

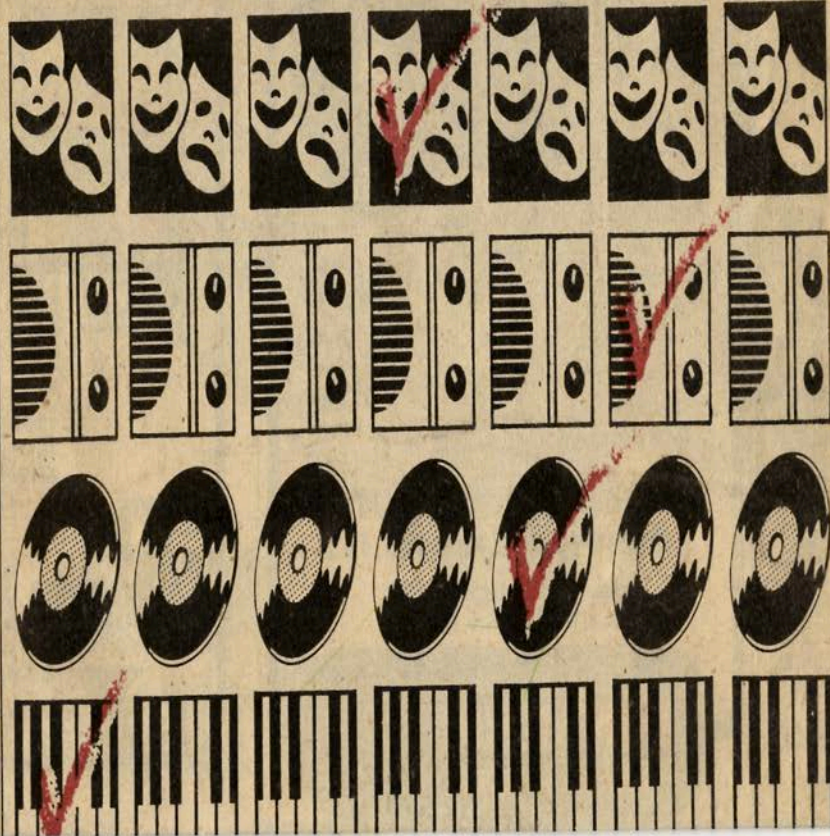
# CALENDAR

## HIT OF THE WEEK

CHEESEBURGER/CAMBRIDGE



**C**heeseburgers are, quite simply, the stuff of life. Will Rogers never met a man he didn't like; we've never sunk into a cheeseburger that hasn't met the daily minimum requirement of easy-to-chew beef product. Admittedly, this covers a wide spectrum - from the euphemistic pleasure of ground



# NONROCK ALBUMS

## SPIN A MIXED PLAY LIST

By Steve Morse

New England is the land of Yankee ingenuity. And nowhere is that ingenuity more apparent than in the determination to put music on vinyl.

It is one thing to make a rock 'n' roll album which in today's marketplace has, theoretically, a chance of selling. But it is quite another proposition to make a non-rock album for a specialized audience. Yet throughout New England there's no shortage of musicians willing to try. What follows is a roundup of reviews of their work.

**Lui Collins** - "Made in New England" (Philo): A candid Connecticut folksinger, Collins merges an intimate folk sound - she plays excellent guitar - with idealistic nature imagery and highly contemporary lyrics. One lovely ballad, "I Know the Time," details her indecision about having a child ("I've always wanted it, my body says it's time/Ah, but I can't make up my mind"). Collins has a powerful voice, at times bubbly, at times thoughtful, but it's always commanding. Occasional concertina and banjo add to the arresting simplicity of the backup tracks.

