

if you want to destroy my fanzine...

all of us; volume one, number four... october 7, 1994

DEAR FOLX,

...who says not much is going on in BC land?? Not me, I'll assure you that! I've got loads to say &, as usual, will be jumping from subject to subject, so fasten those safety belts!

First & foremost, I ask you to examine a letter I received about 4 days ago from a Mr Lewis Crow. I reprint his letter here, along with my reply. If any of you have concerns similar to those of Mr Crow's, please let me know, after all, as I always say, this is YOUR fanzine, right? Review his views & my rebuttal & also let me know if I was out of line in my reply. Really. OK, onward... HAPPY 20th ANNIVERSARY to our friends at GOLDMINE (and thank for the bang-up anniversary issue)!!! If all goes well, ALL OF US should be listed in an upcoming issue featuring fanzines of all kinds. Anyone not familiar with GOLDMINE, an indispensable source for music collecting in my humble opinion, please contact me and I'll hook you up with a free sample issue. Also, if you've ever wanted to run an ad in the GOLDMINE classifieds, but haven't, NOW IS THE TIME—they are running a special offer to first-time advertisers of \$1.00 for your first ad run! A great way to let a LOT of people know what you're buying or selling— DO IT NOW!!

I'd like to ask that, from now on, to make it simpler for me, please send any ITEMS WANTED or ITEMS FOR SALE to me on a 3x5 card. To explain our heading (well, HALF of it— see Mr Crow's letter for the other half), I've really picked up on this young new band from LA, WEEZER. You've no doubt heard their "Undone-The Sweater Song" on your local radio station, yes? I recently got to see them twice (one was an acoustic record store set), & got to meet them & they're very nice, down-to-earth boys. I'd highly recommend their self-titled debut album on DGC records, & if you want lyrics or further info, send an SASE to WEEZER:

Los Angeles, CA 90028. Getting back into more traditional music, you very well may want to check out Scotland's BATTLEFIELD BAND. I saw them play about 2 years ago; they're a great blend of acoustic guitar, keyboards, flute, violin, bagpipes, and other traditional acoustic instruments. I got to meet them after the show— they signed my mandolin & we talked about Scotland, BC, Runrig, etc. I would suggest their album NEW SPRING. For it, or just info on the band, write CINDY FUNK: Springfield, OH 45504

You will find enclosed a form I did up to get to Ian Grant, semi-derived from the Country Club's 1994 Questionnaire— I personally would encourage each & every one of you to take the time to complete the form and mail it and let Mr Grant know what you think. To new folk, or forgetful ones, the best times to call me are 10 am to 2 pm weekdays, or even better (and less expensive), 11:30pm to 1 am weeknights, after I get in from work. My number is . I'm pleased to announce the first annual ALL OF US Convention!! It's December 3rd in olde-town Alexandria VA and, as you'll see from the notice inside, I'll be glad to help any who're seriously interested in attending. Check out the very in-depth review of "Without The Aid..." by Ritch Adams in this very issue, & feel free to write Ritch with any comments. And any of you are always welcome to follow his suit and review anything BC-related, so get those pens or pc's going!! If any of you have special Christmas messages, whether they be to the fanzine itself or to other subscribers, send 'em to me and I'll be sure to print 'em up in our next (Christmas) issue.

CORRECTION: sorry about the misinformation about Mark moving to the U.S.— the Country Club denies this flatly. I think I'll stay out of the hot news/gossip circuit from now on, as the last thing I want to do is misinform. My good friend here in MD, Tom Kercheval, has just completed recording his first full-length studio album and I urge you to write him to get a copy — I've heard his old stuff and it definitely has a BC-feel to it. If you're in the Country Club, I hope you read his lighthearted article in the last issue— it was really refreshing to see an American article there. My own band, Misfit Toys, will be going to the studio for the 4th time this November. With the exception of one song where I, unwittingly, knicked a part of Tony's bassline to Porrohman, we don't have any BC-feel at all, but I'd be glad to send you some material, if you'd like. Also in this issue are the lyrics to Angle Park. I feel the lyrics to the Wonderland ep are vastly different from all other BC works, with the possible exception of Balcony. I hope to print more Wonderland ep lyrics in the near future. A few things missing due to space; the **BC shopper** (although I can tell you that Fran Seal has an extra Big Sampler promo to offer, and I'd like to let any of you searching for the Restless Natives movie know that Tom Kercheval has this also; and also no

