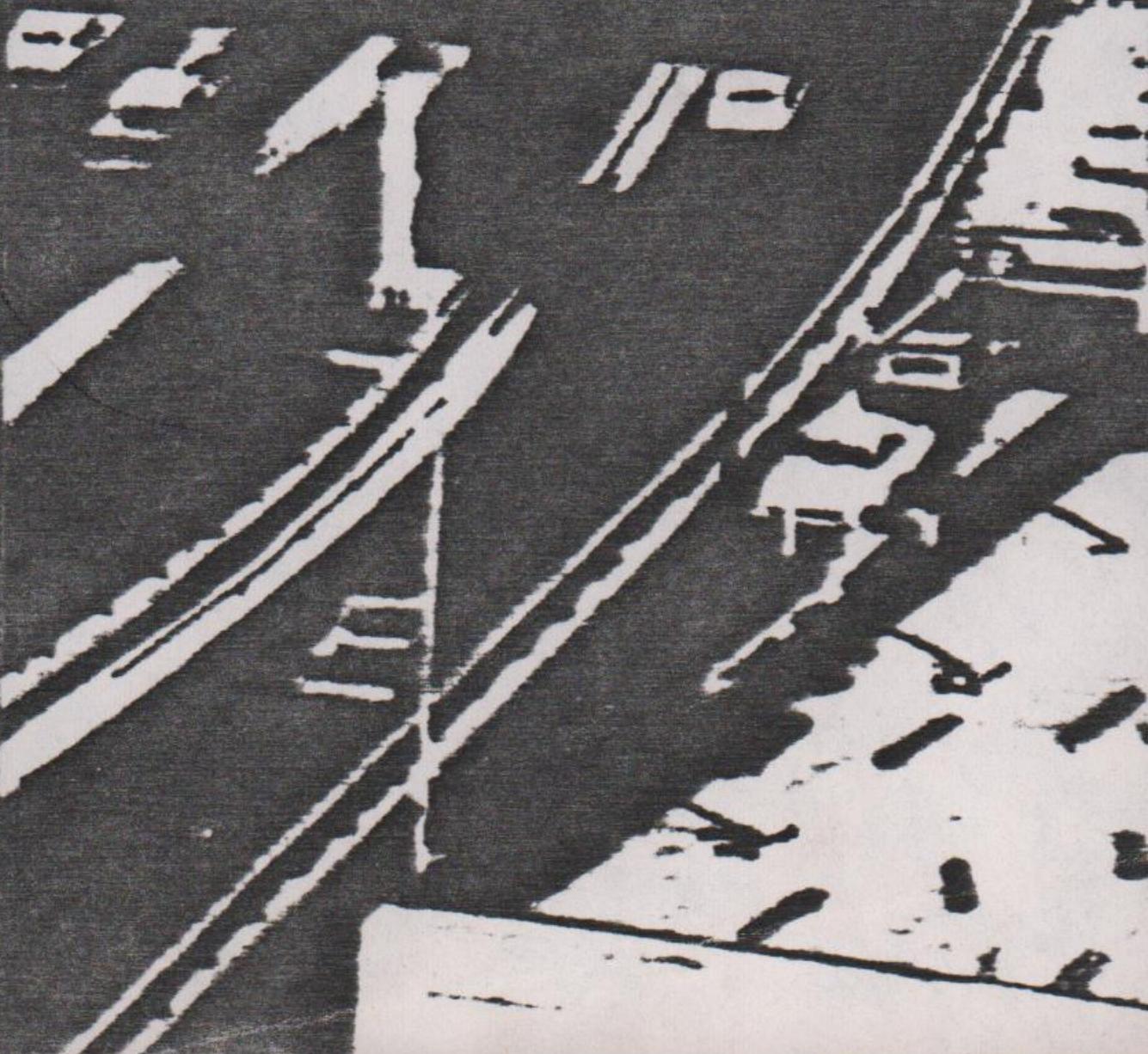
