

ASPECTS  
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1982

## Editor's Aspect

## Inside...

There are times in life when I want to talk, when I want to communicate, and then I speak and the utterance is totally meaningless and foolish. I keep talking because I want to verify what I just said, explain myself and make sense. The more I talk the worse it gets, probably because I never should have opened my mouth in the first place. Then I feel even more absurd because I know everyone around me perceives my discomfort with myself and my agony at being *seen*. Then I feel even more miserable because I really don't think it is bad being *seen*, but it's unsettling to be vulnerable and place yourself as open target.

At times like that I still look for some certainty, some undefinable energy to surround me and comfort me in the incredible abyss that already is. I search for answers in everything: books, art, music, or any type of escape I can lay my hands on. I sometimes think I have found an answer, and for a moment I feel secure and comfortable and happy, then something new comes up to haunt me and this ephemeral mood is shattered and displaced. The same books, etc. somehow lose their "special" meanings and refuse to mold themselves into the brand-new "realizations" I have spun myself into. Then I wish to understand how to keep silent, how to forget (or remember), how to listen, how to disappear, how to remain and understand, spontaneously. Somehow in this emotional mess I have come to the conclusion (today) that if you can let yourself really, truly be *seen* to at least someone, and have them still care about you and help you to feel comfortable about what they "see", it can be the most beautiful experience. It is so goddamn rare to find it, hold on to it, it is worth everything. (To be perfectly frank, I'm amazed friends are still around...thank-you)

In any case, we worked hard to do the best we could with *Aspects* this week- I feel very proud about some of the stupendous writing; whatever you do don't miss Hubert's article- it is truly phenomenal.

Debbie Millman

### 4a-5a: Perspectives:

Mr. H.K.D. at his best and Carter presents a perspective on beauty  
The Voices of Albany ring loud and clear

### 6a-7a: Centerfold:

Guess who is going to dinner?  
Boomer dines out in elegance and taste

### 8a-10a: Sound & Vision:

B.O.'B. explores Gabriel's mind in an extra-special, live interview, Damian gets caught in a Roche-trap, Metin Fripp's out, and Schneider double doses with Petty and Fagen

### 12a: Endgame:

WCDB's Top Twenty, Zhe Pudz come to some painful realizations, and of course, Spectrum...

Cover Photograph by Deb



## Word On A Wing

He may live without books – What is knowledge but grieving?  
He may live with hope – what is hope but deceiving?  
He may live without love – what is passion but pining?  
But where is the man that can live without dining

Owen Meredith, Lucile, I

I would gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today.

Wimpy

Joe gets seduced by a girl who works at the Jack-In-The-Box, named Lucille, who gives him an unpronounceable disease...

Central Scrutinizer  
Joe's Garage act I  
Zappa

# Petty Is Cheap

Someone once said that the worst affliction is to have no affliction. Adversity often has the effect of bringing out the best in people. This also applies to musicians. Tom Petty, who in the past experienced a great deal of trouble, seems to fit the above axiom. His latest LP, *Long After Dark*, shows a complacency. Although it's vintage Petty, it's also a bit flat.

## Robert Schneider

Petty, who has been blessed with both hit singles and albums, has not been blessed with peace and quiet. Almost from the beginning of his mass popularity, Tom Petty has had disputes with many factions, from record companies to radio stations. He hasn't battled his loyal fans, though.

The Florida-born Petty came up the hard way. Originally inspired by Elvis' wealth and girls, the Beatles caused him to consider playing the guitar. His high school band eventually led to the Epics (remember them?). What the Epics did was play the seemingly endless Southern bar circuit. By this time, Petty had dropped out of high school, but life on the road showed Petty that there were more things to life than the Epics. After finishing high school in Gainesville, Fla., Petty left for sunny LA. What really got his career off the ground was the success of the single "Breakdown". It didn't achieve popularity until nine months after its release on Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. Petty wisely followed this up with *You're Gonna Get It*. At this time, Petty's fated legal troubles began. His original label, ABC Records, folded. MCA then claimed to have him under contract. Apparently, Petty didn't like that idea, so he sued MCA. The suit took a lot out of Petty, and eventually he signed with MCA subsidiary Backstreet. This didn't signal the end of his record troubles. *Damn The*

*Torpedoes*, Petty's third album, was a big hit. He wanted to match its success with *Hard Promises*. Petty became incensed when he learned that the album was going to list for the outrageous price of \$9.98. He urged his fans to protest the record company. He won his battle, and *Hard Promises* listed for \$8.98.

Petty is a cynical, self-deprecating man. Even now, with four well-received albums



behind him, he still fears failure. He once described his own music in unprintable terms. This insulted a large number of his fans, and he withdrew the remark. He is generally seen as a nice guy, and for a good reason. A radio station in Chicago bought all the seats for a show, and gave out free tickets. Even this incensed some, and their anger angered Petty, who saw nothing wrong with this gesture. It's examples like that that makes it easy to see

why so many have good feelings about Tom Petty. While the new album won't hurt those feelings, it won't help them either.