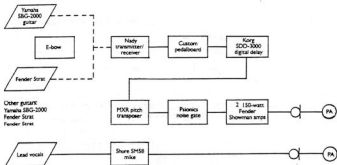
Scandal Sheet this issue, but I promise one next issue! Please welcome our new folk and, as always, stay alive & be nice...



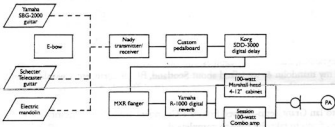
ON STAGE

BIG COUNTRY

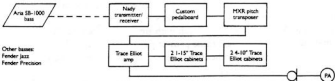
STUART ADAMSON



BRUCE WATSON

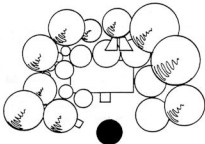


TONY BUTLER



MARK BRZEZICKI

Drums: Pearl
22" bass drum
8" wood snare drum
6 1/2" brass toms
8", 10", 12", 13", 14", 15" toms
4 Occidentals
Cymbals: Paiste
8" bell
kettle
10" 505 splash
11" 403 splash
15" 505 crash
18" 505 crash
14" 2002 crash
20" ride
22" Newe China
Rude China
Raymond China
15" Rude hi-hat



LEWIS CROW

Sep 29, 1994

James D. Birch

Dear James,

Thanks for the copy of ALL OF US. Looks good, with definite potential. I can't promise I'll be subscribing soon, but I'm by no means ruling it out. (It's a money thang....) Only two complaints: 1) microscopic print on p.7; 2) too much fluff--press clippings, photocopied stickers, etc.

My only big concern, which I would like addressed, is how does Country Club, Ian Grant, etc., feel about a branch newsletter (an unauthorized one, at that)? I have no desire to undermine, dilute, or diminish the goals of the official fan club. (Okay, I'm of Scottish heritage--we have the right to be stubborn, cranky, and opinionated.)

I'm sorry I did not get around to responding to your first mailing to me several months ago, so let me give you some bio info now. I'm 31, I've been collecting BC since early 1984, my favorite album is "Steeltown," favorite single is "Fields of Fire," and I saw them in concert for the first time last December in Dallas. I'm open to a bit of correspondence (it's a time thang)--preference given to anyone who can contact me via the Internet (my address: crow@library.uta.edu)

Please give me some information about this "compilation CD"--what's on it, what's its source, how good is the sound, etc. If the sound is really good and I like the track list, I may order one.

Besides "Safety Net," do you know of any other currently available, er, "live albums," either on CD or vinyl, and a place to get them from? Last question--is there any place on God's beautiful earth where I might be able to find that infamous Japanese boxed set? (Somedays I'd be willing to wash a person's car with a toothbrush if they'd sell me one. Some days....)

Stay alive,

Lewis Crow

Lewis Crow

october 5 1994

Dear Mr Crow,

I received your letter about 3 days ago. In the time since then, I've been preoccupied by the sentiments therein; going from upset, to insulted, to mad, & back to upset again... I want to thoroughly reply to you with no misunderstandings. I've read your letter several times over to ensure that I'm not reading too much into it. I'm reprinting your letter in my fanzine (along with this reply) not to embarrass either of us, but to get your views out in the open, so that if any of my subscribers have similar concerns, perhaps they will now feel prompted to let me know.