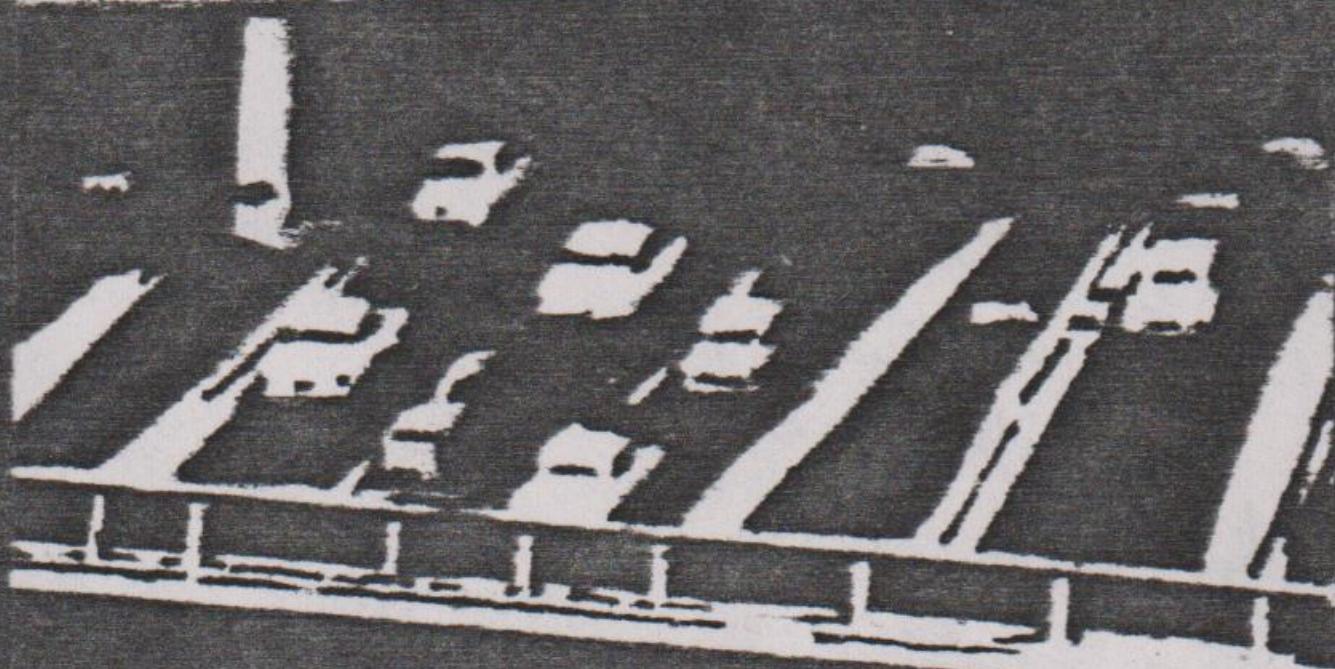