*Long After Dark* can best be described by the middle two words in the opening cut. "A One Story Town" is a competent, standard song. Bassist Howie Epstein, who replaced Ron Blair, immediately makes his presence known. Petty outdoes himself on vocals, with his nasal twang working over-

ashes of proven Petty hits. The better moments are found when other artists are called upon for inspiration. For example, "Finding Out" really moves along, aided by a borrowed chord succession that's found in the Kinks' "Jukebox Music". The style of that classic is barely noticed, but it is there and does a great deal for that tune. Without it, "Finding Out" would be just another song. Alas, that dubious distinction applies to many of the songs here.

Tom Petty's vocals always provide a song with a unique sound. He can range from a nasal, almost sarcastic tone to a gut-wrenching growl. He uses this wide variation on *Long After Dark*. "We Stand a Chance" has Petty trying to replicate his hit "Women In Love", only this time with more hope in his voice. The double-tracking of his voice is found all over the album, and it lends a richness that helps any song along.

Petty and Jimmy Iovine produced *Long After Dark*, and for the most part, they achieved a good balance between vocals and background music. On some tracks, Petty takes a back seat to his band, but this is rare. Usually it's the other way around, like during "Between Two Worlds". Here, there is plenty of room for Petty and the guitars, but drummer Stan Lynch is given very little room, and his drums are forced to sound flat and plain.

As if it was an attempt to cover up for all the previous blandness, Petty closes *Long After Dark* with "A Wasted Life", which has an unmistakable similarity to Steven Bishop's "On and On". A slow number, it has the effect of relaxing the listener, but that's the whole album's problem. Instead of exciting, the record tends to bore you. Petty should be a little more confident in his abilities and talents. He ought to take a chance, instead of relying on time-tested formulas. Maybe he should start a new battle with his record company.

# Fagen Is Deep

These days, it's a sad but true fact that many solo albums are seen as an embarrassment, both to the solo artist and to the former group. Especially in Rock, the whole is often greater than the sum-of-the-parts, consequently, someone who goes solo often sounds like a small fraction of his former group. However, artists like Pete Townshend, Robert Plant and John Lennon have all had solo albums that sometimes sound better than their original groups. With *The Nightfly*, Donald Fagen makes a strong point for going solo.



## Robert Schneider

Fagen was one-half of Steely Dan. Several months after the release of *Gaucho*, the most recent and most questionable Steely Dan effort, it was announced that the group was splitting up. "Group" is an inappropriate description for Steely Dan. What happened was that Fagen and the other half, Walter Becker, took a vacation from each other. Fagen hasn't ruled out the possibility of working with Becker again, although he doesn't know when.

When the breakup was announced, some Steely Dan fans went into convulsions. Sure, *Gaucho* was too poppy, but a breakup was too extreme. Steely Dan had attracted many fans in its nine year history. Their first album, *Can't Buy a Thrill*, was superb, and it was followed by six others. All of these records were well-received, both by critics and fans. With all this success, why wasn't Steely Dan dubbed a "Supergroup"? Well, Becker and Fagen were at best obnoxious to the press, which can't make too many friends. They didn't our either. It's a good thing, too, for a sound like Steely Dan's would sound awful in a hockey rink. Finally, by and large, Steely Dan fans weren't pushy and loud. They didn't rant that Steely Dan was "the

only band that mattered". There are about five bands with that title, by the way.

What Steely Dan concentrated on was not its image, but its style. Becker and Fagen didn't pester their fans with political issues that other musicians adopted. Instead, they got some of the best studio musicians to give Steely Dan a polished, sensual sound. While apolitical, the lyrics were far from uncontroversial. Topics such as gangland executions, ghetto life, drug trips, and sex fill the songs. Often, the lyrics are so abstract that any interpretation is possible. Usually the lyrics have a sarcastic element running through them.

Musically, Becker and Fagen chose their bands well. People like Jeff Baxter, Rick Derringer and Tom Scott have appeared

on Steely Dan records, the group's style evolved to a very jazzy sound when Ajo was released in 1977. *Gaucho* also showed a great deal of jazz influence, along with a pop sound typified by "Hey Nineteen." Lyrically it was still Steely Dan, but the music strayed too close to AM radio. With *The Nightfly*, Fagen has allowed for pop in a way that won't alienate a Steely Dan fan.

Fagen has described his album as a return to his teens, when he lived in New Jersey. All the songs relate in one way or another to the late Fifties, early Sixties. The opening track, "I.G.Y.," deals with the futuristic optimism that pervaded at the time of the International Geophysical Year. This tune sounds like it could have been recorded for *Gaucho*. The lyrics are more hopeful than an average Steely Dan song. "I.G.Y." displays the naive hopefulness of that time: "A just machine to make big decisions/programmed by fellows with compassion and vision/We'll be clean when their work is done/We'll be eternally free and eternally young." Highlighting the song is Rob Mounsey's synthesizer.