To begin, let's address your 2 complaints: 1) "microscopic print on pg 7"(of issue #3)- I myself have no trouble whatsoever reading this, and I have yet to hear a single other complaint regarding this, and also it was necessary to fit that much info on the page.

2) "too much fluff-press clippings, photocopied stickers, etc"- this "fluff" as you call it may be old hat to you, but to those of my subscribers who aren't fortunate enough to have the discography you & I have, the label from the Steeltown LP is new to them. And you might be surprised to know that I have subscribers that have never seen any of the "press clippings" I've printed! To these folk, this is all new stuff and it's nice to see. I guess it's a case of "you can't please all of the people all of the time..."

Now let's get to the meat of the issue- your "big concern" regarding the general "goals" here... First, let me ask if you're aware of INWARDS, WE SAVE NO SOULS, or PINK MARSHMALLOW MOON??? These also are unauthorized fanzines that either exist now or have existed. I can't speak for the first 2 (I'm pretty unfamiliar), but I do know that neither PMM nor my ALL OF US have any enmity toward the COUNTRY CLUB, nor do we by any means wish to "undermine, dilute, or diminish" their goals. Let me, to reinforce my point, quote myself from the "dear folk" letter of issue #0 (which you would have received had you responded to my initial flyer, explaining implicitly my goals):

" I'm not trying to compete with the Country Club- they are great & they are authorized, & they are an invaluable service."

I am simply, as an American fan of BIG COUNTRY, trying to supplement the COUNTRY CLUB- to give folk here in the States something a little less alienating; it's by U.S. fans & for U.S. fans. Again, not to put down the COUNTRY CLUB, but the mailouts are, if not few, far between. But my main goal is to UNITE U.S. BIG COUNTRY FANS- either to introduce them to other fans here in the States they can correspond with, or to help them find BIG COUNTRY stuff they've had trouble finding. To Back this up (and name names!), ask Stan Lenkiewicz where he got his Steeltown Colour Book... ask Art Love where he got his copy of the U.K. gatefold issue of Steeltown... ask loads of folk where they got their copies of the DAT-quality show (from 11-6-93 in Minneapolis)... or maybe ask any of my subscribers who've gotten videos from Tom Kercheval where they learned of him and his great videos. There have been many letters, Mr Crow, thanking me for this "service" & telling me to "keep up the good work". I'm a BIG COUNTRY fan of eleven years (since the ripe old age of 12)- I started out with a few 12-inch records and the Crossing LP. Due to various circumstances- living in record store void areas, being a "late bloomer" & missing the good stuff, etc- some folk don't have as much as you or I, and they might appreciate ALL OF US a little more... that's who I'm here for, as well as the die-hards, who might like to correspond with other BIG COUNTRY fans they find listed in the pages of ALL OF US. Please consider this...

Forgive my cynicism, sir, but BIG COUNTRY do have lawyers, so they probably won't need your "watchdog" services just as yet. They're big boys- they know about the unauthorized fanzines out there. Please don't think for a second that they're ignorant to it all. If you still think, thru ALL OF US, that I am undermining... or diluting... or diminishing the goals of the COUNTRY CLUB, then no, ALLOF US is not for you. If you feel that in uniting U.S. BIG COUNTRY fans & helping them feel a bit less alienated & helping them find some BIG COUNTRY stuff they didn't have is detrimental to the priorities of the band and their official fan club, do not subscribe to ALL OF US; because these are the goals behind ALL OF US.

In closing, I apologize if I have been rude or abrasive, but your letter represented to me the "worst-case scenario" of a response- one I never intended to get, and it did "ruffle my feathers", so to speak... oh, and I will not even begin to address your hypocrisy in asking me where you can buy bootlegs ("er, live albums"), and giving proceeds to bootleggers, when you're so all-fired concerned about the band & their goals!!! I deal almost entirely on a NON-PROFIT level. The compilation cd is available to subscribers only and it also involves NO PROFIT. After giving this rebuttal very careful consideration, I would be interested to know what your opinion is...

