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ON TOUR

TASTE

STONE THE CROWS
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album:
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TASTE: Rory Gallagher, Richie McCracken and John Wilson – have risen in two years from total obscurity to being one of the biggest draws in Europe. The Irish group have gathered followers from the Marquee to Munich with their electric performances in clubs and festivals, and their two hit albums, "Taste" and "On The Boards". This, their first concert tour as headliners, heralds their arrival as one of the biggest groups in the world.



STONE THE CROWS: Born in Scotland, the five-piece group have already made two American tours and their first album, "Stone The Crows", made the American album charts. Their American commitments have limited their appearances in Britain but already their reputation is such that lead guitarist Les Harvey was asked to work with Aretha Franklin and lead singer Maggie Bell is rated as one of the top ten girl group singers in the world.



JAKE HOLMES: Thirty-one year old Jake from San Francisco lives in Greenwich Village and is one of the most highly rated writers in the United States, with material used notably by the Four Seasons and Frank Sinatra. Apart from his writing, Jake is a talented performer who appears at all the major clubs in the United States. With him in England is one of the best guitarists in America, Ted Irwin, whose talents are sought after by many major American artists including Richie Havens.

JAKE HOLMES

When Jake Holmes arrived in this country in the earlier part of the year, he brought with him a guitar, Teddy Irwin, and a desire "to play some gigs."

In between the mass of interviews, tv and radio — he wrote the lyrics to Sinatra's 'Watertown' album, and as Frankie was coming to town later that month, Jake was a good stepping stone for 'the real facts about Sinatra' — he turned up with Teddy, at the Guildford Civic Hall, Birmingham Town Hall, Revolution, and Marquee London. He received encores at Guildford and Birmingham, swung the blase Revolution crowd his way, and made the Marquee audience laugh a lot. At all of these shows but the Revolution, Jake preceded Taste, and seeing the acceptance he received from their fanatical audiences prompted a couple of normally dormant minds to burst into action.

Taste and Jake Holmes in concert, throughout Britain and Europe. An idea that has since emerged into reality, and with Stone the Crows completing the bill, an idea that has realised a concert tour with three diversified, but compatible forms of music.

Jake Holmes was born in San Francisco thirty-one years ago, and after a little discussed school career, he went into the theatre, making his Off-Broadway debut in 'The Golden Apple' in 1962. Music began a year later, when he developed a comedy, folk singing duo called Allen & Grier, which finished with an album 'I'd Rather Be Rich Than Ethnic'.

After a brief period as Jake of Jim, Jake and Joan, he made solo appearances at the Bitter End, the Cellar Door, Cafe Au-Go-Go, the Fillmore East, the Hungry I, on the Tonight TV show, and at colleges throughout the country.

Jake recorded a couple of albums for another label 'The Above Ground Sound Of Jake Holmes' and 'A Letter To Katherine December', before signing to Polydor a releasing his first LP for the label 'Jake Holmes'.

Jake describes that album as "totally off-the-wall songs . . . just me." And it was these songs that he performed to those appreciative audiences this year, with Teddy Irwin, who arranged the album.

As a songwriter for other people, Jake has composed for the Four Seasons, Woody Herman, Eartha Kitt, and ultimately, Sinatra. And he also supplies the music and lyrics for countless tv commercials in the States.

As a writer, Jake says: "If you can do one thing — like songwriting — that you can do skilfully, you can grow and extend from that. To really have your skill breathe, you have to find yourself — or else you become a formula writer.

"I'm a writer who wants to be appreciated in this world as a writer, rather than as a personality."



STONE THE CROWS

Maggie Bells
← Autography

"Without a doubt one of the biggest names that will emerge this year" is what Melody Maker had to say about Stone the Crows. The five members of the band – Les Harvey on guitar, Jim Dewar on bass and vocals, Colin Allen on drums, organist/pianist John McGinnis and lead singer Maggie Bell – produce a mixture of sophistication and good old down home funk that's unique and, more to the point, satisfying.

