

Robyn Hitchcock Takes A Solo Turn

'Moss Elixir' Marks WB Debut Without Egyptians

BY CRAIG ROSEN

LOS ANGELES—After having his back catalog with the Soft Boys and the Egyptians reissued by Ryko and Rhino, respectively, veteran British eccentric Robyn Hitchcock has emerged with his first studio album in four years under a new deal with Warner Bros. Records.



HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock's Warner debut, "Moss Elixir," will be released on CD and cassette Aug. 13. But even before the official release, Warner Bros. will whet the appetites of Hitchcock's loyal following with the July 23 release of the limited-edition, vinyl-only "Mossy Liquor: Outtakes And Prototypes." That album, which will be released in a limited run of 2,500 copies, will feature alternate versions of six of the tracks on "Moss Elixir," as well as six songs not available elsewhere.

"Moss Elixir" also marks Hitchcock's first new album since disbanding his longtime band, the

Egyptians.

Says Hitchcock, "It's really sad for bunches of men over 40 to go around together. Either you do it because you're making millions of dollars or because you are some punk band who has been offered some gigs in Spain. Otherwise, after a certain age, you just don't want to go around with your legs tied together anymore."

So in 1994, Hitchcock began recording "Moss Elixir" as a solo project. "I felt that I wanted to make a record that didn't need a band," he says. "I wanted to put only what was needed on the record. When you have a band, you have to find work for them. If you have a drummer, you can't say, 'I only want drums on three songs out of 12.'"

Free from the constraints of a band and a recording contract, Hitchcock, who was between contracts when he began working on the album, enjoyed a new-found sense of freedom. "I had no deal and no band, and I could do what I wanted as long as I didn't spend too much money."

The low-budget approach suited Hitchcock well. "I never believed that throwing money at recordings has paid off for me," he says. "My success with records has always

been in inverse proportion to the amount of money that is spent on it."

The strategy of inviting a variety of players—including violinist Deni Bonet and saxophonist Ntshuks Bonga—to play on individual songs (published by August 23 Music) worked well.

"I'm an immediate artist," he says. "I don't produce entranced music. I'm not like Bryan Ferry, who I happen to really like. Some people work by building songs up out of layers and layers. We tried a bit of layering with the Egyptians, but my stuff is intimate. It works best when it's just a voice and a couple of guitars."

Other supporting players appearing on the album are onetime Captain Beefheart guitarist Morris Tepper, whose playing Hitchcock

(Continued on next page)



Don't Step On His Shoes. Carl Perkins celebrates his induction into Hollywood, Calif.'s RockWalk in June. Tom Petty introduced Perkins at the ceremony, which was attended by Brian Setzer, producer Pete Anderson, and members of Dash Rip Rock. At the induction, Perkins was presented with the first prototype of a new Gibson Blueshawk guitar, and a donation was made to the Carl Perkins Child Abuse Center. Shown, from left, are Petty, Perkins, chairman of the RockWalk industry advisory committee Ray Scherr, and Setzer.

Low & Sweet Orchestra Mixes Myriad Ingredients On Interscope

BY CHRIS MORRIS

LOS ANGELES—Interscope Records believes that the Low & Sweet Orchestra—whose debut album, "Goodbye To All That," is due Aug. 13—has concocted a recipe for triple-A success that can translate into other formats.

Interscope head of marketing and sales Steve Berman says, "The goal is to lead with triple-A and then see where it develops from there."

The disparate musical ingredients in the L.A.-based band include two seasoned punk-rock veterans, a former member of Celt-punk unit the Pogues, and a pair of rising young film stars who happen to be gifted string players. These oddly matched players produce a sound that is acoustic-based yet abrasive and lyrically hard-nosed.

Singer/guitarist Mike Martt, a vet of such brazen L.A. punk combos as Tex & the Horseheads and Thelouious



THE LOW & SWEET ORCHESTRA

Monster, says the lineup came together two years ago. At that point, former Thelouious Monster and Circle Jerks member Zander Schloss assembled an electric band called Sweet & Low.