SINCERELY,

Jim D. Birch

Assessing "Without the Aid of a Safety Net"
as if he actually paid for it himself (which he did).
by Ritch Adams

"Without the Aid of a Safety Net," Big Country's first sanctioned live release, is a find record. But that isn't saying much. Fans like us expect nothing less, and not simply because the band means a great deal to all of us. While synthesized new wave concoctions like the Human League were dabbling in the studio, Big Country was making their bread and butter on the circuit. They never shied away from playing what Stuart Adamson once called "the toilets of Britain." They proclaimed their work ethic on their first seven-inch: "Heave, lads, an audience awaits... Heave, lads, curtains clear the debt." How many other bands sing on their very first record about tattered nets, empty bowls and melted butter? Theirs was, and in some way remains, the music of calluses and honest labor, of "years of sweat and tears that never left a trace." A decade later and they're still faithfully bringing the harvest home, still clearing their sizable debts by heaving at curtains.

Unlike studio albums or even greatest hits packages (the poor cousin of the concert recording), the live release must answer important questions. First and foremost, why? Why release a live record in the first place? What purpose does it serve? More often than not, live LPs are irrelevant. Witness the three such releases by Rush, or the four sides of Bob Dylan at the Budakon, or Genesis' "Three Sides Live." These recordings can, however, be crucial, and even defining. "Live at Leeds," still the best concert record available, showed that after playing opera houses the world over, The Who packed a sonic wallop. Kiss ruled the 70's—for better or worse—only because of "Alive," their 1975 record that redeemed, in a manner of speaking, three ignored LP's. (We've since been treated to "Alive II" and Alive III," proving that for this band nothing succeeds like excess.) So important was performance to Hüsker Dü that their first release, the bluejean of "Land Speed Record," was live. On the other hand, a redoubtable outfit live, Fogazi considers the live album anathema; for them, the immediacy of the performance must be witnessed. For years now, Stuart has fielded questions about

a live album. Yet the band has issued live tidbits all along, and bootlegs are so easily available as to seem ubiquitous. Anyone with a passing familiarity with the band's b-sides has heard not merely live originals (i.e. "Winter Sky"), but some fine covers, "Honky Tonk Woman" and "Tracks of My Tears" for instance. Does a fan of a band like the Grateful Dead have room for a live album?

Compounding these questions is the odd moment of this release in Big Country's career. Not only is "Safety Net" on the market twelve years after the band formed, it sits in store bins along side three (at last count) greatest hits collections. Why now? This question gets at the album's true importance. Let us remember that 1993 was for the band a turning point: it saw a new, self-produced record; the return Mark Brzezicki; and an extensive North American tour. "Safety Net" is the band's opportunity to sift through its back catalog and decide what's important, to discover what in their past remains pertinent, and what might be relevant to their future. The live album takes them, as Stuart might say, to the bridge.

Inevitably there will be bumps along the way, awkward moments like looking at pictures of your haircut in a high school yearbook. And few people change haircuts like Stuart Adamson, though it is to his credit that each one has seemed appropriate. "Safety Net" proves this fact, although it also proves that these various styles can make for a rough mix. The disc begins, in fact, with a moment of desperate intentions. After Stuart welcomes the Barrowlands crowd to "the Big Country extravaganza," the band rolls into a modest, low-pitched version of "Harvest Home." The resulting juxtaposition is revealing. With its catalog-style, repeating verses, the song bespeaks a sense of tradition and an attentiveness to the small things that, woven together, create the fabric of experience. "Harvest Home" achieves a kind of grandeur through its instance that local details express matters transcendent: say, the creaking of abandoned alters has something to with the departure of King Canute and all the "heroes

honest." This would seem unpretentious material for an "extravaganza." Of course, Stuart is being facetious, but not entirely so. For Big Country achieves an extravagant sound, their shows, as many of us will attest, are panoramic; by managing to encompass all our lives, they give the impression of being larger than life. Competing sentiments have characterized every Big Country release, and "Safety Net" is no exception. The music simultaneously constructs a homely setting and makes the grand gesture. It's modern folk music that begs to be played in the modern arena. It's this combination of faith and ambition—qualities not easily reconciled—that has made Big Country such a riddle to rock critics. And it's that combination that makes "Safety Net" more a puzzle than a tapestry.