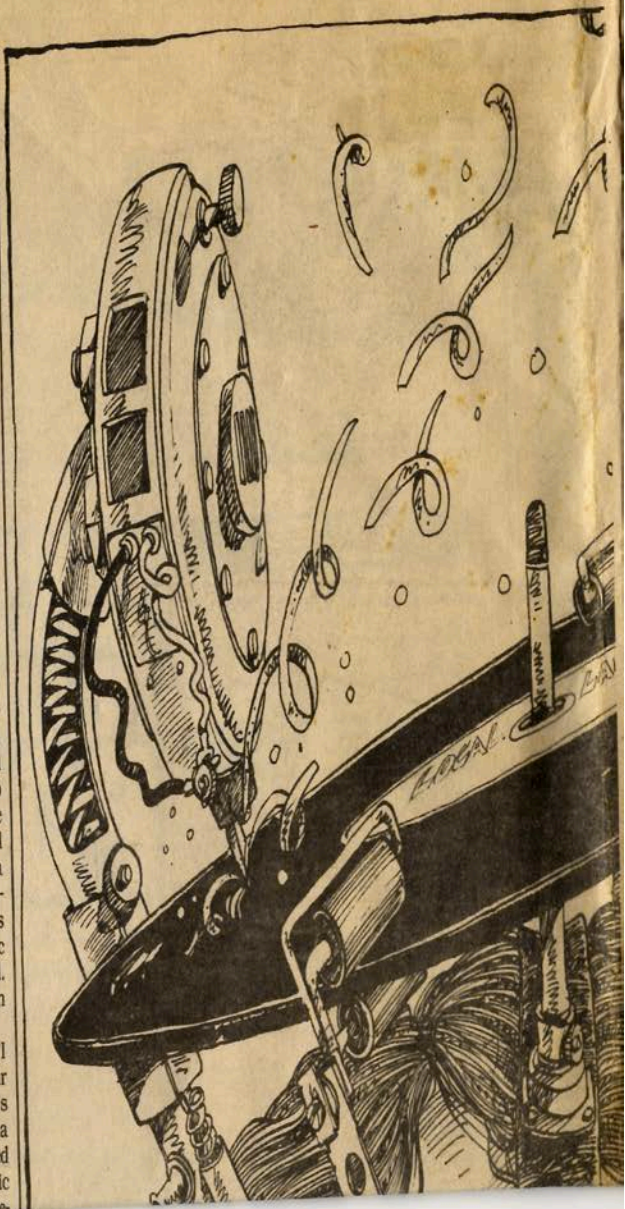
**Little Joe Cook** - "Little Joe Cook-In" (Beantown): Unfortunately, this album is more subdued than you'd expect. Little

here than on the group's premier album, "Ornament of Hope." And, sadly, the new album is also their shortest. The musicianship continues to be adventurous, if a bit austere. Some groups incorporate world instruments - from tablas to Moroccan clay drums - purely for effect, but Do'A does it with integrity and worship.

**Grayson Hugh** - "Grayson Hugh" (One of Nineteen): This pop album, which veers into near-Barry Manilow stickiness at times, bears all the sins of self-indulgent idealism. A Connecticut songwriter, Hugh distinguishes himself as a pianist, but not as a front man. His fault is in his pedestrian romantic lyrics (For example: "Just when we were loving you went away/Leaving me with nothing or something to say") and dry, overwrought arrangements. For information, write the 19 Recording Studio, South Glastonbury, Conn. 06073.

**Lorraine Lee & Roger Nicholson** - "An Exultation of Dulcimers" (Greenhays): Lorraine Lee lives in Natick and has been influential in the dulcimer revival. She's teamed here with an English dulcimer player, Roger Nicholson, and the two gorgeously assay Carolan harp pieces, traditional music, Morris dance tunes and Elizabethan songs. Singer and dulcimer pioneer Jean Ritchie lends a hand and the result is music of an extremely high, ennobled caliber. Lorraine's husband Rick also stands out on periodic banjo and piano tracks. A fine record. Greenhays is marketed by Flying Fish and distributed by Rounder Records.

**Geoff Muldaur & The Nite Lites** - "I Ain't Drunk" (Hannibal): Geoff Muldaur really gave it a go last year. The Martha's Vineyard resident and brother of Marla got himself a great band, but was stymied by lack of management. That the music



bridge's Cantab Lounge where he's the house singer on weekends, but the electricity of his live shows is only intermittently captured here. He remakes his old hit, "Peanuts," with a slick, modernized disco feel, used on a couple of other cuts as well. There is some lively party music - "Back Up & Whip It" is great, cookin' R&B, and "Mother's Crying Again" showcases his falsetto trademark. But the album sound quality is inconsistent, and so are the performances. Cook lovers, however, will at least be pleased to see him back on vinyl.

**Cunningham and Woods** - "First of Many Second Thoughts" (ESA Records) and "On the Verge" (Trinity Enterprises): These are two different albums from the local folk and comedy duo which plays regularly on Thursday night at O'Reiley's in Waltham and on Friday nights at McMahon's in Brighton. "First of Many Second Thoughts" is breezy, well-done sing-along music from Irish tunes to the Kingston Trio's hit, "Charlie on the MTA." Both Jim Cunningham and Rich Woods also contribute five easy-flowing originals.

Their other album, "On the Verge," appears to have been done by some other group. It leans on the comic side of the duo (how about a song about the first Pope of New Jersey, "Bruno the First"?). The material may go over on the nightclub stage but it's too hammy and ingratiating here.