Maggie, a warm and startlingly natural lady, is the one who, being so unmistakably up front, tends to capture the initial attention. Writers have compared her with Janis Joplin, which appears to be a bit unfair on Maggie, who seems to me to be less hysterical and altogether much more subtly expressive while lacking not an ounce of Janis' power and intensity. Maggie herself goes for Laura Nyro – "a beautiful singer and a fantastic musician" – and Aretha Franklin.

Les Harvey, brother of Alex, himself a near-legendary guitarist, has closer connections with Aretha. This summer he was summoned to Spain to play guitar in the great lady's band. There can't be many tougher gigs than that. Not a flashy player, Les plays measured, precise phrases that can build into emotional climaxes without ever stepping out of the band harmony, but adding to the unity of the whole sound.

Bassist, Jim Dewar has a voice that would put many lead singers in the shade, while his bass work does just what a good bassist should – it holds everything together. Jim provides a sympathetic foundation to guitar and organ flights of improvisation with his flexible but dead-sure contribution. He, in conjunction with Les, writes a lot of the group's material.

John McGinnis on keyboards is the fourth Glaswegian of the band. Not a great talker, what he does say he means. Likewise his playing. Often lyrical, often understated, but always tight and cliché-free, his sense of pace and timing contrasts with the self-indulgent thrashing of many rock organists. John doesn't have to perform gymnastic contortions to make it rock.

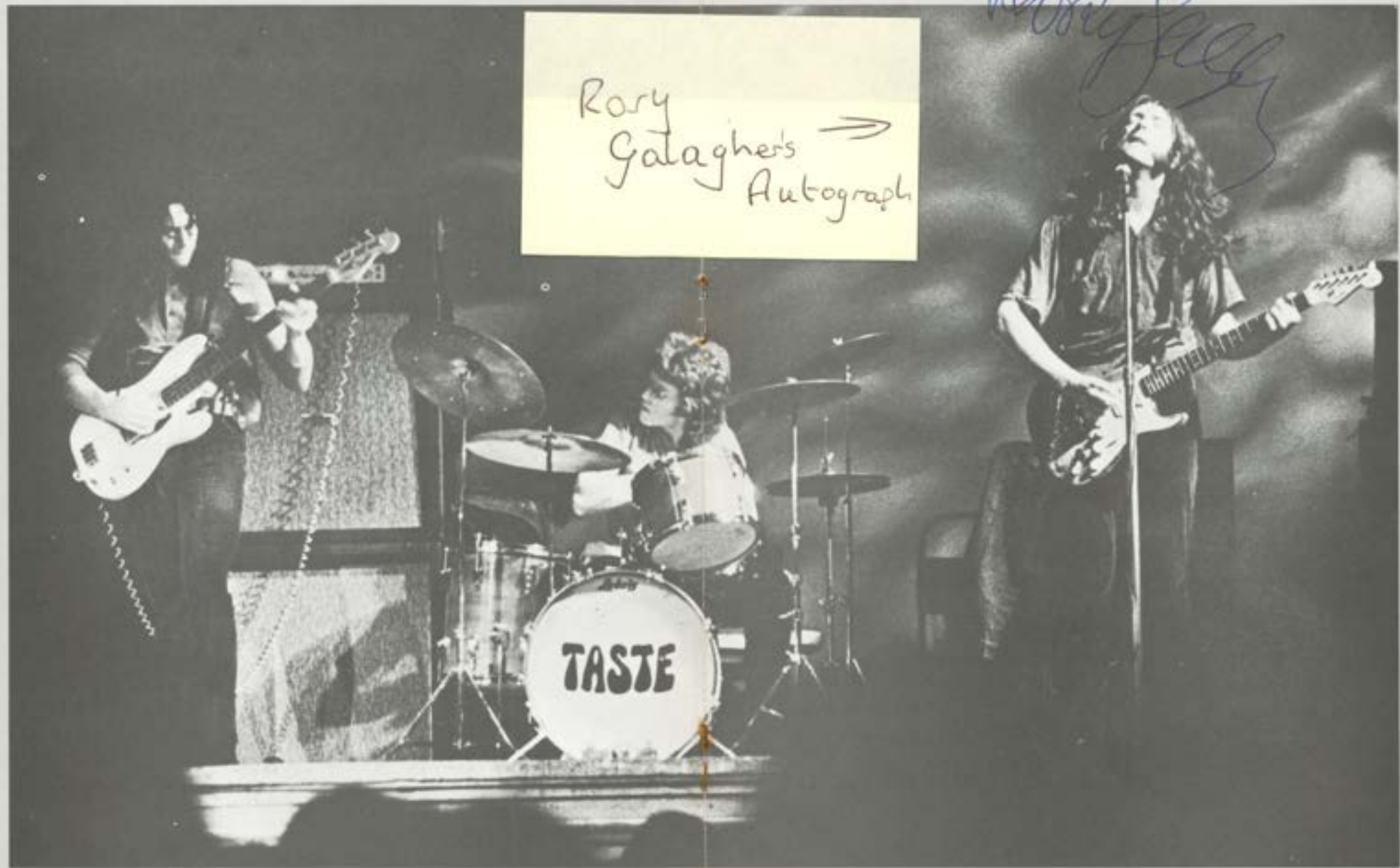
A veteran of Zoot Money's Big Roll Band, the Blue Flames and the Bluesbreakers, Bournemouth-born Colin Allen was known to be one of the best drummers in the country when he chose to play with Stone the Crows, of whom he says, "the best band I've played in". Colin's technique is formidable, but it doesn't get in the way.