"Harvest Home" is an excellent choice for the first number not simply because it was the band's first single, but because more than any of their other songs (even "In a Big Country" with its insistence that the pain and truth do, in fact, matter) it asserts their philosophy: there will be just desserts, "just as you sow you shall reap," the landlord's carriage may shine but he, too, will get his. Here as in each of the acoustic songs, Stuart manages to soften his voice perfectly. Tony's bass is fat and insistent. The contracted arrangement befits the song's simple sentiments.

The transition to "Peace in Our Time" seems natural. But this impression is deceiving. For in moving from one song to the other the band reenacts a crucial transition in their philosophical outlook, a transition that helped create the slick sound of the ill-fated fourth album. In "PIOT" the personal resolve of the early material gives way to political posturing. Where before Stuart advised us to "pull everything inward" despite the outer darkness, now he advocates "a stronger voice, a stronger law," as if policy making can take the place of "talk about justice and freedom and pain." The acoustic version of "Peace" achieves power and immediacy by stripping away layers of effects; yet its abstract sentiments can't match the local color and specificity of a song like "In this Place" where, in

spite of the black-suited bully's shopping mall (for which a corporation doubtless received a policy-driven tax incentive, in the interests of economic development and the rest), the singer can still smell the roses.

The movements from "Harvest" to "Peace" brings to mind another brief moment in "Safety Net" whose significance belies its brevity. When during the course of "Just a Shadow" Stuart comes to the line "While we lived in Eldorado/Did we find the gold we should? he interjects "fat chance." He can't help himself. This popping off isn't bitterness. Rather, it's the latest stage in the evolution of a certain outlook prevalent in Big Country's material, one we might term the realization of uselessness. We see it in "The Storm," where the singer understands that he cannot return "to the time of hope" where he was born; we see it also in "One Great Thing," where the singer doubts the efficacy of his song in a world where "too many songs are sung;" and again in "River of Hope," where the search of the intrepid singer is doomed because "some damn fool's gonna lose" the eponymous river. The singer is sustained in these songs by the very fact of his vain exertions. Because the pain and the truth are what really mattered, the acts themselves had value. There is strength in this belief, though such meager sustenance likely will produce its share of frustrations. For Big Country, this belief no longer may suffice. Perhaps dreaming is all that's left, and our only hope is to act like the life we have is the life we want. This view, too, has potential, but it needs to be fleshed out—and it's not clear that Stuart has abandoned pain and truth.

In the combination of "Shadow" and "13 Valleys," led by Bruce's insistent mandolin, the band achieves lyricism. Big Country has made this end-of-song charge something of a trademark since "Into the Fire," and they continue the tradition here in "Long Way Home," "IABC" and "Lost Patrol." Too often employed, however, and explosive energy seems mannerism.

"The Storm" is the song on "Safety Net" which approaches most closely the ideal of a communal chant. Mark's propulsive bongos, coupled with Bruce and Stuart's determined strumming, creates the impression of an historical ditty played before

members of an extended family. With its intimations of struggle and the looming presence of the elements, "The Storm" has an Homeric quality of history enacted through narration.

With "Chance" we come to the question of song selection. As it's played here, just perceptively up tempo, the song is quite good; indeed, when it's well performed, "Chance" allows Mark and Tony to recreate the rhythmic textures they achieved on songs such as Pete Townsend's "Slit Skirts," from his 1982 "Chinese Eyes" album. On this score, the most neglected aspect of "The Crossing" is the rhythmic interplay of Bruce's and Stuart's guitars. "In a Big Country" is compelling musically because the ascending guitar line echoes and then reverses Mark's percussive introduction.

