashbags into the alley dirt. It was something to strike back at.

In a fit of perversity, she surrendered her upbringing, pulled a bright red lipstick from her purse and made toward the wall to respond violently to the artist.

The tip had just oozed colorfully into the brick when a back door opened and scents of lasagna forewarned her. The owner stood glaring.

"I've never done this before," she offered.

"If you were a man I'd knock you flat," he answered, unimpressed.

She ran—not stopping to cap her makeup, wondering why the others got away with it.

Review

TA LKI N GHE ADS

By Kerry Bouchard



Photo by Bob Green

Madness: "Lord Suggs," lead singer for the British group Madness, pleases the audience at the Bronco Bowl with ska music.

Getting mad

By Susan Shields

Recently transformed into a night of lunacy, the Bronco Bowl hosted, among the Thursday night bowling leagues and small-time pinch hitters, a band that calls itself simply Madness.

Not so simple is ska, the music they play. For those who still think punk is the latest breakfast cereal and Bob Seger is what rock 'n' roll is all about, ska is a cross between reggae and rock that originated in the Mexican music movement of the late 1960s. It's best described as upbeat and one of the purest forms of dance music.

With the release of their first album, *One Step Beyond*, the group became a promising ska band in 1979. Their fourth and latest album, *Madness*, includes their hit "Our House," a song that brought the group recognition in the United States.

Lead singer "Lord Suggs" enthralled the cult-like crowd. His performance was energized and characterized by John Lennon-like charisma. The rest of the seven-piece group brought the ska beat together through keyboards, drums, guitars, a melodious saxophone and a funky trumpet background. The show included the more memorable "Night Boat to China," "One Step Beyond," "Baggy Trousers" and "Embarrassment."

With *Speaking in Tongues* the Talking Heads have jettisoned the solemn anguish and oppressively weird keyboard parts that made their *Remain in Light* material so artsy in places and settled on straightforward Kafkaesque funk. (You remember Kafka—he was the German guy with a father problem who turned himself into a cockroach and wrote novels about how absurd he felt when his sister wasn't around to feed him breakfast.)

Besides simplifying the texture of the music, the Heads have also simplified their rhythm. Quirky syncopations have been dropped in favor of the *bomp bomp Smash! bomp bomp Smash!* beat that makes contemporary rock 'n' roll rhythm sections sound like legions of militaristic Pac Men fornicating on the eve of Armageddon. The riffs from the guitars and synthesizer are as odd as in past efforts, and combined with the simple rhythms give the album a sort of "Motown goes to Neptune" quality that perfectly matches David Byrne's sensibilities as a song writer.

The songs continue with the kinds of themes Byrne dealt with in *Remain in Light* and his collaboration with choreographer Twyla Tharp in *The Catherine Wheel*. "Burning Down the House" is another anthem for people walking the jagged edge of banality and hysteria. (*People on their way to work, baby what did you expect?*)

Gonna burst into flame . . . I'm just an ordinary guy, burning down the house.) "Slippery People" is an existentialist gospel shout with question-answer between the lead vocal and the chorus (*God help us! Help us lose our minds*) and "Swamp" is a parody of disco demonism with Byrne laughing obscenely between choruses.

In "Making Flippy Floppy," David Byrne's lyrics over the funky-out dance rhythms sketch a kind of parody of modern leisure that Kafka might have understood: *We lie on our backs, feet in the air, rest and relaxation, rocket to my brain . . .* "This Must be the Place" is Byrne's ode to conjugal bliss. It features a melody and arrangement beguiling enough to make it on main-stream radio, although a few listeners might find it hard to relate to words like *Love me till my heart stops, love me till I'm dead.*

Some of the songs, like "Moon Rocks," are just plain meaningless. In itself of course, this isn't a problem for pop art—where the goal is to be very simple without being too predictable or banal—but the music isn't always distinctive enough to make up for the fact that the song isn't going anywhere.

"Burning Down the House," "Making Flippy Floppy" and "This Must be the Place" are kinky and fun, and if you liked Motown and are a person who occasionally finds yourself obsessed with the meaning of time, you'll probably like this album.

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26 MON

Iethus 7 a.m., Student Center Room 202.
 Hall Directors 9 a.m., Student Center Room 214.
 Library Consultants noon, Student Center Room 211.
 Assertiveness Training 3 p.m., TCU Counseling Center.
 Panhellenic 3:30 p.m., Student Center Room 218.
 IFC 3:30 p.m., Student Center Room 222.
 Housing 4 p.m., Student Center Room 214.
 BSU 6:15 p.m., Student Center Room 214.
 "A Brahms' Evening" 8 p.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium.
 Rusty Wright: "The Resurrection" 8:30 p.m., Moudy Building Lecture Hall North.

27 TUE

Campus Crusade for Christ 8 a.m., Student Center Ballroom.
 Basic Insurance School 8:30 a.m., Student Center Room 222.
 Housing 9:30 a.m., Student Center Rooms 211, 218.
 Interview Workshop 11 a.m., Student Center Room 218.
 Greek Leaders 3:30 p.m., Student Center Room 207.
 Academic Affairs 4 p.m., Student Center Room 203.
 Parents' Weekend 4 p.m., Student Center Room 202.
 House of Student Representatives 5 p.m., Student Center Room 222.
 Angel Flight 5 p.m., Student Center Room 218.
 Performing Arts 5 p.m., Student Center Room 203.
 International Students 5 p.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Panhellenic 6 p.m., Student Center Room 211.
 Wranglers 6 p.m., Student Center Room 207.
 Homecoming Committee 6:30 p.m., Student Center Room 214.
 Human Sexuality 7 p.m., Student Center Room 218.
 Presbyterian Fellowship 7:30 p.m., Student Center Room 204.

28 WED

Basic Insurance School 8:30 a.m., Student Center Room 222.
 University Relations 11:30 a.m., Student Center Room 218.
 Black Faculty noon, Student Center Room 214.
 ISA noon, Student Center Room 211.
 University Chapel noon, Robert Carr Chapel.
 Admissions 2:30 p.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Community Concerns 4 p.m., Student Center Room 203.
 Forums 4 p.m., Student Center Room 204.
 RHA 4 p.m., Student Center Room 211.
 Canterbury Club 5:30 p.m., Trinity Episcopal Church.
 Homecoming Committee 6 p.m., Student Center Room 202.
 ISA 6 p.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Circle K 6 p.m., Student Center Room 207.
 Iethus 8 p.m., Student Center Room 207.
 Young Life 9 p.m., Student Center Room 205.

29 THUR

Interview Tapes 2 p.m., Student Center Room 218.
 Women's Group Leaders 3 p.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Second Century Seminars 4 p.m., Student Center Room 207.
 Public Relations Committee 4 p.m., Student Center Room 204.
 Arnold Air Society 5 p.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Art Talk by Chris Mohler 7 p.m., Moudy Building Room 132N.
 Church of Christ 7:30 p.m., Student Center Room 202.

30 FRI

Physical Plant 8 a.m., Student Center Room 205.
 Student Life Staff 8:30 a.m., Student Center Room 214.
 Texas Commerce Bank noon, Student Center Room 209.
 50-year Reunion 2 p.m., Student Center Room 202.



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