It all seems so easy and effective. With one record out already, the group's second album will be in the shops during September. Stone the Crows have already made one trip to the States, where their album entered the charts. "It didn't get a bad review *anywhere*", a cheerful Maggie confided to me. "And I'm sure we're better than that on stage". added Colin.

RICK SANDERS



Maggie Bell



Rory
Galagher's →
Autograph

Rory Gallagher



TASTE

Some bands make it because they have a rich manager, a good publicity hustler and connections in the business. OK, they may still manage to be a good band. Others just play the music they dig and plug away on the club circuit without the strength of the machine behind them. You can bet that they'll deserve everything they ever get — it's something to do with making your own way, paying your own dues, not having to live up to the handouts and doing what you believe.

Taste in its present form got together two years ago this summer. At the time, I was working on a rock paper. While we were printing features about Cream, the Who, Ten Years After and Fleetwood Mac, suddenly an avalanche of fiercely partisan letters began to arrive, telling us that Taste were better than the lot of them. We must have got as many about Taste as any other band.

So, when the group's second album, 'On the Boards', started to climb the charts, the music industry, busy shaking hands with itself, was taken by surprise. But Taste weren't a new craze sensation supergroup, as anyone who'd seen their vast grassroots following around the clubs could have told the startled behemoth. As the title of the album indicates, Taste were all about playing live gigs and supplying the goods, no hype.

Leader and central point of the band is Rory Gallagher. He sings, plays guitar, mouth-organ, alto saxophone, and writes songs. He comes from Cork. John Wilson, from Belfast, plays drums, and Richard McCracken on bass is from Omagh. Though it was 'On the Boards' that established the band, released in January this year, they made one called just 'Taste' which came out in March 1969 and sold enough, both here and in America, for it to appear in the holy charts. -----



STONE THE CROWS
very mixed bag

Stone
the
crows...
they're
great!

WITHOUT a doubt one of the biggest names that will emerge to make their fortune this year will be Stone the Crows. They have already given rise to favorable music coverage throughout the press and the public world of pop music in both Britain and America.

Stone the Crows comprise four typically friendly Glaswegians — including beautiful lead vocalist Maggie Bell — and one equally gorgeous musician in ex-Beatmaker Colin Allen. Last week they were rehearsing in a Manhattanish pub in preparation for their American tour and baffling the regulars in the process with their offbeat and most Glaswegian strains.

Many people are giving great kudos to the group and the faith is more than justified on hearing a short preview of their forthcoming LP.