Yet as good as "Chance" is on this occasion, it's a questionable choice. Like "In a Big Country," "Look Away," "Lost Patrol," and "Wonderland," "Chance" regularly has been resurrected, and several live versions have appeared as b-sides. Given the familiarity of these songs, it's to the band's credit that on "Safety Net" they sound as good as they do. But each suffers a bit: the album's crystalline production robs the fire from "Look Away," making it seem too precisely executed, even fastidious; "IABC," while passable, hasn't been the same since Stuart changed to ESP guitars (resist the urge to pipe if you must, but lately this song has resembled a version of itself crossed with "Save Me"); "Lost Patrol" is slow to build the momentum needed to propel the band into the raucous jam that draws down the curtain. And aside from simply not sounding fresh, "Wonderland" adds a painful note of irony. Although Stuart introduces the song as a "trip down memory lane," it is merely one of six—almost half of the record—drawn from the first year-and-a-half of the band's career. Furthermore, "Wonderland" is a powerful song precisely because it renounces this sort of nostalgia. The innocence within ourselves, it suggests, can piece together shattered pride. It should also be noted that acoustic versions of "Peace in Our Time" and "13 Valleys" have appeared as b-sides. "Ships," too, strikes a dubious note. A power-ballad that sounds too much like "Slip Slidin' Away," the song belongs in an "extravaganza" where kids wave

their lighters, as they in fact did at the band's First Avenue show in Minneapolis last November. Neither the concept of individuals as ships, nor the matching his/her verses (see "Shadow" and "13 Valleys") is new to Big Country, all of which makes "Ships" an unusual choice for the band's first live album.

Of course, this is not entirely their fault. Without the aid of executives at Compulsion records, we might have a very different live album. It's rumored that there was enough good acoustic material for a two CD set; what a treat that might have been. Yet even if we are mindful that it is a record company's mission to sell records, aspects of "Safety Net" remain hard to explain. Coming as it does rather late in Big Country's career, this record probably won't cause an explosion of fan interest, much as we might hope otherwise. Live albums simply do not evoke this kind of reaction; they confirm, they substantiate, but for the established band they don't necessarily extend or revive.

As fans of the band, we must be allowed our wishful thinking. What if, say, "Alone" (which appears on the live video of the Hogmanay show) replaced "Ships"? Stuart's mysterious guitar meander that introduced the song on the North American tour would have been the perfect match for the solos on "Wonderland" and the interlude near the end of "IABC." Not to mention the heartening effect of the lines, "I was the first across the water/Last upon the land/I walked out of the silver mine/My pockets full of sand," one of the most trenchant images in "The Buffalo Skinners." Additionally, the song might have contextualized the transition from "Wonderland" to "Long Way Home," rendering the movement from courage to suspicion more comprehensible.

"Alone" might well have complemented the exceptional moments on "Safety Net." "Ships" to the side, the newest material comes off best. "What Are You Working For" was, on "The Buffalo Skinners," a dynamic, powerful number. With Mark on the drums, it becomes essential. Where Simon Phillips is firm, substantial and even a bit heavy-fisted, Mark is adroit and buoyant. He fills the empty spaces of "Working," moving the song in unexpected directions.

"Long Way Home" doesn't smolder, it blazes from the outset. It's

in this song, as well as in "Kansas" (a number sorely missed on "Safety Net"), that Stuart acknowledges the frustrations of always pulling inward, of feeling the need for internal stability amidst the detritus of conflict and commerce, the "public consumption" of "private hell(s)." The guitar work here is loud and elemental; not simple by any means, but hardy and basic. The quality that makes The Who's "The Seeker" comforting is present here. Like the singer who sorts through Dylan, the Beatles, and Timothy Leary to no avail, Stuart insists that the way home is long, but there remains at least a way, and, for that matter, a home. He is a version of "the desperate man" who will travel four hundred miles on fields of fire. In this view, the cheers at the Barrowlands sent up for "Long Way Home" are quite like the cheers that greeted the words "I will be coming home again" ten years before. There is within the pain of "half a million Nixon babies" a truth that matters.

