

Music notes

By LOUIS HILGARTNER
Staff Columnist

One of the most bandied-about words in music these days is "supergroup."

It's gotten to where the term is applied to just about every popular band nowadays and it's this overuse that makes me want to throw my radio out the window every time I hear it.

Supergroups are everywhere. The craziest thing about them is that they are all supposed to be the greatest bands ever to take the stage.

You can list 'em: Genesis, the Police, the Pretenders, the Rolling Stones, the Who, any band Phil Collins is in, Michael Jackson's band(s), Big Country (Big Country?!), David Bowie, Journey, Van Halen, etc., etc., etc.

You tell me — which one is THE MOST IMPORTANT BAND OF OUR TIME?

Whatever happened to the good ol' meat and potatoes bands that so many folks cut their teeth on? I'll tell you what happened to them. Many have broken up because they couldn't compete with these so-called "supergroups" (Let's be

realistic, how many bands have their own video game cartridges?). Others keep plugging away, hoping someday they will be brought off the musical back burner.

Just for grins, see how many of these bands you remember (No, I'm not making them up and, yes, these songs were hits):

The Fabulous Poodles — "Mirror Star"

New England — "Don't Ever Wanna Lose Ya"

Ambrosia — "Life Beyond L. A.," and "Falling In Love"

Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen — "Hot Rod Lincoln"

The Knack — "My Sharona," and "Good Girls Don't (But I Do)"

Uriah Heep — "Stealin'"
Angel — "Don't Leave Me Lonely"

Sniff 'n The Tears — "Driver's Seat"

Head East — "Never Been Any Reason"

Suzi Quatro — "Someone Else's Lipstick"

The Kings — "This Beat Goes On/Switchin' To Glide"

Diesel — "Sausalito Summer



Louis Hilgartner

Night"
Rick Derringer — "Rock 'N' Roll Hoochie Koo"
Deep Purple — "Burn"

Some are obvious, and then again, some probably have you muttering quaint homespun phrases about my ancestry. The point is, for awhile all these bands were immensely popular.

Enter the Age Of The Supergroup. What makes a band a supergroup in the first place?

Is it popularity? Record sales? Concert attendance? Neat videos?

The whole concept is so ambiguous.

The fact that just because Air Supply releases a song which, because it is from Air Supply, is obligated to get enough airplay to make you sick every time you hear it has become standard procedure. But is every Air Supply song really that great? Could there be some struggling band out there who has a tune that will set the world on fire but we will never get to hear it because it isn't Air Supply?

Probably. In the first place, rock 'n' roll is a vicious game. Of all the forms of music, rock — from the business standpoint — is by far the most cutthroat.

The attitude of "no quarter asked, no quarter given" pervades the whole industry and is first in the Music Laws of Probability and Attrition.

From onstage to backstage to under the stage, bands that

can't make the grade don't get the records, money and the other trappings of stardom.

However, the title of "supergroup" has become a slap in the face to the multitudes of struggling musicians.

It's not enough to have to drive zillions of miles to your gig in lousy trucks, spend the night in a third-rate motel and play a show only to find the manager has split with all the money. That's called "Paying Your Dues." That can be dealt with.

But to finally cut through all the crap that comes with Paying Your Dues and cut an album only to find it's not getting any airplay because it's not by a supergroup is something entirely different. It's the way the music world (something you have been dedicating yourself to for lo these many years) says: "Yeah, yeah, another album from an unknown. Put it under my coffee, will ya? I need something for a coaster."

Album review



By LOUIS HILGARTNER
Staff Columnist

Scorpions
Love At First Sting
PolyGram Records

Hailing from Hannover, West Germany, the Scorpions have been cranking out high-octane rock 'n' roll for over a decade.

Their latest album *Love At First Sting* continues in this tradition, picking up where last year's *Blackout* left off.

Compared to earlier efforts such as *Lovedrive* and *Animal Magnetism* — which contained the hit "Make It Real (Not Fantasy)" — the Scorpions have changed very little on the surface. The blistering guitar leads of Matthias Jabs still lace every song and are backed by the rhythm guitar of Rudolf Schenker. However, *Love At First Sting* does offer a few surprises.

The first song on the album "Bad Boys Running Wild" opens with some bizzare guitar effects. Schenker's power

chords take over and the tune launches off in true Scorpion hard-rock style with lead singer Klaus Meine's vocals loud and clear.

