The Rocket

Wishes you Season’s Greetings from Rat Fink

And Happy New Year from Ratchet Jaw
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM RATCHET JAW

AND ED "BIG DADDY" ROTH
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MATT GROENING

MEET YNGWIE MALMSTEEN
& WIN A SCHECTER GUITAR!

Celebrate New Year's Eve with
YNGWIE MALMSTEEN -- IN CONCERT!
at the Seattle Center Coliseum!

Come into Budget Tapes & Records
and register
to win:
1st prize-
An electric
Schechter guitar
2 tickets AND
Backstage passes
to Yngwie
Malmsteens
New Year's Eve
Concert!

2nd prize-
Yngwie
Malmsteen's black
satin tour jacket
Tickets &
Backstage passes

3rd prize-
Tickets &
Backstage passes
Contest ends
Thurs. Dec. 26th
Drawing held
Dec. 27th
Hello beloved readers. Welcome to yet another of our endless "special" issues of this, the World's Greatest Magazine. This month is our semi-legendary Year in Review issue, where we give you, our loyal and dedicated friends, the definitive word on what "went down" in 1985. Art fans will no doubt be left speechless by the appearance of Kartoonist and KarKustomizer Ed "Big Daddy" Roth as our cover artist this month. Mr. Roth's "radical" drawings of Rat Fink & Co. were a seminal influence on Rocket staff members in their younger days, and he was kind enough to send us the cover drawn on a T-shirt (which Art Director "supreme" Art Chantry is now proudly sporting around town to his many book signings). Our hard-working staff has compiled huge quantities of lists of every type imaginable in our giant collector's item pages. Mr. Final Word on Film Jim Emerson lays down the cinematic law in his '85 summary, and Minister of Metal KJ Doughon destroys the assembled molten hordes with some deft slices as he delivers his State of Metal 1985 speech. Our reviews section is jam-packed with the best overlooked records of the year (Richard Peterson's Second Album is not included). Radiating Editor Dennis P. Elchorn bravely exposed the atomic secrets of Richland one more time as he compiled yet another glowing report on the world's greatest accumulation of plutonium. Horror hostess Elvira went one-on-one with our own mistress of the pencil Gillian G. Gaar, and Roberta Penn uncovered the Vietnamese club scene in Seattle. We also have Northwest Xmas discs, Shays' Rebellion and the 1985 Sub/Pop wrap-up. And speaking of rapping, the Seattle Thunderbirds hockey team will be giving the always cagey Spokane Flyers a good rap in the mouth on Rocket/Budget Records & Tapes night, January 10 at 7:30pm at the Seattle Center Arena. We'll be hoping for a repeat of our last hockey night, when several over-zealous Rocket staff members were ejected from the stands for rooting for our beloved Thunderbirds a bit too enthusiastically. Now, that's the kind of holiday spirit we can "get behind."
AFRICAN BANDS

AFRICAN BROTHERS BAND INT'L ME MAAAME (AB Records - Ghana). A fixture on the Ghanaian music scene, Nana Kwame Ampadu is truly a musical wizard who improves with age. He is leader/songwriter/guitarist/vocalist for this highlife guitar band, and their rootsy style sounds better than ever.

MALOPOETS MALOPOETS (EMI/Enigma - U.S.). Certainly the best live African show in Seattle in '85 was by this black South African “mbaqanga” group at Bumbershoot. Their modern version of township pop sound gets the Martin Meissner treatment (the French producer who did the recent King Sunny LPs), yet it still captures the group’s exuberant mbaqanga beat and rich, full vocal sound.

AURLES MABELE NICOLETTA, FILLE DES ANTILLES (Afro-Rhythms - France). The best of the recent Parisian studia Congolaise music, with those wonderful layered electric guitars that riff effortlessly over the sweet vocals. The perfect African party music.

DOCTEUR NICO MIKALAY (Africa New Sound - Togo). This is unfortunately one of the last recordings of Dr. Nico, who died during 1985. He was making a comeback of sorts, and this recording demonstrates why he was dubbed Dieu de la Guitare (God of the Guitar).

LES WANYIKA GREATEST HITS (Polydor - Kenya). East African pop is often overlooked, because West African ju-ju and highlife and Congolese music are much more available here. Kenya’s Les Wanyika sound somewhat Congolese, but with a lighter touch, less dense and with more of a relaxed feeling.