Interposed between "Working" and "Long Way" is "Safety Net's" most pleasant surprise... "Steeltown" is a remarkable unity. On this song everyone is working, everyone heaving and sweating as Stuart decries the way industrialism removed families from their homes and put "hands of skill" to hazardous duty. Here we approach the essence of Big Country: four skilled musicians making disparate contributions that resolve into reassuring rock. And Stuart's lyric is no less assured than his band's labor. The past is not missed, and it is not bemoaned. Instead, it lives in the singer, endowing him with "the skill of choice" that permits him to walk the slide "that only killers will fear." Tony's bass lurks behind the song heavy and fat. So forceful is his playing, in fact, that it keeps Mark to his task. Rather than recurring to his small cymbals, Mark has time only for the crash cymbal that emphasizes both Stuart's shouting chorus and his own drum rumble.

"Steeltown" is passionate, tough-minded and yet amicable. Where we expect recrimination we find instead compassion and resolve.

Songs like "Steeltown" and "The Storm" insist that the vestiges of history be recognized rather than worshipped. Further, the manner of their performance implies that this recognition requires some effort on the listener's part. The band's vaunted connection with its audience, then, is an insistence upon a common endeavor. Lately, Stuart has been saying that we all risk being trampled, whether by "dollar bombers," bucolic science labs, "black-suited bullies," or the isolation of our own "tiny little worlds." If we look hard enough, or perhaps if we listen closely, we will perceive that it's possible to walk at peace beneath the feet of "giant men." "Without the Aid of a Safety Net" testifies that Big Country's "hands of skill" are still up to the task. Let's hope that their spirit doesn't soon retreat.

Peanuts



WONDER BOYS

Big Country release their fifth single this week.

Produced by Steve Lillywhite who has worked with U2 and Simple Minds, "Wonderland" was written by the band.

The B-side is "Giant", and apparently the 12" version contains an "extravagantly extended version" of the A-side.

On January 21 the band are interviewed by Paul Gambaccini on Channel 4's *The Other Side Of The Tracks*.



Peanuts



BIG COUNTRY

One Great Thing (Mercury)

THE only obstacle left now in Big Country's world-domination plan is how on earth they are going to shake off their increasingly dull image, a reputation not helped by their recent Knebworth appearance or Sir Stuart's predilection for dressing à la Coco the clown. The best way back will be to release more stuff like "One Great Thing", a vast improvement on "Teacher" and less hysterical than a lot of "The Seer". Big Country are at their best when they leave a bit of room to breathe between the guitars and "One Great Thing", particularly the Boston mix, suggests a welcome return to form for the kings of tartan. Talking of which...

Angle Park

lyrics by S. Adamson & B. Watson

the autumn howled around the heads
that hung so slack with lips so red
the blooms had withered, leaves were shed
tongues stuck in jaws, sad clowns parade
the crushing whine began its call
and pointed fingers at us all

in angle park, the lights are dimmed
the statues grin
in angle park
the fountains crack

the beaten cry behind white dress
the clowns stuck fast upon the mesh
while mothers wring their hands of tears
the spelling books are in arrears
the evil genius hugs his wife
as tiles ring with fear of life
the window fills with beating hearts
beat on blindly
beat it all

LOWELL'S CORNER...