The sole exception to the late fifties attitude is "Green Flower Street." It deals with a more Steely Dan-ish subject: trouble in an inner-city neighborhood. An excellent solo by Rick Derringer adds even more to this funky, jazzy song. Again the synthesizer really moves a song along.

"New Frontier," leading off side two, is an adolescent tale of a party in an underground shelter that was built "in case the Reds decide to push the button down." This is the best song on the album. It combines a strategically placed piano run, by Michael Omartian, with synthesizers and Larry Carlton's guitar. In addition to all of this, there's a harmonica that merges with the guitar, and thus avoids being folksy. In the song, Fagen is courting the affection of a big blonde: "I hear you're mad about Brubeck/I like your eyes—I like him too."

After all the lyrics are done, the song continues, thus letting the musicians take over. They do this well, all building up to a very satisfying ending.

You may be wondering about the title of this album. What is a nightfly? Does it bite? What Fagen is referring to is a type of radio personality that was heard only late at night, and played jazz when most stations were playing doo-wop. Apparently these characters had a big influence on the then-young Fagen. The cover of the album has Fagen behind the microphone of a 50's radio station, with a Sonny Rollins album on the desk.

As Fagen has put it, he wants the album to be more hopeful than a Steely Dan record. This isn't the case with "The Goodbye Look," a tale of an American paradise lost in Cuba, when Castro took over. Featuring a Salsa beat with excellent percussion by Steve Vanderloket, the lyrics aren't too optimistic, while the music is. Fagen realizes the new power is "...arranging a small reception just for me/Behind the casino by the sea." "The Goodbye Look" is like a cross between Steely Dan's "Haitian Divorce" and "Bad Sneakers."

The final cut, "Walk Between Raindrops," sounds as if Frank Sinatra could have recorded it in 1962. It's a cheerful little tune with a big-band sound. Fagen does well not to sound foolish here, and in fact, he sounds as if he's been singing swing-time music all his life.

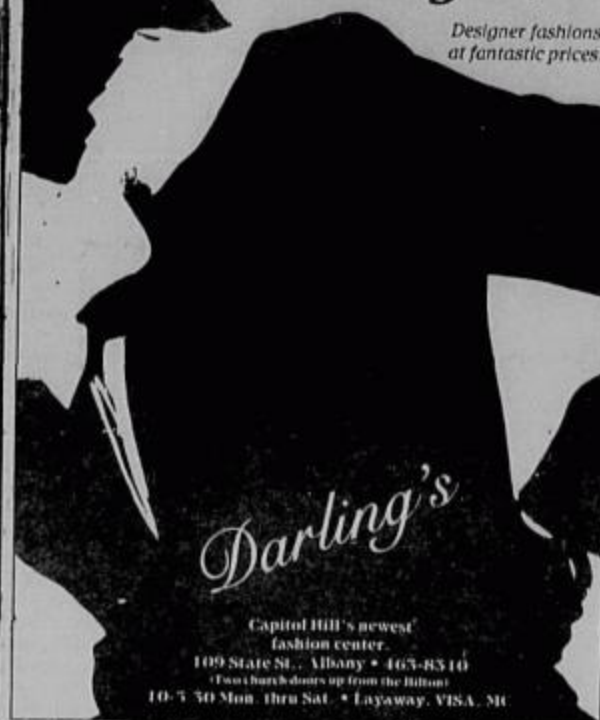
Taken as a whole, *The Nightfly* is a very enjoyable work. It's easy to see that great care was taken in making it. Gary Katz, who often worked with Steely Dan, produced this record, and the lack of sloppiness is a tribute to his talent. As for Steely Dan fans who still long for the return of that duo, take heart. Donald Fagen has matched Steely Dan. Who knows — he may have even surpassed it.

## NUCLEAR STUDY

Essays, poems, fiction, photography and art dealing with the nuclear arms crisis for a special edition of ASPECTS in early spring. Send material to H. Staley, Humanities 346. We would like representation from every discipline — physics, politics, english, business, etc.

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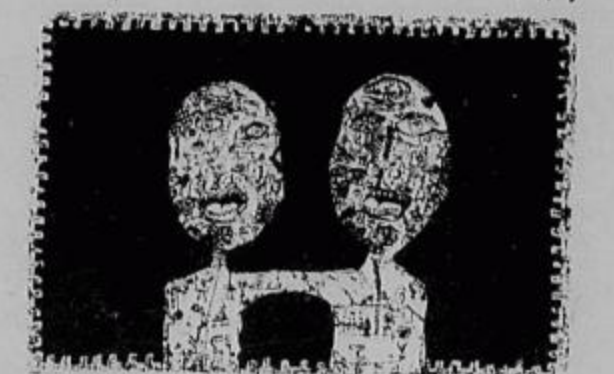
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