'Y' nine

BULLETIN III



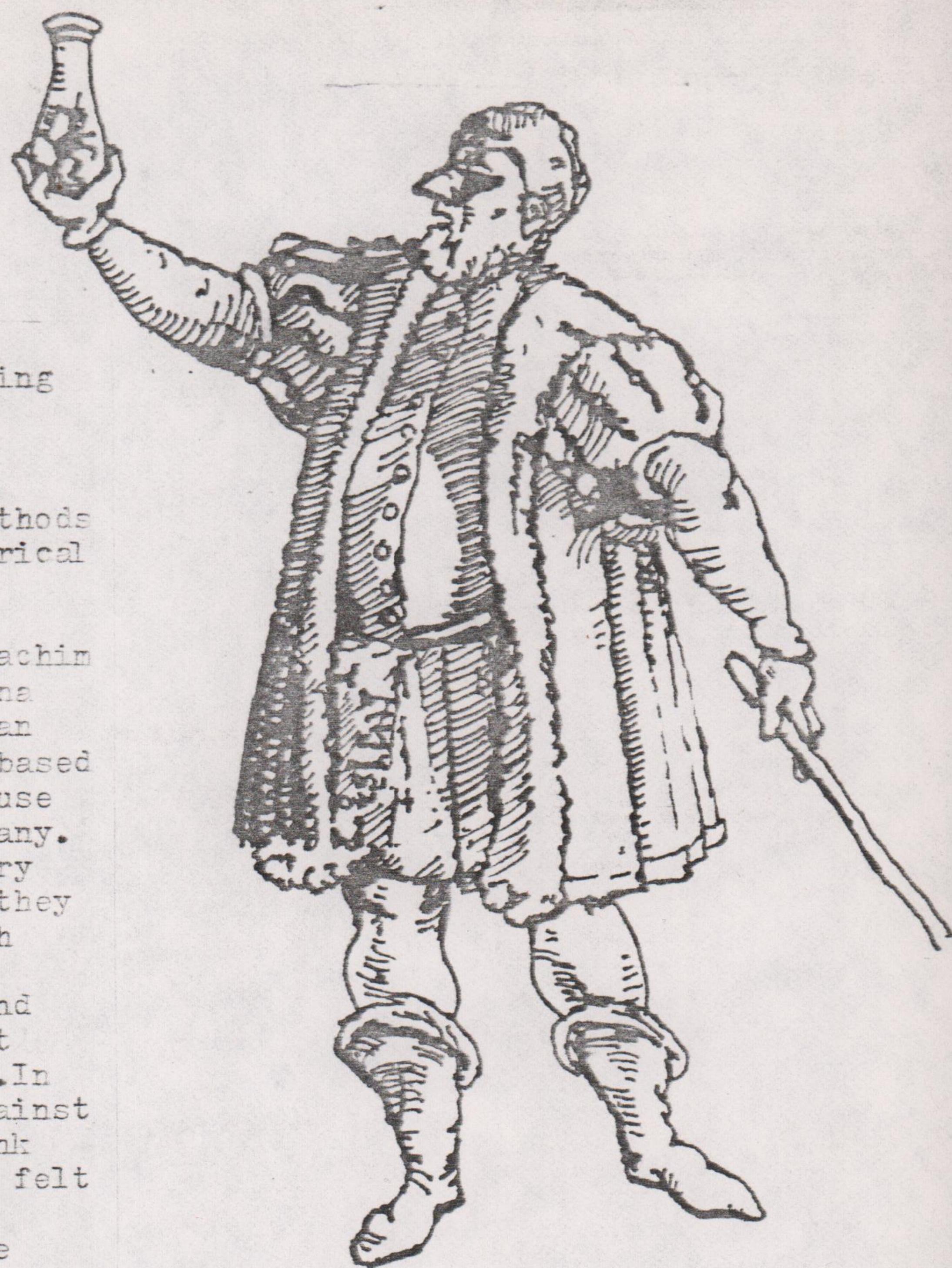
Faust

I will begin this article by admitting that I know next to nothing about Faust and their history. As a relative newcomer to the music of Faust, I will try to give an appreciation of their music and methods as well as supplying the few historical facts that I know.

Faust - Werner Diermaier, Hans-Joachim Irmler, Jean-Hervé Peron, Rudolf Sosna and Gunther Wüsthoff. As far as I can ascertain, they formed in 1971 and based themselves in a converted schoolhouse between Hamburg and Bremen in Germany. Arming themselves with the necessary electronic and acoustic equipment, they carried out sound experiments which resulted in four(?) albums. Faust disregarded the 'rock tradition' and were shamelessly self-indulgent, not caring for any mythical 'audience'. In other words, they set themselves against everybody and everything. Why? I think because it was the only thing they felt they could do. According to Faust's producer, adviser and encourager, Uwe Nettelbeck:

"The idea was not to copy anything going on in the Anglo-Saxon rock scene - and it worked. I like Faust, because their music is just not 'industrial product'. They're not 'professional' in that sense - they're just trying to be themselves and put out nothing but their own music. We've always liked the idea of releasing records which lacked conventional 'finish' in terms of production but which have that private thrill of spontaneity that I miss in the business. In other words: the records should sound like bootlegs, as if recorded by someone who passed a group rehearsing or jamming and then cut the recorded material wildly together."

Faust appreciated the need of a random factor. They were energy, violence, beauty, reflection - of course, their music sounds much more accessible now, ten years on, when others have used the techniques Faust pioneered, but in their day, and still to some extent today, musical terrorists Faust were (according to John Gill) "the sound of art being flayed alive" - directly following on from Tristan Tzara's premise that "art needs an operation."



Now to their recorded work - four LPs, the first three rereleased by Recommended Records, the fourth on Virgin now in bargain bins of the world. This appreciation of Faust's albums is entirely subjective; to know for yourself you must hear for yourself.

FAUST

'Faust' begins with an electronic hissing and spitting which metamorphoses into shouting, pianos, baroque tunes, mantras, more electronics, silly songs, fuzz guitars, bells, laughing and speech, then finally all these alternating wildly bound together with more electronics like a Burroughs Penny Arcade Peep Show - and this is only the first piece. All the tracks are manic sound-collages of all sorts music and noise, but flowing together so that the whole far outweighs the sum of the parts. Apart from putting the electronics through their paces, here Faust show also their capacity for producing the beautiful acoustic ballads which occur on each LP. 'Faust', as with all Faust records, defies rational thinking - it is a spiritual experience.

