

Metal music parody played by the Tubes

By JOHN VANORE
Battalion Staff Writer

A month or so ago my roommate heard "White Punks on Dope," the single from the Tubes' debut album, "The Tubes" on the radio. He's been bugging me to review it ever since, so here it is.

On first listening, the Tubes sound like a bunch of degenerate heavy metal musicians. Gradually, their true persona emerges.

What they're really playing is heavy metal parody. Rock music you can laugh at. The Tubes don't take themselves too seriously, and work at keeping heavy metal from becoming an oppressive drudgery.

The Tubes are actually many things at once. They are audacity, decadence, music, outrage, and theater. Their rock-as-theater performances bring to mind Jim Morrison's original concept of the Doors' music. They even remind one of the original Alice Cooper, before he got rich and famous and spoiled.

Mostly, however, the Tubes are a satire on reality. Their songs are about wealth, greed, teen-age lust — all the basic components of day-to-day life.

Take "White Punks on Dope." It's a vicious stab at the super-rich, and their young punk kids who get bored to death with that life-style.

"What Do You Want From Life" offers the listener, if he is an American citizen, a multitude of prizes that might have originated in the pages of National Lampoon magazine.

"Mondo Bondage" sounds like a porno book dealing with

Sadism/Masochism and perversion in general.

If all of this sounds rather over-produced, you're exactly right. The Tubes planned to come off with a big, pretentious sound that would knock everyone over. As guitarist Bill Spooner put it, "After all, it's every kid's dream to have the biggest erector set."

The Tubes compile their giant set with the usual embellishments, such as strings, orchestration, and the like. The total incongruity of it all is what really makes one jump. For example: Tubes producer Al Kooper, one of the founders of Blood, Sweat and Tears, added an aria-like chorus to "White Punks on Dope." The effect of such an angelic chant behind the lyrics "White Punks on Dope," repeated over and over, is a sound so inconsistent that it's captivating.

Another facet of the Tubes' music which no listener can miss is their lyrics. They vary between funny and dismal. Take these lines from "Mondo Bondage" — "I could run off to Jamaica/If this bondage I could breaka" Really now! Only three songs later, "ghetto" is rhymed with "betto," in "But born in Pacific Heights doesn't seem much betto," from "White Punks on Dope."

There is a bright side to all this. The satirical lyrics in many of the other songs override the nonsense, and a serious statement is actually

present in many cases.

"Boy Crazy," for instance, ends with "There's something missing, I don't know what/Someone should tell you, I'd rather not." Maybe even the decadent Tubes consider endless one-night-stands to be shallow and empty.

Beneath the surface satire of "What Do You Want From Life," the song is a very heavy indictment of modern-day greed. "What do you want from life," the song asks, "an Indian garu/to show you the inner light . . . a meaningless love affair with a girl that you met last night

The Tubes use this song as a vehicle to hurl a devastating blast at material wealth, comfort, and luxury. Without a shred of personal fulfillment, life is a waste, they tell us.

By now you're probably ready to run out and buy it. But not so fast. The first few times I heard it, I thought it was great. But as the days turned into weeks, the Tubes' music got pretty tedious. It ended up being very superficial, with nothing much below the surface. With a lot of music, every listening reveals something new to me, but not so with the Tubes.

I guarantee that if you buy "The Tubes," you'll play it like mad for a week or so, and then it'll turn into just another dust collector.

Many thanks to Ernie at Musicland for providing the record used here.

Hearst's lawyers ask for gag order

Associated Press
SAN FRANCISCO — Prosecutors, accusing Patricia Hearst's lawyers of using the media to create sympathy for the jailed heiress, have asked a judge to issue a gag order barring attorneys from further public comment on the case.

The government's motion Monday charged that defense lawyers F. Lee Bailey and Al Johnson waged a "publicity campaign devoted to evoking a sympathetic public image for the defendant by stressing her mental condition."

The result of the publicity, the government alleged, "can only be to influence potential jurors."

Johnson said, "I consider the request for a gag order to be entirely inappropriate since government agents of as high status as the attorney general of the United States have chosen for the past 19 months during her captivity to effectively diminish the presumption of inno-

cence in her favor by branding her with such comments as being a notorious criminal."

He said he was referring to a statement by former U.S. Atty. Gen. William Saxbe.

Johnson said the motion does not accuse the defense of any court violation anywhere. He did not say whether he intended to oppose the government motion.

The attorney said last Tuesday that Miss Hearst had been losing weight rapidly, looked pale and gaunt and had "emotional problems in converting her thoughts to speech." However, the sheriff's office said she weighed within half a pound of what she weighed when she was jailed 12 weeks ago.

The defense had maintained in previous statements that Miss Hearst was suffering mentally from the effects of her kidnaping by the Symbionese Liberation Army.

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