

New Musical Express

EVERY
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Mr & Mrs JAGGER



see page 25

CLAPTON OR

HENDRIX

Who's been
voted No 1
guitarist?

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musicians poll
FULL RESULTS
ON PAGES 16-18

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see page 4



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see page 22





CAT STEVENS (right) pictured on stage at Montreux, Switzerland recently with his two supporting musicians ALUN DAVIES guitar and LARRY STEEL bass (centre).

THE Yanks were waiting by their thousands for the Cat, when he recently arrived in the New World for his second exploratory expedition. Not with cannon and musket, but adulation and praise.

Without realising it Cat Stevens was to find himself in the Midas role where he is now the favourite candidate for "Superstardom" — American style.

Though I loath the word and many of its superficial implications, it is still very satisfying to observe how Stevens' status has grown. It would seem for him that things have turned out to be lovelier the second time around.

The Cat was purring happily when I met up with him at the Rose D'Or Festival in Montreux, Switzerland, where a couple of

CAT A U.S. SUPERSTAR CANDIDATE

hours previous he had completely devastated the first of his two capacity audiences. Tuning his guitar which paved the way for his own

interpretation of the McGuinness-Flint ditty "When I'm Dead And Gone," he told me of his recent Westward wanderings. "When I first toured America

ROY CARR'S PROFILE ON SANTANA'S

Neil Schon: there was a risk he would out blow Clapton

AT the very impressionable age of 17, Neil Schon has been plucked from obscurity and thrown in at the deep end to share guitar duties with no lesser personage than Carlos Santana. An enviable task which he seems to be handling with naive confidence and amazing reticence.

But this seems to be indicative of his personality. On stage he may be a little monster, but in company he is unassuming to the point of being anonymous. Possessed with all the looks, yet more important the talent of a contemporary guitar-playing hero, he will soon be striking fear into the hearts of all would-be egomaniacs.

When we spoke, Neil was suffering from the chronic after-

math of 'flu and a lung-bustin' cough. Apologising for his state of health he answered my questions in a slow nasal drawl. "Until I joined this band, all I'd been doin' was ten dollars-a-night gigs with local combos in a few small clubs."

Apparently, it wasn't only Santana whose attention had been drawn to Schon's emerging talent, for Eric Clapton had expressed a

wish for him to join Derek and the Dominoes.

"It was like this," Neil began in his lethargic tones. "I had met some of Santana and jammed with them in the studio when Clapton dropped by as he was doing a concert in Berkeley that evening. He asked me if I'd like to come along to the gig that night and play, which I did."

So impressed was our Mr. Clapton

at Neil's command of his instrument that he made positive overtures to him to join the Dominoes on a permanent basis. Then both Eric and Neil had second thoughts.

Neil may have proved to be too much competition for "Slow-hand" while in the other corner Neil felt that he would prefer to just do record sessions with the Dominoes as opposed to hitting the road.

However, Neil did accept an invitation from Carlos to go on the road for a couple of gigs, and by mutual consent he became a permanent sideman.

In answer to my inquiry as to wasn't restricting having two lead guitarists, Neil had this to say. "Once in a while it becomes awkward having the two of us up there blowing, because you don't always get the leads that you feel you wanna play. But in the long run it's usually very exciting playing with Carlos and the entire band."

Though still tender in years, Neil confessed that from his own viewpoint he feels that he has matured considerably since joining the band. "I can tell you this," he concluded before taking the stage, "This whole band and just being on the road is trip... it really is."

It was Santana's organist Gregg Rolie, who had the final word. "If you think Neil is great now at the age of 17, what's he gonna be like when he's 23, eh?" That's food for thought.

ALAN FREEMAN INTRODUCES WELSH SINGER

ALAN FREEMAN dashed from "Pick of the Pops" by helicopter, chartered aircraft and taxi to be on stage at Batley Variety Club 2 1/2 hours later last week to introduce new singer Arwyn Davidson.

The disc jockey was so impressed with his voice on his new Polydor record, "I Am A Simple Man," (see review on page 12), that he considered the hectic schedule worthwhile to see Arwyn perform live.

Obviously Arwyn needs time to develop his personality and stage presence, but he showed that the potential is there to become a big name.

Appearing as second top to Roy Orbison, he held the audience with his powerful voice and varied programme. How many first timers for instance would have attempted "Danny Boy" in a night club without accompaniment?

The young Welshman, making his English cabaret debut, backed by two guitars, piano and drums, even had some sections of the capacity audience calling for more.

He didn't include his new record but presented a well-tryed selection. Notably "You've Lost That Loving Feeling," "Can't Help Falling In Love" and one of Gene Pitney's many hits, "I'm Gonna Be Strong."

— GORDON SAMPSON.

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TAMI LYNN
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AWAY FROM YOU"

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says ROY CARR

"I don't want to get involved with doing three months of one-nighters at a time." His reason

For without fear of over-exposing his talents like so many wouldbe Princes of pop, Cat is now able to pick and choose his gigs.

A less weaker person may have become a stark narrator, disillusioned and at loggerheads with life . . . not so the Cat. His songs may be of love, found and lost, but they are tranquil, almost philosophical. Assessing his own work he said:

"It teaches me and guides me as to how I'm thinking . . . it keeps my mind open."

**THINGS REALLY DO GO
BETTER WITH COKE**

Two years of subversive self-tuition, led Coke to secure a job in a Monterey Hotel with the Carlos Frederico Orchestra. "Around this

From experience, Coke related, "When he's holding auditions, he makes you play cold . . . if you can't keep up, it's 'Next one, please'."

It would appear that Coke is enjoying the best of both worlds. As they say "Things go better with Coke."

**say
EAST
OF
EDEN**

The Push and Rufus Thomas

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