Following "Bad Boys" is the album's biggest hit "Rock You Like A Hurricane."

"Hurricane" gives Jabs plenty of room to solo and he is solidly backed by the steady drums of Herman Rarebell and bass of Francis Bucholz.

Rounding out the first side are "I'm Leaving You" and "Coming Home" and "The Same Thrill."

"Leaving You" is a hard-driving ballad. It's the Scorpion variation on the theme of "you made me sad so I'm going — but keep me on your mind because maybe I'll come back and we can work it out."

"Coming Home" begins with a soft acoustic intro in which Meine sings about "being out on the road and away from the girlfriend" with the hopes that the tour will end soon so he can get back home. The Scorpions aren't a band to spend too much time on acoustic intros and sentimentality though, and soon you're tumbling head over heels into a wild "tribute" to the fans who pack their way into various concert halls around the world.

"Thrill" is a salute to the wild life of rock 'n' roll. Nothing fancy here, just straight ahead rocking.

Kicking off side two are "Big City Nights" and "As Soon As The Good Times Roll." Again, the modus operandi is "drive you into the wall" with a smat-

tering of just enough leads, fills and tricks to keep you from yawning.

Following "Good Times" is an interesting tune called "Crossfire."

"Crossfire" is set to a military marching tempo with Rarebell pounding out the cadence. The anti-war lyrics and bagpipe-sounding guitar solos are about as unusual for the Scorpions as you could imagine. Sung from the young warrior's point of view, "Crossfire" presents the often-ignored opinion of the soldier.

Closing the album is "Still Loving You," a song which absolutely cries to become a classic. The lyrics reek of feeling, in particular the feeling of having screwed up the best relationship you've ever had — and the desperate desire to get it back together.

Love At First Sting is by no means an original album in the sense of trying out new ideas. However, it is good to see the Scorpions getting away from the same old three-chord pounding that typified much of their earlier work. This could be the breakthrough album for this band and I wouldn't be the least surprised if this album does a lot more than just rock you like a hurricane.

George Washington story to air on CBS

Barry Bostwick believes his portrayal of George Washington in the upcoming CBS miniseries is as historically accurate as possible, even the passion he shows for Sally Fairfax, wife of his best friend.

The eight-hour mini-series based on the four-volume biography by James Thomas Flexner, which won a National Book Award and special Pulitzer Prize citation, will air on CBS April 8, 10 and 11.

While a number of so-called docu-dramas this season have touched off debate over whether television is freely re-writing history — CBS's "Cook and Peary," NBC's "Kennedy" and Operation Prime Time's "Sadat" — Bostwick sincerely doubts "George Washington" will draw similar fire.

"Flexner spent 12 years on his biography and the script was being written for two years," he said "So there's 14 years of research and writing. Then there were two years of locking in permission to shoot in all the original environments."

Administrators at each of the historic sites used in the miniseries had to approve the 400-page script.

Life was a little easier for Bostwick because Washington is a more remote and historic figure than others depicted in recent films.

"He and I look exactly alike," Bostwick chuckled. "Someone said to me the other day, 'Was George Washington really 6-foot-3?' I said, 'He is now.' Who's going to know. I'm George from now on."

"I don't think I'd want to play Kennedy. You're just throwing yourself open to too much controversy and criticism. Everybody has a different vision of the man — he should sound this way and his nose should be that way. Our vision is too immediate."

"But we have no immediate vision of George Washington. Our concept of him is a 65-year-old man with no body. The Stewart portrait."

The actor said he did a lot of research on his character, starting with the first volume of Flexner's history, which gave him a general feel for the man.

"One of the hardest things of the job was the constant reading. When I wasn't learning lines I was reading another book on some specific aspect of his life — some battle."

"Four days before we started shooting, I went to the library at Mount Vernon and talked to the librarian and the archivist. They could answer very specific questions — about his sense of humor, things that happened in his life, his relation with so and so."

Bostwick also visited the archives of the Washington Masonic Memorial Shrine, devoted to the first president, who was a Mason.

When he went into the "George Washington" project, Bostwick said, "I was in awe of him because I knew nothing about him. He was a sort of stone monument, stern father figure image. He was not a flesh

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