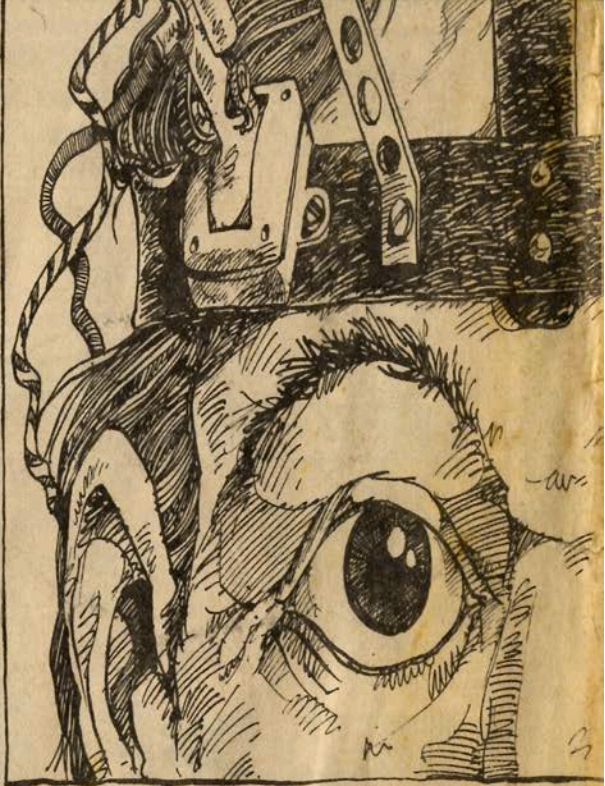
**Do'A** - "Ancient Beauty" (Philo): Do'A is an Arabic-Persian word meaning a call to prayer and meditation, which is what this instrumental fusion of spiritual music - from Japan to Africa - is designed to do. New Hampshire's Randy Armstrong and Ken LaRoche, who are Do'A, are beautifully recorded here at a live concert in Brattleboro, Vt. Armstrong's a sure-fingered virtuoso guitarist but plays less

Steve Morse is a pop music writer.

cord, a wonderful amalgam of big band blues, cryin' blues and boogie woogie. The singing chores are ably handled by Muldaur (who is, however, better at slow blues than his expanded treatment of John Lee Hooker's "Boogie Chillen' II") and by Bostonians Kaz Kazanoff and Sarah Brown - she sings an evocative Woodrow Johnson torch song, "That's How I Feel About You." From the performances, this was clearly a fun record to make. Although the group has since broken up, this is a nice legacy.

**On Wings of Song** - "Many Blessings" (Philo Fretless): This is New Age music from a spiritual community in Ashby. Many songs are warmly delivered chants from the community's 19-member choir, along with folk songs possessing a child-like innocence. The material is from all over the world; there are Shaker, Jewish, Latin, Indian, Sufi and Sanskrit sources, plus a song of love from the yogi Paramahansa Yogananda. A beautiful booklet explaining the songs and giving the sheet music accompanies the album. Definitely for the open-minded believer, however; this music would be naively sugary and sweet to anyone else. For information, write Spring Hill, Box 124, Ashby 01431.

**Rosenshontz** - "Rosenshontz Tickle You" (RS): Billed as songs for children of all ages, this album will have its most immediate impact with real kids, not the adult kind. It is musically well done: Vermonters Gary Rosen and Bill Shontz, who allegedly met over a Ping-Pong game, play with enthusiasm and include all kinds of singalongs (how about "Teddy Bears Picnic" or "Hippopotamus Rock?") and folk novelty numbers. It's not just zany, though. They also address topics close to kids such as fear of the dark, but they



convey an impressive optimism. For information, write RS Records, Box 651, Brattleboro, Vt. 05301.

**Sea Bright** - "Sea Bright" (Sea Bright): Lovers of '60s folk-rock - especially the more mysterious kind from It's a Beautiful Day to Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll - may want to check out this Quincy group. The accent is on atmospheric love songs and songs of the sea; there's even the sound of waves crashing on one song - a definite '60s trick. Some of it is so laid-back as to be soporific, but when Debbie Sturdevant starts to sing you take notice. She has a warm, sublime voice, and on faraway, misty ballads she's entrancing. Mike Cotter's songs

skirt the border between pathos and bathos, but there are enough lovely, sculpted melodies (with filigree guitar touches from Phil Donovan) to make it interesting, particularly Side 2. For information, write Sea Bright, PO Box 707, Quincy 02109.

**Joe Val & the New England Bluegrass Boys** - "Live in Holland" (Strictly Country): For followers of Boston's Joe Val, and admirers of purist bluegrass, this album is a joy. Recorded in a living room performance last winter in Holland,