"Don't put on in any bag" was just about every other phrase, but Stone the Crows really can't be classified and the pigeon-hole treatment will have their work cut out as they dream and up.

The music is indelible and a Stone the Crows with vocals of Laura Nyro, Janis Joplin and the Soft Machine all sound together with a very strong jazz feel.

Colin Allen, Harvey, younger brother of Alex Harvey, worked faithfully with various Glaswegian groups before deciding to get Stone the Crows together, and obviously picked the cream of the crop while he was about it.

Stone the Crows performed much last September when Lee received a phone call from manager Mark Leeder. Mark

had plans for Lee to join forces with another group but Lee persuaded him to come to Glasgow and give a listen to his own band. The result was that Lee stayed with Stone the Crows and the whole group came south.

Initially they have few regrets at making the move but Lee does have some reservations about the group scene in London.

"People seem to have their sense of values and proportions all wrong in London, and that's why there is so much of the wrong kind of music and their approach isn't realistic."

"We're not trying to play jazz," says the quiet, reserved John McLaughlin. "We do play some numbers which are jazz influenced but it's certainly not straight jazz. The comparison between us and the Soft Machine probably stems from the fact that we play a lot of odd time signatures. Sometimes it's not that we're tapping them. You could say we are offbeat in the Soft Machine."

Forming as group members rarely seem to add music musically, at best they are usually complete and good looking and are regarded as something of a novelty for putting in crowds.

Maggie Bell, however, is the classic example of the exception to the rule. She is certainly very much involved in her music and has become so much an integral part of Stone the Crows' sound.

If there are going to be any criticisms of the Stone the Crows it's a safe bet that it will take the form of Maggie doing a carbon copy of Janis Joplin. It's true there is a similarity but looking at her she is so obviously a complete individual — and that goes for every other band singing.

"People are always telling me I sound like Janis Joplin, says Maggie," and I suppose she has influenced me. But I really like Laura Nyro. She's a beautiful singer and a fantastic musician. She's what you could call a singer's singer."

Asked Maggie how she felt about being the only girl in the group.

"There's a man of this company but if that's what you mean, I regard myself just like one of the guys and I carry and wear along with them."

Like a lot of groups before them, Lee says that coming south has meant that he had to work a lot harder for recognition. He also says that likely he would still like to work in Scotland because he has a sister for London.

"This is partly why we are living in the 'Magical House' in Hampstead. It's on the top of a hill and very beautiful. A lot of groups have stayed there just because it's so quiet. Jack Bruce and Tompan are lucky with their Scottish friends but then they can afford it."

Stone the Crows are good and possibly too good for British appreciation. — Let's hope they're not driven off to Nevada parts — permanently. — RAYMOND TELFORD

Club Review

Jake Holmes Very, Very Good

NEW YORK — Polydor's Jake Holmes seemed to have only two speeds at his recent Bitter End appearance: his music was very, very sad or very, very whimsical but, in either case, it was always very, very.

The fact that Holmes has been absent from the personal appearance scene for most of the past two years was not at all obvious as Holmes went through a brilliantly polished set of his own tunes.

Compelling Sense of Humor

He has a compelling, nearly slapstick sense of humor as witnessed in the delightful spoof of a love lost, "Mary Alice Johnson" (the name has been changed to protect the innocent). On the other end of the scale was the bittersweet memory of "The Moving Day."

Always intense, with either humor or melancholy, Jake Holmes was impressive, too, on "I Live in a Suitcase Room," "How Are You," "Animal Farm" and others. Jake is delightful and shows great promise for the future.

—Spence Berland.

SECOND ADVERT

JOHN MAYALL
albums:
turning point
empty rooms

ERIC BURDON
album:
eric burdon declares war

polydor tells it like it is
...now you know



THIRD ADVERT

*Rosy
Gallagher*

TASTE
albums: taste

taste on the boards

STONE THE CROWS

album: stone the crows
(and a new album soon)

JAKE HOLMES

album: jake holmes

polydor tells it like it is

...now you know



Rosy Gallagher
Autograph