...well, folk, just about anyone who knows me at all knows lowell austin, jr. also- he's just about the biggest BC fan you could ever meet and also probably the nicest person you could ever hope to come across in your day-to-day life. Lowell answered an ad I put in Goldmine (nearly 3 years ago) to help get up with other BC fans. Since then, we've been the best o' pals and we still write and send each other tapes and compare BC notes along with opinions on politics, world events, and Alabama sports. So it seems only fitting that I give lowell a little mention here... if you don't already know the wonder that is lowell austin, jr., then by all means drop him a line today- you'll be glad you did!

LOWELL'S SURVEY RESULTS:

first memory: mtv video '83

Favo track on "skinners": the 1 I love o' PMM

Favo album: steeltown (way above the others)

Favo single: wonderland (live in moscow '88)

Favo b-side: all of us, restless natives, winter sky

Favo album design: the crossing, wonderland

rearest item(s): mint radio shows, some singles

T-SHIRT DISSAPPOINTMENT!

due to serious lack of interest, no t-shirts will be made at this time... to those who sent their \$\$, I thank you very much for helping w/ the attempt, & if you have not already received your refund, it's on the way. Once again, I will take this opportunity to remind you folk that we need to stick together- if you say you want something but then do not back it up, I simply can't provide. Let's all work together to make things happen w/ all of us!



BIG COUNTRY are preparing for the release of their second album, "Steel Town", on October 18.

And they've announced an extra London date in the December section of their British tour.

The album, out on Mercury and produced by Steve Lillywhite, features 10 new songs including the current hit single, "East Of Eden". It was recorded in Sweden and London.

The new tour date is at Wembley Arena on December 13. Tickets for that show, and for the other Wembley concert on December 14, are £7 and £5 by post from Big Country Box Office, PO Box 77, London SW4 9LH.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Big Country Box Office, and a 30p booking fee should be added to the ticket price. Fans should specify which of the two dates they want tickets for.

the first annual ALL OF US convention
hey folk, that's right- the very first all of us convention will be tentatively (see above guilt trip) held December 3rd in old-town Alexandria, Virginia on the same day as the absolutely spellbinding annual Scottish Christmas Walk!

It's gonna be a fine time full of all things Scottish (bagpipe bands, corries, heather... whiskey?), and when you add to that a pack of overzealous Big Country fans and some decent record stores right in town, it all adds up to a fine, fine day to remember for years to come! I've been going to the Scottish Christmas Walk for about 7 or 8 years now and I look forward to it each year! Now, obviously some folk are not gonna make it, but I would encourage any of you who live in driving distance of VA to please try to come out and have a great time w/ us. Anyone interested can just call or write me for details- I will do everything I possibly can to help you out if you sincerely want to attend. We can get together for a great team, talking BC over some scotch and maybe even a little BC hotness involving some of us fans and a few unwitting musical instruments!!!

SHIP TO :

all of us -
the unauthorized u.s.
big country fan network



ANOTHER SKID OUT



STUART ADAMSON

ANOTHER chapter in the turbulent history of The Skids was added a couple of weeks back with the departure of founder member Stuart Adamson. This leaves just Stuart Russell Webb and Richard Jobson to continue as The Skids who now seem likely to become a recording name rather than a live band.

The parting seems to have been an amicable affair with Adamson going out of his way to be nice to Jobson and Webb in the record company press release. The root of the problem appears to have been an increasing lack of

communication within the band due to its various members living and growing apart in Scotland and in London. Adamson, who composed the band's music, felt that it was definitely time for a break.

"I didn't think the band was a force to be reckoned with on any level at all really," he concluded from his Dunfermline home where he is currently laying down demos on a four-track recorder.

Working on his own will be nothing new to Adamson. He wrote all three songs on The Skids' initial "Charles" EP as well as contributing solo compositions to their first two albums, though what he's working on now will be new rather than stockpiled material. Whether or not others will become involved he feels it's too early to say.

A talented individual in many ways - as a writer, an illustrator and vocalist as well as a guitarist - the underemotive Adamson has always been overshadowed by the publicity garnered by Jobson. What he eventually comes up with should be well worth hearing.

IAN CRANNA