

Resonance by Steve Grayson

Mick Jagger says the Rolling Stones' new album was influenced by "local reggae." Traffic's latest album was recorded in Jamaica. The Doobie Brothers sing about how they "got to get back to Jamaica" on the "Toulouse Street" album and Johnny Rivers' new album is "L.A. Reggae."

Kingston, Jamaica, is the home and birthplace of reggae, a mixture of voodoo, jazz and jungle bongos set to an ever-changing quick tempo. The term was first used in the mid-fifties to describe a curious type of music unique to Kingston's bars and clubs.

The Jamaicans had been American jazz fans and when rock-and-roll took over the record industry, they began to produce their own stuff. Reggae was the result. It is simply produced, as only guitars, bongos and a few reed instruments were available to the Jamaicans. However, the rhythms it involves are so difficult to produce that even today, if one wants reggae musicians, one goes to Jamaica.

Reggae can be obvious, as on Simon and Garfunkles' "Cecelia" (yep, that's what you call that stuff) or as unassuming as the accordion and moog parts on Johnny Nash's "I Can See Clearly Now."

Reggae got its start in the outside world when homesick black Jamaican workers got together in the seacoast towns of England. It was improved with the incorporation of non-Jamaican interpre-

tation and gradually began to surface as a distinct music style.

Perhaps the first reggae artist with a hit single was Millie Small, whose "My Boy Lollipop" made the charts in 1964. But by no means did this signal any sort of reggae fad. Desmond Dekker had "Israelites" in '65 and Nash's "Hold Me Tight" came out in '67, but, largely, reggae was put down in Britain as primitive music unacceptable to civilized people.

Indeed, its acceptance proceeded with glacial speed. Bob Dylan said it was "ok" in '71 and since then Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin and Paul Simon, besides the Stones, Nash and Traffic, have all recorded in Jamaica using at least a few local musicians.

Now reggae is a common noun-adjective around music circles, but through the years, its boundaries lost their distinctness. Even though Johnny River's new album is entitled "L.A. Reggae," he says, "The only relationship between what we play and reggae is that it's basically very simple music, straight ahead rock-and-roll." Even the king himself, Mr. Nash, exclaims, "I would like for them to explain . . . what it really is."

Whatever reggae does or doesn't refer to, its influence is growing. Besides, even if there was no such thing, the recording industry can always use another word to describe some new piece of music that really isn't new.

Environmental Troubleshooter To Evaluate Pollution Device

A&M's Environmental Troubleshooters Team will soon swing into action as it helps evaluate a pollution control device for automobiles.

The device, called the PASER (Power Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) 500, is being manufactured by Amerimex Industries, Inc., of Dallas.

Eugene Irvin Jr., president of the corporation, said the device was not the complete solution to pollution problems caused by automobiles, but that it did reduce hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide emissions while increasing gas mileage by about 10 per cent.

Dr. J. Martin Hughes, assistant professor of Environmental Engineering, said the device would be evaluated to see just how good it really is.

"We plan to evaluate tests of the device in actual automobile installations and in laboratory conditions," he said. "We are in no way endorsing the device. We are merely going to make impar-

tial evaluations for the company to see what the device will do."

The device, according to Irvin, achieves a high induced voltage which causes an electrical discharge in the combustion chamber of an automobile engine, leading to more complete combustion of gasoline vapor and lower exhaust emissions.

"The PASER 500," he said, "uses electromagnetic energy from the ignition system of the engine, energy that is normally wasted, in such a way that it leads to more ideal conditions for combustion in the combustion chamber."

An earlier version of the device was tested by General Testing Laboratories, Inc., and it was found that reductions in hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide were achieved by the device with an increase in fuel economy.

The company wants to improve the PASER 500, and has approached Hughes and his team for recommendations.

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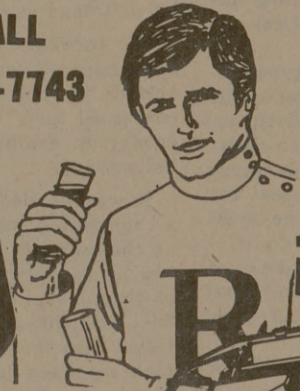
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