

Roadkings
smack between
rock, country

By Rob Newberry

There is a spot right smack between rock 'n' roll and country known as rockabilly. Unfortunately, because of its middle-of-the-road style, it doesn't catch a lot of attention. It's a shame, too — some rockabilly performances have all the emotion of the best country and all the kick of rock 'n' roll. Such was the case Thursday when former College Station rockabillys the Road Kings returned to perform at the Flying Tomato.

Fronted by guitarist-vocalist Jesse Dayton and backed by Brian Lux on bass and Eric Tucker on drums, the Road Kings performed three 45-minute sets, including songs from their recent release *Runnin' Hot*, plus other original material and some classic rock and blues covers.

The Road Kings performed "Drivin' My Tears Away" and "Lust is a Terminal Thang" from their new tape, as well as my favorite off the recording, "Walk On By." The cover list included blues-rock classics like "Be Bop A Lula" and Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin'" done by audience request. Another treat was a medley-tribute to the Bo Diddley rhythm, which included lyrics from Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away," "Who Do You Love," and U2's "Desire."

Dayton is a real mean guitarist. His rhythm work is balanced with melodic solos well-suited to the rockabilly style. Dayton's work is not usually technical wizardry, just straight-forward, good-sounding guitar. But when he wants to show off, he can, soloing with the guitar held behind his head or lying on his back, kneeling in front of the audience.

The guitar work is also balanced against the Road Kings rhythm section. Lux plucks away at his stand-up bass, pounding out the backdrop harmony for Dayton's vocals and guitar. Likewise, Tucker knows what drums go where: he keeps the bass and snare doing most of the work and clinks on the ride cymbal in the way that is distinctive to good blues-rock. Dayton's work usually stays in the forefront, but the guys always seem to be a team on stage. And occasionally, Lux will machine-gun up into the higher range of his bass for a rhythmic fill.

The only problem all night were with Dayton's vocals. Sometimes he seems to be holding back, or maybe it is just that the sound system is not being mixed right. It took me two verses of "I Fought the Law" to recog-



nize it, and Dayton definitely has the voice for this style of music. His voice gets intentionally scratchy for effect on songs like "Lust is a Terminal Thang," but other times it seems sort of muddy. If Dayton's vocals were as relaxed and cool as his guitar playing, the result would be impressive.

Not much of a crowd came out to the Tomato for the show, and part of that is probably most people's unfamiliarity with rockabilly. I could say that the Road Kings sound like the Stray Cats, but I don't know if people really remember that group or not. The best thing to say is that the music is a perfect blend of upbeat country and rock, and fans of either style will find something they like about the Road Kings set.

Cure's compilation album not so obscure

By Kevin Robinson

The Cure
Mixed Up
Elektra Records

It's always a treat for me to see a new Cure album released. For the past few years, every new Cure album has been better than the last, taking the gloom rock basics of their early '80s style and expanding it into a unique sound that has catapulted the group into sold-out concerts, platinum albums and superstar status. However, with their new compilation album, *Mixed Up*, it seems the Cure has finally realized their popularity and discovered how to exploit it.

Mixed Up is an album of dance remixes of various Cure songs from the past. The initial word on this album was intriguing. Lead singer/songwriter Robert Smith promised a compilation of obscure remixes and songs from previous Cure singles, all of them now long out of print and demanding high prices on the collectors' market. Technically, this is what Smith delivers.

However, most songs on the album are the exact remixes that have been released on singles for the past few years. The rest, though interesting, is filled with songs never really meant to be produced in a dance format. In the words of a friend of mine, "Listen to what they did to that poor song!"

Four of the album's 12 songs are

from the Cure's previous release, *Disintegration*. All but one of these ("Pictures of You" is now put to a simple hip-hop beat) are mixes that have all been released on the group's maxi-singles. Two more of the songs, "Hot, Hot, Hot" and "Why Can't I Be You" have also been previously released only a few years ago. I don't know if this is what Smith means by rare and obscure, but to me it's a case of overkill. After all, the *Disintegration* singles are still readily available and have been played to death on the radio.

Five other songs come from farther back in the Cure's history, but are revamped and put to a modern beat. This really works only on "The Walk," which was a fairly weak dance number to begin with and is now the techno-dance number it was meant to be. "Close to Me," however, sounds almost identical to the original. Both "The Caterpillar" and "Inbetween Days" go the opposite direction and are twisted and sliced beyond recognition, losing a lot of their original charm in the process. The less said about the new version of "A Forest" the better, as one of the Cure's best songs turns into the low point of the album.

The only really redeeming factor of *Mixed Up* is the new song of the batch, "Never Enough." This is a hard, guitar-driven rocker that puts to shame the rest of this disappointing

album. The best news of all is that the Cure has released "Never Enough" as a single. My advice would be to stay away from *Mixed Up* and enjoy the only good song on the album for a third of the price.

