

U.S. news

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JOHNNY Whitaker, a teenage actor better known as Tom Sawyer in the recent film, is about to be presented to the American public on disc and TV and may just emerge as the new teenage idol.

Johnny has been recorded singing the title tune from a new children's TV series, Sigmund and the Sea Monsters and he will be singing other songs in the series. He will play one of the animated characters in the show and all the music is being created by writers who work for a chap named Wes Farrell.

Wes, in case you aren't familiar with his name, is a very enthusiastic chap who has recorded all of David Cassidy's hits and all the hits by the Partridge Family.

And while he doesn't record David anymore, he is still the producer for all the Partridge's music — and that's a full-time job.

"Johnny Whitaker," Wes says, "has great skill for a youngster and it's been great working with him." The first single by Johnny on the Chelsea label is Friends which was written by Danny Janssen and Bobby Hart.

And now... Sigmund and the sea monsters

Wes points out that the launching of Johnny's career on records in conjunction with the premiere of a new TV series is the first time since the Partridge Family that a teen pop star makes his debut simultaneously on records and TV.

Besides the Partridge Family, the Monkees are another act which had both TV and record exposure simultaneously and it worked, just the way it worked for the Partridge Family and just the way Wes believes it can happen for Whitaker.

Whitaker is the red headed fella in the feature film Tom Sawyer and has also appeared in the recent TV series Family Affair.

Petula Clark has revealed that she writes songs and claims having written several under another name which became hits. Will she sing her own songs? No, she says, because it would look like she's jumping on the singer-songwriter bandwagon.

She speaks of wanting to do a TV special in Madrid involving doing a concert. The show would be shown in England and the States.

Jesse Colin Young, formerly the leader of the Youngbloods is going out alone on Warner Bros. His debut LP will be Song For Juli with personal appearances being arranged after the LP is out in September.

Following Mott the Hoople's successful con-

cert in New York at the Felt Forum, Columbia threw a lavish party that boasted Sly Stone, Iggy and the Stooges, Todd Rundgren, Steve Paul, Eagles and America... Buffy St. Marie and the Memphis Horns will be heard on the next LP by the New Riders of the Purple Sage... Sly Stone, that ole rascal, has taped a concert appearance in New York's Central Park for a TV special called Good Vibes From... Bob Dylan's new single of Knockin' On Heaven's Door is a cut from his Pat Garrett film soundtrack.

The Sunset Strip used to be really packed with people during the summer

months when it was warm in Los Angeles and there were a number of rock clubs. This summer, the streets are rather deserted (where have all the hippies gone?) and only the Whisky has been booking top rock acts. A few doors up the street a new rock theatre is taking shape. It will be called Roxy and should be open within the next several months. Across the street from the Whisky, a former striptease club, the Classic Cat, has gone straight and is now called the Classic and is featuring the musical Jacques Brel Is Alive And Well. When that closes, the room will be used for other musical presentations. So it looks like the Strip will be gaining some new talent locations.

Saxman Eddie Harris will write the music for the

film Black Belt Brothers with Atlantic releasing the soundtrack LP... the James Montgomery Band from the New England community of Cambridge has joined Capricorn Records, a label headquartered in the South of the country. The New England area is not particularly noted for its blues or country bands.

Billy Paul, El Chicano, the Impressions, Barry White and Love Unlimited and others headlined during the second annual Watts Summer Festival concert in the 100,000 seat Los Angeles Coliseum... Grace Slick is putting the finishing touches on her next Grunt LP after having recorded strings and other orchestral parts in London... Edwin Starr has cut an LP with producer Norman Whitfield.

Straight from the States

JAMES BROWN: Sexy, Sexy, Sexy; Slaughter Theme (Polydor) and LYN COLLINS (THE FEMALE PREACHER): How Long Can I Keep It Up (People). James Brown, meets Jim Brown! Yes, hot on the heels of his soundtrack scoring chores for "Black Caesar", Mr. James Brown has trotted out more movie music, this time for the latest in the Jim Brown-starring (and Jim Brown-produced) "Slaughter" series, "Slaughter's Big Rip Off". Remember, Billy Preston did the original "Slaughter" theme? Well, the impact of hearing the new James Brown theme as you sit back in your cinema seat is gonna be a whole lot different! From a slowly building suspense-filled start it explodes into a whole mess of funky butt Soul rhythm, before easing back into a comparatively melodic instrumental passage. However, that's only the B-side of J.B.'s new single, the score-culled A-side of which is one of those leaping whomping stomping dancers of the sort which he cut a few years back... hence, if it comes out in Britain, it stands a really good chance of hitting here. Add the kinda blatant title to a beat that sure don't quit, and Pop satisfaction is guaranteed! Then, for a Soulful turnabout, also from "Slaughter's Big Rip Off" comes The Female Preacher's lovely new slowie, penned by J.B. with Fred Wesley, and of course arranged and produced by James Brown - The Hit Man - Godfather of Soul (as both labels proclaim). Interestingly, the Lyn Collins record features an edited 3:32

"Part 1" version on the plug side and the full 5:29 "Part 1 & 2" on the flip. It's a rap-introed beauty with a gorgeous relaxed backing behind Lyn's tender then raw emoting, which obviously relates lyrically to Slaughter's girlfriend in the movie: as the words switch from a loving resignation to her man's dangerous way of life and become more agitated by self-doubt about her own inner strength, so the music becomes a churning whirl that accurately reflects her mental turmoil. Thus, if the only reason for a visit to the original rather drab "Slaughter" movie was to see Stella

Our exclusive service to RM readers. James Hamilton listens to records so far only available in the US.

Stevens starkers, James Brown's music will be reason enough to sit through the "Big Rip Off"... provided that they fit it all in the film. JOE SIMON: Theme From Cleopatra Jones; Who Was That Lady (Spring). Staying with black movie music, we find that although Joe Simon himself wrote and produced this theme for "Cleopatra Jones," the Brad Shapiro-penned / produced flip has rather more to do with the film's subject matter, actually mentioning her by name. The theme itself is a ponderous mixture of instrumental and vocal which never gets off the ground, consisting mainly of a monotonous cluster of clomps

infiltrated by torpid strings, brass and electric piano, not to forget a bit of the mandatory wah-wah guitar, over which Joe Simon bays and howls. He does actually say "Cleo" twice towards the end, but on the faster, synthesizer-introed flip he tells us all about "Miss Jones" - a gun-totin' afroed cutie taken to wearing mink boleros with bead accessories, if the paper sleeve pic's anything to go by. This flip is so much more lively and better than the A-side that it will be a good move of Polydor's if they make it the plug side when and if British release time comes. DEODATO: Rhapsody In Blue (CTI). George Gershweeeeen (as Peter Sellers once sang) wrote his "Rhapsody In Blue" in the mid-'20s, and played the piano part himself on its original recording by Paul Whiteman. I happened to grow up with a wind-up gramophone and the two twelve-inch 78s which comprised that original recording, and bought the Top Rank-released hi-fi re-recording by Whiteman while still a young lad in 1959. You may not be surprised to learn that "Rhapsody In Blue" is my favourite piece of music (as opposed to tune). So, along comes Eumir "Also Sprach Zarathustra" Deodato and - lol! - he does his inimitable restyling job, leaving the basic brass climax parts and a little bit of the main melody but chucking out the rest in favour of his usual jerky doodling. And, while it ain't Gershwin, it ain't bad... although I do think that as "Zarathustra" was only a series of climaxes to start with, it was a more suitable choice for adaptation.

U.S. CHARTS single album. Includes charts for singles and albums with columns for rank, title, artist, and label. Includes a star graphic and the text 'from Billboard'.