SOMO SOMO (Stern’s Africa - U.K.). The hottest London-based African band of 1985. Zairian guitarist Mose Se Senga “Fan Fan” came up through Franco’s group in Zaïre, then played in Kenya, and made his way to London in ‘84 to put together a group of British musicians to play the latest soukous style.

SUPER RAIL BAND (New Dimensions in Rail Culture). NEW DIMENSIONS in Rail Culture (Grooveystyle/Ace - U.K.). A majority of the fertile Malian popular music scene since 1970, the Rail Band’s music is very different than much other African pop, as it draws upon Mandinka, the traditional music of the griots, and adapts it to electric instruments. The vocal sound in this part of West Africa is very Arabic in timbre, and the guitars play in a modal, soaring solositic manner.

THE LIFE ELSEWHERE TEN BUMBITE Bottoms Up (Vindaloo). LP Compiling, sometimes disturbing, thoughtful music tinged with acid (the burning kind).

COIL Scatology (Force & Form). K4200 LP. Far more healthy than 99.9% of what the media would have us waste our time on.

MARC RILEY WITH THE CREEPERS Shadow Figure (In Tape) 12” EP. Even father and son relationships come under their vigilant scrutiny.

FOLK DEVIL Fire & Chrome (Karbon) 12” EP. Nothing and nobody comes near to the Folks Devils’ venom-doused music.

INTIMATE OBSESSIONS Erebus To Hades (Third Mind). LP. A stunning debut. A duo that any clever major should be wary of.

JACOBITES Robespierre’s Velvet Basement (Glass). LP. Nikki Sudden and Dave Kusworth make music that is just at the point of falling apart for the listener who has. And that’s the beauty.

MEL-O-TONES Mel-O-Tones (Profe Plus) 12” EP. From Liverpool but probably a million miles from the mop tops.

VARIOUS ARTISTS A Reflex Compilation (Reflex). Any combination that features the collective genius of the Cretins and COIL locomotive and the Very Things must be included in a "best of" list.

THREE JOHNS Death of the European (Abstract) 12” EP. Quite simply an amazing record for radio, dancing or your own private Walkman world.


BEST AND WORST

Man of the Year
NELSON MANDELA

Best Venue
THE FABULOUS RAINBOW

Worst Venue
GORILLA GARDENS/ROCK THEATRE

Best Radio Station
KCM

Worst Radio Station
KCM/KCIS

Best National Label
RINO

Best Northwest Label
NETWORK

Best Band Name
PLAID WEINER

Worst Band Name
10 BULLS

Best Album Cover
YOUNG FRESH Fellows TOPSY TURVY

Worst Album Cover
UNCLE SAM

Whitest Song
“FIND A WAY” AMY GRANT

Blackest Song
“LET’S TALK (ABOUT SEX)” ONE WAY

Best Northwest Video
“DREAM (ABOUT YOU)” GRAPES OF WRATH

Best Videos
“SUN CITY” ARTISTS UNITED AGAINST APARTHEID

Worst Videos
“WE ARE THE WORLD” USA FOR AFRICA

You Spin Me Right Round Dead or Alive

Biggest Rip Off
PARENTS IN ARMS

Best Northwest TV SOUNDPROOF (CABLE 10, VANCOUVER, B.C.)

Biggest Flop
“GIVE JUST A LITTLE”

Best Seahawk
PAUL SKANS

Best Mariner
PHIL BRADLEY

Best Husky
MO HILL

A DOZEN NORTHWEST BANDS TO WATCH

BRILLIANT ORANGE MYTH SHAYS’ REBELLION NEW AGE URBAN SQUIRRELS FRANKIE MARTH
### TOP 10 NORTHWEST RECORDS

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<th>ROBERT CRAY</th>
<th>False Accusations (LP)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN</td>
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<td>JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP</td>
<td>Scarecrow</td>
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<td>JOHN FOGERTY</td>
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<td>Diamond Dog</td>
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<td>WELLS StINHORSE</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>ROBERT BRIANN</td>
<td>Shakedown Street (Arista)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>EDDIE ROBERTSON</td>
<td>Playin' Big Town Blues (Epic)</td>
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### TOP 20 ALBUMS

