

NEW YORK:

TOWNES VAN ZANDT—HOME ON THE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES

Some say that Texas is its own best of all possible worlds and an insular state of mind. Stereotypes of cowboy hats, boots and oilwells and a vague collection of a Texas friend who once told me how hurt he was when I called him a southerner. "Texas is the WAYest," he lectured me, as if direction speaks for itself.

Townes Van Zandt is from Texas, and his fifth LP is out on Poppy, "High, Low And In Between." Although his roots are western (and to a large degree, this is what makes his music unique in a sea of nowhere acoustic acts), he really doesn't live anywhere these days. Just kind of travels around from gig to gig. Last year, the college coffee house circuit kept him going. This year he's hoping for larger-halled concerts. And when a label has stuck with you for five LPs and your following grows not by miles, but by inches and feet, slowly and methodically, it can indeed happen. Not in a burst of James Taylor, but in his own way and time.

The 11 originals on his new album run the gamut from very firm-foundation-oriented story songs to the middle ground of mild-mannered imagery and from thence to the realm of the omnipotent seer who both makes no sense and all the sense in the world simultaneously. "Highway Kind" represents the former, a tale of the man on the move:

"Time among the pines, it feels like breath of air.
Usually, I just walk these streets and tell myself to care.
And sometimes I believe me, and sometimes I don't hear.
Sometimes the shape I'm in won't let me go."

His middle-ground can best be illustrated in some lyrical snatches from "To Live Is To Fly." These are meaningful statements compounded by imagery which is so visually stimulating, that we tend to forget its original intent and simply enjoy the view:

"Days up and down they come,
Like rain on a conga drum . . .
Well, I'll miss the system here,
The bottom's low and the trouble's clear."

And for those who like their lyrics totally Dylanesque, there's the entire lyrical maze of "Mr. Gold & Mr. Mud" which begins:

"Well, the wicked king of clubs awoke and it was to his queen he turned.
His lips were laughing as they spoke, his eyes like bullets burned.
'The sun's upon a gamblin' day,' the queen smiled low and blissfully.
'Let's make some wretched fool to pay!' 'Plain it was!' she did agree."

Shades of "Frankie Lee & Judas Priest!"

We summon the vision of Dylan only as an example, not as a mold. Van Zandt has somehow managed to avoid copying the style as well as the form; his musical patterns for his verbal dress are totally unlike anything Dylan has ever done. Townes' inspiration most likely stems from a non-musical source—'cause when you are homeless and on the road, you sure don't get to hear much from the radio to inspire you; and he hasn't taken to toting stereo components on his back.

Van Zandt copes much better than he copies, and this is the sure sign of something significant happening, 'though you might not have heard it yet, Mr. Jones.

r.a.

EAST COAST GIRL OF THE WEEK—

When you come right down to it, we were all Wayne Fontana freaks. And when he and the Mindbenders slipped into "Groovy Kind Of Love," they were singing our song! Well, Carol Bayer Sager's song actually. Carol, our East Coast Girl Of The Week for this issue, composed that classic along with a myriad of popular works recorded by artists such as the Monkees, Neil Sedaka and Leslie Gore. And when the tube's Flying Nun swept across the sky she did so to the songs of Carol, who was composing for Screen Gems at the time. Currently our girl is in the songwriting employ of Metromedia, and "Jennifer," which she penned with Peter Allen, is the current single by Bobby Sherman. Carol's smart. She figured out that the best way to succeed as a songwriter was to start young. Real young. While the rest of us were scuffling about letting our teenage years zip by, Carol had already gotten herself in order. And kept things that way as is the wont of those selected to reign as East Coast Girl Of The Week. And that, my friends, is mindbending.



e.k.

OUT IN THE STREET—New York concert halls are being booked for just about every night during the month of November. Seems that promoters are trying to set a new world's record! If you've been saving your pennies hoping to go to a show, now is the time: Howard Stein presents at the Academy of Music in New York; (Nov. 25), Procol Harum, Yes, and King Crimson; Dec. 1, Alice Cooper and Wet Willie; Dec. 3-4, Humble Pie; Hunter College, Nov. 19, James Gang in for two shows at 7:30 and 10:30. Philharmonic Hall, Nov. 12, Seals & Crofts and Boz Scaggs; Nov. 26, Miles Davis; Dec. 5, Livingston Taylor and Dec. 19, Emmit Rhodes. Gordon Lightfoot at Carnegie Hall for shows on Nov. 11 & 12 followed in by Pink Floyd on Nov. 15. Madison Square Garden will host Emerson, Lake & Palmer and the J. Giles Band on Nov. 25, followed by Rod Stewart and Faces on the 26th. Don't Forget about the return visit from Ten Years After to the Garden on Nov. 18. The Beacon Theatre presents a soul explosion featuring Wilson Pickett

HOLLYWOOD (cont'd from p. 18)

A term at MGM followed for Ray, with the release of the hits album and of "The Other Side of Ray Peterson," a collection of pop standards recorded in Nashville. Next came a contract with Uni, and an unimaginatively-produced album of remakes of some earlier material. And now, for Decca, "Peterson Country."