Peter Gabriel
Shaking the Tree
Geffen Records

While the Cure compilation may be a big disappointment, Peter Gabriel's first greatest hits album is nothing short of classic. *Shaking the Tree* is how an artist's compilation should be done. Gabriel himself compiled the album and has included tracks from every one of his albums (except his second, which has yet to be released in the United States). These tracks span from rather obscure numbers such as "Family Snapshot" and "Mercy Street" to Top 40 hits like "Shock the Monkey" and "Sledgehammer."

This gives the album a necessary variety that is bound to please both casual listeners and Gabriel's hardcore fans. Songs such as "Don't Give Up" and "Here Comes the Flood" are tracks that I wouldn't have normally thought of as being on a greatest hits compilation, but they introduce new listeners to some of the great music Gabriel has composed outside of MTV fame.

A glaring omission, however, is the

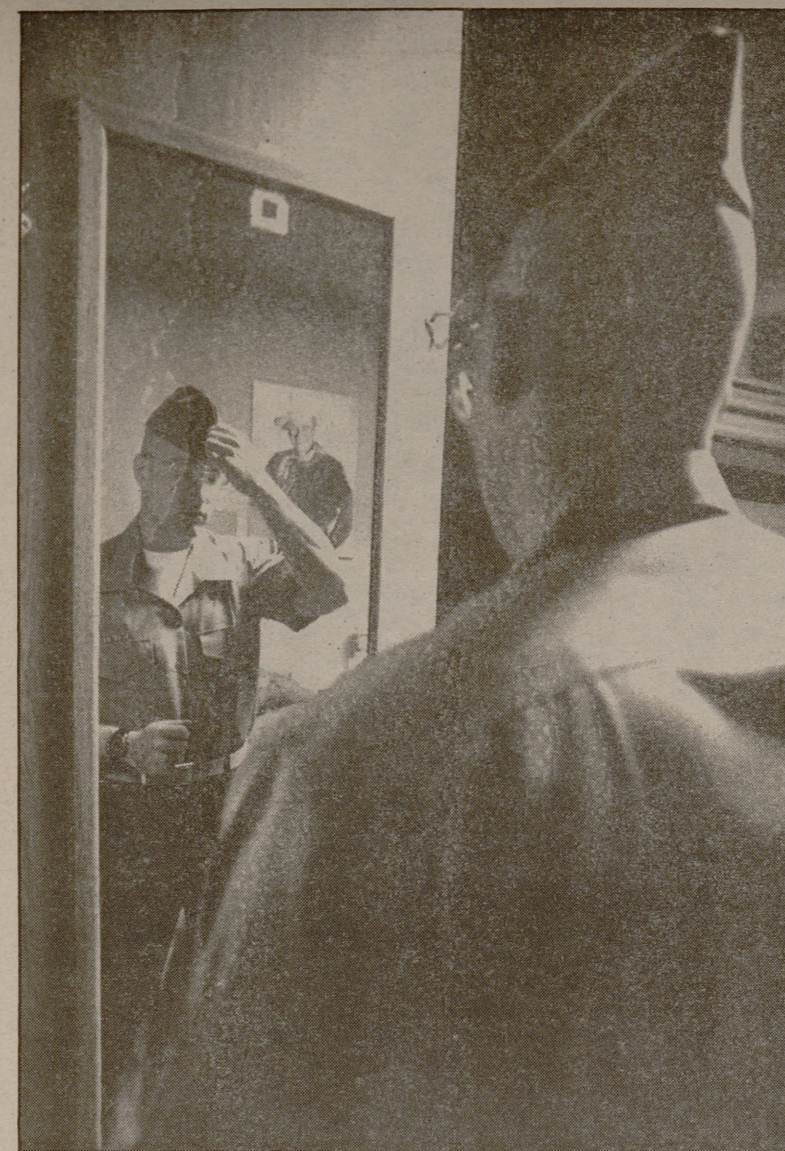
ballad "In Your Eyes," made popular a few years back by the film, "Say Anything." "In Your Eyes," while one of Gabriel's most successful songs, is also one of his best, and it's curious that it hasn't been included here.

Another suprising moment in the album comes with the inclusion of "Zaar," a track from *Passion*, the soundtrack for the film, "The Last Temptation of Christ." At first listen, it doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of the songs here. Nevertheless, it gives a new listener an introduction to Gabriel's instrumental film work and his current interest in world music.

This interest also comes through sharply on the only new song of the album, "Shaking the Tree," a terrific collaboration with Yossou N'Dour, whose presence was heavily felt on the 1986 release *So*.

Because of Gabriel's work, extensive touring with Amnesty International and his production of several world beat albums, it has been more than five years since his last endeavor. Now in the studio with *So's* producer Daniel Lanois, a new Gabriel album is said to be due sometime in the next year.

So whether you're an old fan or someone who merely knows the popular face of Peter Gabriel, *Shaking the Tree* is a great way to re-acquaint yourself with some of his best work.



"I've got a job to do. I just want to get over there, do it and get on with my life."

Top: On the morning of his departure, Slaton dresses in his Marines uniform before meeting with the Commandant of the Corps of Cadet to officially resign from the A&M Corps. Gordon Slaton leaves A&M carrying only the gear he will need in the desert.