Martt recalls, "[Schloss] had Rob Rosa from Menudo singing for him, and he did one show, and it was horrible, so he fired the guy, and he still had a Sweet & Low show coming up at the Alligator Lounge. So we put this together real quick as the Sweet & Low Orchestra, and it just took off

(Continued on next page)

Discover Gets Credit For Helping NARAS; Madacy Prices Heat Up For Summer Set

DISCOVER THE POSSIBILITIES: NARAS and Discover Card will kick off the second Discover Grammy Festival July 12. Participating artists include Sting, Liza Minnelli, B.B. King, Santana, the Spin Doctors, Michael Bolton, John Tesh, Indigo Girls, and Crosby, Stills & Nash. The three-month series encompasses concerts and community outreach programs that include artists conducting master classes. Discover Card will make a donation to the NARAS Foundation, which funds music education programs. Events will take place in New York, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Dallas, Philadelphia, Seattle, Chicago, Miami, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. NARAS started the program in 1993 in eight cities with American Express as the sponsor; Discover Card signed on last year.



by Melinda Newman

SUMMERTIME: Madacy Entertainment Group, best known for flooding the market with its popular budget-line classical titles, has released its first full-priced title. "Sun Splashin'," a 16-track compilation of summer-oriented tunes, came out June 10. The album carries a suggested list price of \$17.98 for CD and \$10.98 for cassette.

According to a Madacy representative, the label decided to make the title full price because of the many cuts on the collection and because it claims that several of the tracks are seldom licensed. "Sun Splashin'" is full priced undoubtedly also to help recoup the tremendous \$3 million advertising campaign for the title. Madacy is running a full slate of ads on Ted Turner-owned stations (including CNN Headline News, WTBS, and TNT) through Aug. 30. The Turner channels were picked because their demographics match the ones Madacy feels will want the compilation and because of their high household penetration.

If the album, which debuts at No. 128 on The Billboard 200 this week, is successful, Madacy will release a similar compilation annually.

LET'S ROCK: International Talent Group head Mike Farrell will join forces with Agency for the Performing Arts as a senior VP Monday (1), bringing to the booking agency a number of acts, including Pink Floyd, Phil Collins, Genesis, Steve Miller, Mike & the Mechanics, and Julian Lennon.

The addition of rock acts expands APA's music roster, which has traditionally leaned jazz and middle of the road. "We've been trying to round out our roster, and this move takes us to a different level in the business," says

Nat Burgess, head of APA's New York operation. "We book Boston, but we were looking to get more into the rock business."

Among the other music acts APA books are John Tesh, Adam Sandler, Wynton Marsalis, Peter Cetera, Art Garfunkel, America, and the Spinners.

The move will result in the closing of ITG's Manhattan, N.Y., office. Burgess would not discuss any financial aspects of the deal, which was negotiated largely by APA partner Harvey Litwin.

THIS AND THAT: "Bordello Of Blood," the soundtrack to the third film under the "Tales From The Crypt" banner, will be released Aug. 6. The Mercury release includes a new title track by

Anthrax, as well as classic tunes from Sweet, Free, Thin Lizzy, and the Scorpions... In a completely unrelated note, American Recordings has signed Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. The Pakistani singer's label debut will be released in September. There are also tentative plans for Khan to record an album of duets. Khan has received mainstream attention in this country for his duets with Eddie Vedder on the "Dead Man Walking" soundtrack.

HighTone Records will release "Interstate City," a live album from Dave Alvin, July 30. Alvin performs songs from his solo career, as well as some from his days with the Blasters... Just in time for its tour with Foreigner and Peter Frampton, REO Speedwagon will release its first album of new material in six years July 9. The album, produced by Greg Ladanyi, will be out on Castle Records.

ON THE ROAD: A number of acts have been tapped as opening acts for Neil Young, including Jewel, Oasis, and the Gin Blossoms... Young himself will be the special guest at the Aug. 23 H.O.R.D.E. concert at Hersheypark in Hershey, Pa. That is the only festival date Young is scheduled to play... Tripping Daisy has landed the opening slot on the Def Leppard tour, which started June 26.

Pantera and White Zombie will share a double bill throughout the summer. The arena/shed tour opened June 28 in Winston-Salem, N.C.... Trance Syndicate act Bedhead, which just released its fourth album for the label, "Beheaded," will be on a club tour through July 19... The Cranberries have canceled their remaining Australian and Southeast Asian tour because of a knee injury sustained by lead singer Dolores O'Riordan. They are still scheduled to kick off their U.S. tour Aug. 1.

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