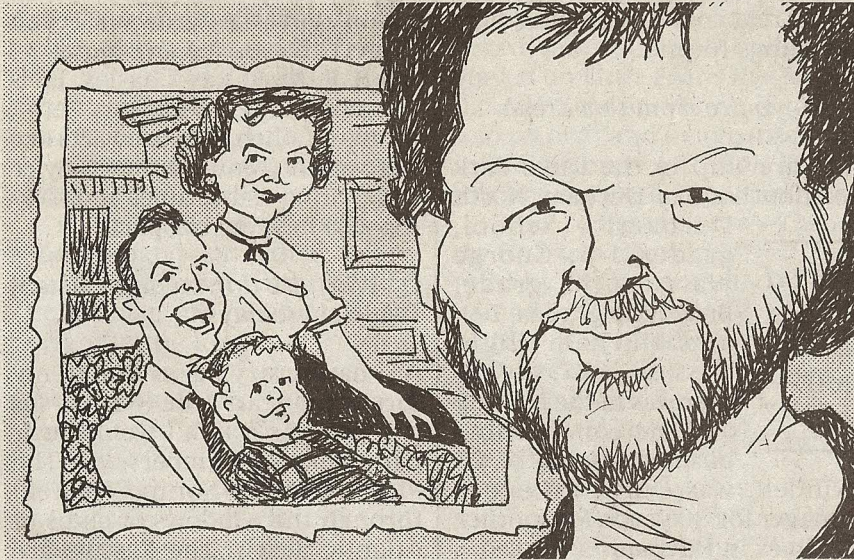


RIDDUMS

BY WILLIE PAINTER

VC ROGERS



Insert Beach Here

Andy Swindell's CD, *Living In The Baby Boom*, has been released and is being distributed by Ripete Records. All songs on the album are written by Swindell, and on many tracks he plays all the instruments in addition to handling vocals. The occasional guest star shines on this solo or that rhythm; however, *Living In The Baby Boom* is very much a one man project that shows a love of rhythm and blues, as well as rock and roll. Beach music? Well, that's how it's being marketed by various programmers.

I interviewed Andy Swindell recently. When the dust settled, these words remained.

Q: *Who do you currently play with?*

A: I'm playing with The Embers. We played around 250 dates last year. The coolest place we played was House of Blues in Chicago.

Q: *Is Micasa Studio, where the album was recorded, at your house, as the name implies?*

A: Si.

Q: *How do you start recording a track that you play everything on?*

A: Each song starts with a sequenced sketch. Then I set up the

drums in my family room and play. It's crude and noisy, but I play so loudly that you can't hear all of the crap going on in the room. The sketch is then erased from the tape, and subsequent parts are added. The rough order is bass, keyboards, then guitars, lead and background vocals, then any horn or decorative synthesizer parts. I build from the foundation up.

Q: *What is your primary instrument?*

A: Keyboard. I took piano lessons from Felicia Sears in Durham in the '60s. She played organ at the

"I think a good album should be like a letter from an old friend."

Catholic Church, as well as at the silent movies in the old downtown theaters. She knew that I liked music that juke, so she let me play boogie and ragtime pieces. It was real cool hearing her play the things for me.

Q: So you're from this area?

A: I grew up in the Duke Park neighborhood of Durham. North Durham School, grades 1-5; George Watts, 6th grade; Brogden, grades 7-9; and Durham High, class of 1971. My father was in the heating and air conditioning business. My uncle, Ed Swindell, was Durham County Manager for 30 years. My mother still lives in Durham.

I'm a Duke fan, a Carolina grad, and an N.C. State student. I now live in Raleigh with my wife Tammy and our son, Ian.

Q: I didn't realize I was a beach music fan until I heard this CD. Are you comfortable with that categorization?

A: If I had to categorize it, I would call this "rock and roll." But I'm certainly not uncomfortable with the "beach music" label. Those are the folks who know me from The Embers. I'm comfortable being a grownup. Thank God I don't have to be an old guy trying to be young. Nothing is uglier. I try to write songs from an adult perspective for adults. If kids happen to like the tunes, that's great, too.

I was at a party a few years ago with a bunch of 20-year-olds. They put on a record and said, "This is Rod Stewart when he was Rod Stewart." He's certainly not writing any "Maggie May" quality tunes any more. I attribute this to [having] fame from an early age. His life experiences have not been normal since his teens. What's he going to write about now? Having a pedicure?

My generation loved music,

but the heroes haven't aged well. The Stones are stupid. Even though I love them, the street-fighting-man, rebellious-youth crap is tired. They're grown men — why don't they grow up? I can't respect that image any more.