The album is straight country; produced by Joe Johnson and recorded in Nashville with a nice string section arranged by Bill Walker. Many long-time Peterson fans are bound to argue that it's his best effort since the days at RCA. Ray would probably agree. "I'm really being sincere about this album. My whole life is coming together again since I've moved to Nashville, and I think it shows. I've taken up yoga breathing exercises, and my voice has matured. It's much stronger, and I don't get sore throats like in the old days." His personal appearances, mostly in clubs, consist of sets "... at least 45 minutes long," incorporating songs from all stages of his career. "There are a couple of changes. We've updated 'Fever' into sort of a Santana arrangement. And I do impressions of Little Willie John and Peggy Lee in the number."

Now, at his fourth time out, Ray's chances for the stardom his talent warrents seem stronger than ever.

Todd Everett

IF I'D A SEEN 'EM EARLIER, I'D SAID IT SOONER—All right, you're in the music business or you wouldn't be reading Cash Box. When was the last time you saw a group that (1) started its show on time (2) took only a fifteen-minute intermission between sets (3) had the sound system working beautifully (4) took only between fifteen and thirty seconds between numbers, with no time spent wandering around aimlessly or tuning up incessantly (5) played all their hits and several new numbers; mostly in versions that were short enough to be interesting (6) had a show well-paced enough to be actually building to something (7) took the time and trouble to have interesting stage costumes (8) knew well enough to use good versions of established songs when it really counts at the end of the show and (9) kept ticket prices down to \$5.50 top for the whole affair? All right then, so why are you beefing about Grand Funk? Instead of wondering why they're so damn popular, ask yourself why more supposed "musicians" aren't watching them and learning how to put on a show. And the drum solo wasn't too bad, either—especially the part where he beat on the tom tom with his head.

Our West Coast Chart Department, checking around, came up with the fascinating information that L.A.'s retail giant Tower Records lists as their best-selling single "Loco-Motion," by Little Eva. The record, originally issued on Dimension and #1 in August, 1962, was played over the store p. a. system one afternoon for laughs. Within a few days, the store had sold about 25 copies—compared to 35 of their best-selling "Shaft" during the same period. We asked assistant store manager Willie Rinehard the reason for the sudden burst of sales. "Well," he conjectured, "Carole King's pretty hot right now." Miss King, meanwhile, is in the studio working on another album. Do you think she can be persuaded . . . ?

t.e.

INADVERTENTLY DROPPED from last week's column were a couple of paragraphs containing the title of George Simon's new book under discussion. It is (with apologies to Mr. Simon, New York exec director of NARAS): "Simon Says," billed as "the Sights and Sounds of the Swing Era, 1935-1955" and published by Arlington House.

WEST COAST GIRL OF THE WEEK—

Candy Cabe, known to many as the legendary "Miss Candy" of Capitol Records' publicity festival. Candy was born when Sagittarius was at mid-heaven in the Mile-High City of Denver and has been joyously living up to her heritage ever since. A true child of nature, she cut her teeth on the works of Albert Payson Terhune and Jack Kerouac and attended the University of Colorado, majoring in mah-jongg and the culinary arts.

Finding little challenge in the halls of academia, Candy left the Rockies for the more fulfilling world of show business. (Who can forget her debut film, "Moonlight and Jaundice," which, though narrow-mindedly condemned by the FCC, the FAA and the ILGWU, received Best of Show award at the annual All-Utah film festival?)

Presently, in addition to gracing the eighth floor of the Capitol Tower, Candy can be found at home with her absorbing the unique collection of antique bottecap sculpture. Her favorite food is schav. Her favorite color is mauve. Her hobbies are her own business.



on Nov. 5-6; and Ike and Tina Turner Nov. 27-28.

The Who, also known as Meaty, Beaty, Big & Bouncy continue their already SRO American tour with dates as follows: Nov. 22, University Of Alabama; 23, Memorial Auditorium, Georgia; 25-26, Convention Center, Florida; 28-Mid South Coliseum, Tennessee; 29-30, The Warehouse, New Orleans; Dec. 1, Sam Houston Coliseum, Texas; 2, Memorial Auditorium, Texas; 4-5, The Coliseum, Colorado. Townes Van Zandt to appear live Nov. 9, Connecticut, 10-11, Boston, 15, Baltimore 16, Virginia. Tony Bennett will perform at the J.F.K. Center for Performing Arts in Washington on Nov. 13. Proceeds from the concert will be used by the Center's Educational Fund to provide discount tickets for low income groups for performances at the Opera House. Eddie Fisher set for dates at Latin Casino in Jersey on Nov. 8-18.