



**ALICE'S
NEW LP
REVIEWED**

LONGPLAYERS

by Shel Kagan

Alice plunges in again

Humble Pie regroups



Alice has a new sound, new show and a new haircut.

Alice Cooper—Flush the Fashion (Warner Bros.)

Although Alice's new album sounds like a collection of parodies and sendups of current rock fashions, his management claims it's all serious. Produced by Roy Thomas Baker (who's done the Cars and Queen) it numbers among its songs "Clones," which is a play on Gary Numan, and "Leather Boots," which is ripped out of every garage band between London and Akron.

"Model Citizen" is a sociological musical study of the masks we all wear, and "Nuclear Infected" glows in the dark with comment about Three Mile Island. On "Grim Facts," wherein

Alice sounds like the lurker he used to be, he delves into familiar territory: "The boy's got problems, the boy's got stress/the boy's got a 38 hidden in his desk . . ."

Apparently all of that is a return to roots—basic rock & roll. But there just isn't enough gore and guts. Madhouse rock, the Coop's last tour, which was a stage version of his drying-out asylum experience, had the expected shock elements, some of which were left over from previous tours (the guillotine, for instance). While that show attracted sellout crowds from among the faithful, it didn't appear to acquire any new adherents, nor did the album, *From the Inside*. But a new tour is underway, with a difference: scaled-down production

values and smaller venues.

Alice is a new wave fan, and claims his favorite group is Talking Heads. Be that as it may, the choice of Baker as producer may be a miscalculation. The production is so clean it undoes the star it is supposed to support.

There is one hope for Alice fans, though. His appearance a few months back on television's dreadful *Pink Lady* show was, unlike those of Blondie and Cheap Trick, not a film clip but a live appearance. "I only went for the Japanese food backstage," says the Coop, who sang "Clones" wearing a very weird Green Beret outfit. If that's a taste of his new roots, he might not have failed us after all.

Humble Pie—On to Victory (Atco)

Now expatriate Britons living in America, original Humble Pie mates Steve Marriott and Jerry Shirley have reformed the band, which broke up in 1975. Their first two albums, *As Safe as Yesterday Is* and *Town & Country*, late '60s products, were memorable for the infusion of acoustic guitar that mellowed the rough edges of their heavy metal.

Now under the guidance of Leber & Krebs, who seem to have a corner on the market in heavy metal groups (AC/DC, Aerosmith, Nugent, Mahogany Rush) vocalist Bobby Tench has the credentials (Jeff Beck and Van Morrison), like Marriott, but is swamped by the mix, particularly in rockers like "Baby Don't Do It." Altogether there is too much singing and too little guitar flash. The sound of the album, given the state of the recording art, is oddly wooden.

These drawbacks may in the long run (or even in the short run, for that matter) hold back the chance for a revival of what was unquestionably one of the great groups of the previous decade.

The Jags—Evening Standards (Island)

Lead singer Nick Watkinson sounds—deadly so—like Elvis Costello, though he has denied that he had any interest in the redoubtable EC. The Jags, in fact, do not consider themselves so much new wave as just plain old rock & roll. Nick and guitarist John Alder hail from the north of England and were together just two years when Island snapped them up.

Their songs are punnish, gritty commentaries on Our Life Today—"Evening Standards" is a rap on interoffice romance, "Desert Island