B. B. King, Ray Charles, Elvis Costello, Billy Joel, Tom Petty, Leonard Cohen, and even acts like Aerosmith (I love 'em — they're still writing viable tunes and kicking ass) have my respect.

Q: Who else do you enjoy listening to these days?

A: I have crazy tastes due to my formative years (the '60s versus the '50s) As a kid, I would hear bands like The Embers and The Platters (with Sonny Turner) through the windows of clubs at Atlantic Beach. The Rascals are one of my favorite all-time bands. I had Beatles cards.

I love Steely Dan, the Wallflowers, Was (Not Was), U2, the Black Crowes — any 60s soul music. Todd Rundgren and Stevie Wonder were always cool to me, because they each played many instruments on their records. That sort of inspired my efforts. Now it's so tough getting grown-ups together to make music that it's a necessity for me to play multiple parts. Plus, I have no budget. Andy's econo-record.

Q: It sounds like "Sat'dy Night" was a lot of fun to record. Was it helpful to have other musicians interacting with you, rather than doing the whole song yourself?

A: That song was recorded in pieces just like all the others. I just wanted to include a few buddies on the record.

Tony Davis came and played drums. Then I played guitar, bass, and keys to his performance. Finally, Audley Freed, who plays guitar with the Black Crowes, came over and played solos on that and two other songs in about an hour. So you see, the perceived interaction was actually each player reacting to preceding per-

"My generation loved music, but the heroes haven't aged well. The Stones are grown men — why don't they grow up?"

formances.

Q: *Are you happy with the album overall?*

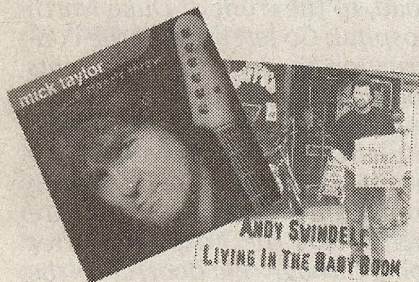
A: I think a good album should be like a letter from an old friend. One enjoys hearing from them every so often. It is my desire that folks like my little ditties enough to enjoy hearing more from me in the future.

It's also my desire to be a good husband and father, a good friend, and lead a normal life. These things are much more important in the long run.

Q: *Do you think Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone?*

A: Definitely! I saw him portray Abe Lincoln onstage in 1960. Hal Holbrook can't compare.

If your local shop doesn't sell Living In The Baby Boom, it can be ordered directly from Ripete Records at 1-877-864-6821, or online under "Artists" at ripete.com. •



REVIEWS

Mick Taylor

A Stone's Throw
Cannonball CBD29113

Mick Taylor is one of the stellar guitarists John Mayall recruited for his blues band in the '60s (Eric Clapton and Peter Green being just two others). After gigging with Mayall for three years, Taylor was tapped by the Rolling Stones to replace Brian Jones. He remained with the band from 1969 to 1975, during what many consider to be the Stones'

best years. In 1979 he released a self-titled solo album that showcased his exceptional guitar playing along with original songs and his own lead vocals.

Since then the world hasn't heard that much of Taylor; he played on Little Feat's live album (Lowell George was on Taylor's solo record) and he recorded the *Infidels* album with Bob Dylan, subsequently touring with Dylan.

Now comes *A Stone's Throw*, the first solo effort in 20 years by Taylor. Accompanied by rock steady pianist Max Middleton (Jeff Beck Group), with organist John "Rabbit" Bundrick (The Who) guesting on two tracks, *A Stone's Throw* is a solid collection of eight original tunes with two covers. "Morning Comes" has a spare, introspective feel with jazzy changes, while "Lost In The Desert" features a blistering sax solo from Andy MacIntosh.

The standout, however, has to be "Blues In The Morning." This is what Mick Taylor does best — let his guitar do the talking. ☆☆☆

Mick Taylor will perform at the Cat's Cradle May 3.

Andy Swindell

Living In The Baby Boom
Swoontune Music 7001

Andy Swindell has given us a marvelous collection of songs that sound, I would guess, just like he heard 'em in his head. That's what happens when you play almost every instrument and sing all the lead vocals to your tunes. I guess it can be called beach music; I guess Andy doesn't really care what it's called. To me it sounds like a groove has been found and worked hard on songs like "Girl's Got Rhythm." This is unpretentious, honest music that rocks.

Standout: "Sat'dy Night."
Love that funk. ☆☆☆



Willie Painter lives and works in Durham. He enjoys playing and listening to music.