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'New Clear Days' commercial, amusing

Vapors album blends rock with new wave

By Bob Sebree

Battalion Reporter Everyday industrial strength punk music isn't enough for these guys. In the Vapors' album "New Clear Days," they attempt to sell their music by mating rock (reminiscent of the Byrds and their era) with "new wave," hoping to spawn a new, more sophisticated sound sound

The sound, sometimes referred to as "businessman's punk," is entertaining but falls short of combining the best of the old and the new. It's understandable that as a casual listener one might be absorbed by the simple, new-wavish tunes and even hope to find some sophisticated, underlying meaning. Just don't be disappointed by the up-front, tell-it-like-it-is lines like "You're just another little girl with stars in your eyes ... I don't wanna' go home with you." Along with this direct approach there is an air of pessimism, third degree bore-

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dom, tension and frustration in their uoni, tension and nustration in their music, typical of new wave/punk that comes driving through in hard-hitting but garish riffs. Even the title, "New Clear Days," (a pun on Nuclear Days) comments on the group's high hopes for the future the future.

An Oriental influence is prevalent in the music and lyrics. One track mentions the accounts of "Hiro" while traditional Japenese instruments are heard in several songs. The most obvious example of this is their hit "Turning Japenese."

So what accounts for the 22 weeks "New Clear Days" has enjoyed in Bill-board's Top 100 (presently at number 86)? Although their music is somewhat second-rate and their indust is somewhat second-rate and their lyrics aren't going to save the world, what they've done is bring a fresh approach to the already stagnant world of new wave. It is, after all, just short of being a really good album album.

Rather than describing the deep per-sonal, social or cosmic elements experi-enced in day-to-day life, we get the trials and tribulations of someone just having

come into puberty. The lyrics are consis-tently directed to a pre-pubescent audi-ence that might conceivably get off to sitting in dark closets and looking through obscure "dirty" magazines.

Don't get me wrong ... I enjoy the album, even though I rarely frequent dark closets, and I have yet to find an ear that didn't respond favorably to "Turn-ing Japanese." Which causes one to ask: "How can anyone see well enough to write a hit song in a dark closet?

Even though it strays off of the beaten, and often battered, path of new-wave/ punk, it is still music to pogo by.

"New Clear Days," although too com-mercial, is realistic and often amusing. "I really think so."

Dragon Dickenson curses film

By Stephen Bonin

Battalion Reporter Area movie goers beware. "Charlie Chan And The Curse Of The Dragon Queen," playing at the Manor East III, is not one of the classic series of yesteryear. Hollywood has given us another one of its "winning for-mula" quickies in which an old idea is resurrected and familiar names are cast.

In larger cities, newspaper ads entice viewers with this: "Murderer Who Turn Victim Into Human Baked Potato Have Real Appetite For Crime." But in College Station, the

movie has arrived sans fanfare. In fact, the only clues given are that Peter Ustinov and Angie Dickenson star.

This is just as misleading as the title.

The only "curse" of the Dra-gon Queen (Dickenson) is her

repulsive appearance on the big screen. And viewers probably won't spend much time won-dering how 10 minutes of air time merits top billing. They'll just be grateful she didn't get more

In the film, Charlie Chan is summoned to some unfortunate place in Hawaii to solve a series of brutal murders, one being the "baked potato" case. No link connects them. Chan has a hunch it's the Dragon Queen, whom he put behind bars for murdering Bernie Lupowitz years ago.

Chan's "number one grandson" Lee Lupowitz, a Jewish-Hawaiin half-breed descendent of Chan and Mrs. Lupowitz (don't worry, that's as confusing as it gets), is an aspiring detec-tive who's dying (no pun in-tended) to learn the ropes. So he's going to help "gram-

pa" by causing havoc in a Chinatown outdoor market, chasing the Dragon Queen in a chariot race out of "Ben Hur," and in race out of "Ben Hur," and in general, getting in the way. Apparently, Dragon Lady's hex applied to Chan's following generations, and since Lee is "number one grandson"... Your standard mystery thril-ler elements are all present, in-cluding the surprise discovery of the *real* killer at the end. And it's not the Dragon Oueen.

Queen. Thus, the only conceivable reason why the aging sex god-dess appears in her second consecutive cameo is to capitalize on the mass hype over her leggy scene in Brian De Palma's "Dressed To Kill."

Sorry guys, in this one she bares nothing. But she does don a brunette wig and gaudy clothes to accentuate her beau-ty. Sadly, the days of "Police-

woman" are over. She no longer conveys that intensity that mesmerized television viewer several years ago.

As the legendary Oriental de-tective, Peter Ustinov does a fair job, but what can you do with a role that's been done countless

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times. Lee Grant as Mrs. Lupo witz is a prime suspect who croons a gold urn she believes to be her dead husband. Roddy McDowall as a haughty wheel-chair stricken butler rolls around the mansion to cast disapproving glances on her strange be-havior.

Then there's Brian Keith, the gentle loving father from 'Fami-ly Affair,'' playing a sterotypical tempermental police chief. He spouts profanity with the same frequency and natural flair that John Travolta did in "Saturday Night Fever.

Lee's fiance Cordelia is the unbelievably precious and dumb blond who wiggles and giggles like she was a Goldie Hawn Acting School reject. Un-fortunately, television's "smut-coms" have made this type character into an unappealing bore.

The dialogue sounds like "Charlie's Angels" in Hawaii. Maybe the scripts got mixed up. And the actors muddle through endless cliches in an unsuccess-ful attempt at slapstick comedy.

As Charlie Chan say to num-ber one grandson, "He who suckers for this movie is the real victim.

FOCUS	Record prices are going up, but used records can help ease the pinch on the pocketbook. By Kate McElroy	On the cover: Can you pick out the real John, Paul,
Staff WriterKathleen McElroy Focus will accept any items submitted for publication, although the decision to publish lies solely with the editor. Deadline is 5 p.m. the Thursday before publication.	International folkdances come to Texas A&M University. By Valerie Shockey	George and Ringo from this line-up? Find out all about the Beatle-clone cast of Beatlema- nia on pages 8 and 9.