SO FAR

This second record is much less extreme, more accessible, but again it is hardly easy listening. The first track, 'Rainy Day Sunshine Girl' is seven minutes of sheer repetition based on a pounding drum pattern with totally inane lyrics. This is followed by a pastoral acoustic piece which turns into an HM thrash. On side 2, the title track is one of the most accomplished things Faust produced - very fulfilling, but lacking some of the anarchic spirit which fired the first LP. Then more electronics, acoustics, voices and etc to the end of the record, finishing up with a New Orleans jazz number about the lack of soul in modern existence - so out of character that it's in character!

THE FAUST TAPES

This LP takes Faust's sound-collage experiments furthest, cutting together studio and live tapes recorded between 1971 and 1973, sometimes whole pieces, sometimes just fragments. It gives the greatest indication of how extreme Faust actually were, and what a range of styles they encompassed. But although it is a motley collection, 'The Faust Tapes' does hold together as a whole - it cuts the music lines to let out hidden meanings.

FAUST IV

The only other album by Faust that I know of, 'Faust IV' is the most rock orientated of all their records, relying on a lot of electronics and guitar noises. 'Krautrock', which opens, is a heavy electronic piece which employs rhythm and repetition to carry it along. On side 2 there are five pieces which flow smoothly into each other, electric and acoustic, all incredibly subtle.



'Faust IV' was recorded in 1973. After that I don't know what happened to Faust and its members - into oblivion, I suppose, leaving only a few recorded testaments to the musical alchemy that was. Their influence survives, however, on those who have seen and taken note.

So, Faust: a madness in the method, practical jokers, musical terrorists, one of the most important groups of the 70s. Look back, then forward.

You can obtain the first three Faust LPs (plus two 'extracts' EPs and two collaborations with Slapp Happy) from Recommended, 387 Wandsworth Road, London SW8. Start with 'So Far' - it's more accessible - then get the others.

REVIEWS

ROUGH TRADE

The example of Rough Trade again goes to show how business interests eclipse creative impulse. Early Rough Trade was hope and promise - there was something there - now almost nothing on the label is worth listening to. RT has become bland. The latest batch of releases are a testament to this. The Blue Orchids LP is standard hip rock. Singles by Pigbag, Pulsallama and Shriekback are standard Yrecords 'funk'. However, the press release for singles by the Gist, Weekend, Raincoats and Pale Fountains shows just how far RT have fallen - it celebrates how commercial, bland and suitable for the appalling daytime radio these records are. They all sound the same. There are only a few exceptions which hold off the total artistic demise of Rough Trade...

YAD/SITUATION 2/BEGGARS BANQUET

This amalgam of labels seems to be waiting to produce more top-class records along the lines of their Gilbert & Lewis things. Their recent records - LPs by Modern English, Lydia Lunch, Del-Byzanteens and Gun Club, singles by Bauhaus, Colin Newman and Gene Loves Jezebel - are average but inoffensive, but the labels have potential to rise above the mire. They will do it.

12TH DECEMBER

Another free magazine, with reports of Gruts For Tea, Man Bites God, Argentine Pilot Sinks Falklands. Send SAE to Mowbray Product, 1 Morris Cam Walk, Asfordby, Melton, Leics.

'Y'9 was produced by Matthew Collin and Nick Cope. Thanks to all our friends and benefactors - you know who you are.

Z'EV: Wipe Out

STEFAN WEISSER: Contexts And Poextensions

Two Z'ev egos at work; treated tapes and drums flicker and hum. Aim - destruction of rational thinking. Muzak to unsettle.

CABARET VOLTAIRE: 2x45

ERIC RANDOM: Earthbound Ghost Need
23 SKIDOO: Tearing Up The Plans

/3 sides to a coin/Spiritualistic music with the unmistakeable sound of tearing./3 directions and you can follow each. Recommended.

SUN RA: Strange Celestial Road

My first taste of Ra - I am impressed. Definitely based in jazz, but the rhythm and electronics move you to somewhere else. Touching, but not cloying. Things fall apart to get back together and on in an endless circle. There is the feeling that Sun Ra is unique, timeless. "An ageless man of all ages." Y records should dedicate themselves to rereleasing Ra records like this classic.

LITANIK

Write for catalogue of all sorts of interesting magazines, music and otherwise to Litanik, Sylvia James, Am Bahnhof 1, D-2808 Syke, W. Germany.

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A free magazine featuring 23 Skidoo etc. Send SAE to 14 Hawthorne Court, Grantham, Lincs.

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