1. **HUSKER DU** - New Day Rising
2. **JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP** - Scarecrow
3. **JOHN FOGERTY** - Centerfield
4. **ARLENE RAY** - Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood
5. **JOHNNY WINTER** - Blues for the Modern Mind
6. **BOB WAIT** - Diamond Dog
7. **WILLIE NELSON** - Red Headed Stranger
8. **ROBERT SEATZ** - Diary of a Madman (Trick)
9. **ROBERT BRIANN** - Shakedown Street (Arista)
10. **EDDIE ROBERTSON** - Playin' Big Town Blues (Epic)

### TOP 3 NEW BANDS

1. **AGENT STEEL** (California)
2. **CRAZY LEE** (Texas)
3. **ROBERT CRAY** (Chattanooga)
singing was popular in the South during the 60s and with Al Green's old 7:" The "cool ruler" at his best, again.

FREDDIE McFERRIN &
DENNIS BROWN
Raggamuffin
(Greensleeves/RAS) 12:" Killer harmony from reggae's most consistent talents.

WAYNE SMITH Stenglieng Mix Down
remix (Greensleeves) 12:" Some say the root of this year's malaise, except this is the
ultimate version.

SOPHIA GEORGE Girlie Girlie
(Winner) 7:" Humor and social comment
even! Yet another example of superb
styling destined to be overlooked by pop
fans.

YABBY YOU Fleeing From the City
(Shanachie) LP. When a legend speaks
you have no choice but to listen.

THE ROBOTICS Man and Machine
(Ariwa) LP. Neil Fraser aka The Mad
Professor proves one more time that
dub is his forte.

KEITH DOUGLAS You Move Me
(CSA 12:" Sadly overlooked lovers' gem.

MICHAEL BLACK Little Did You
Know (Youth Talent) 12:" Lovers' style in
a hard dance ball production.

TIPPER IRIE Stenglieng Finish
Already (UK Bubblers) 12:" A fitting way
to finish from the UK's top ranking
chatterer. — NORMAN BATLEY

1. Sun's Greatest Hits
2. The Every Brothers Songs Our Daddy Taught Us
3. The Zombies Live on the BBC 1965-1967
4. The TV Theme Song Along Album
5. The Best of the Ensaybots, Featuring Friday on My Mind
6. Wrestling Rocks, Real Rock 'n Roll As Sung by the World's Greatest Professional Wrestlers
7. The Monkees The Birds, the Bees, and the Monkees
8. The Treeclimbers The Treeclimbers (LP)
9. The Wailers Live at the Castle (LP) reissue
10. Richard Peterson Second Album (LP)
Ruben Blades’ Pan-American Vision

Ruben Blades y Seis Del Solar
Escenas (Scenes)
Elektra Records

* BY BRUCE NEED *

Ever several years or so, some type of indigenous Third World music gets touted as the next big thing. A selected star is hyped in the rock press, tours are arranged, there is even possibly a major label signing or two. Usually, after failing to dent the American market in any significant way, the genre in question settles in a cult level: pricey records available in good stores, occasional shows in cheap clubs. This happened in the mid-'70s with reggae and in the early '80s with African music. Now it appears to be happening with Latin music in the persona of Ruben Blades.

What's interesting about these swells of hoopla is that they don't develop at a grassroots level, but are instead whipped up by media intellectuals. Part of this has to do with access: people who score free discs through their jobs can afford to experiment with what they listen to. But unfortunately part of it also has to do with the fact that success for these genres is conceptualized in terms of making it with the mainstream white audience. This isn't too offensive in terms of, say, King Sunny Ade, who neither has an ethno-geo-political signature nor is an export success.

But there's another side to these sudden bursts of media attention, and that is that people hear about great artists they might otherwise not come into contact with, like Bob Marley or Sunny Ade. Ruben Blades might yet be in that class. Born and raised in the barrios of Panama, he claims to have first learned English by listening to Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak Hotel.' He attended law school in Panama, but left home in 1974 to come to New York and become a musician. A series of highly successful records on Fania Records made him a star throughout Latin America, and in 1984 his American major label debut, Buscando America, won critical hosannas. Blades recently appeared in a movie, Crossover Dreams, but he's also returned to law school at Harvard and intends someday to go back home and use his power as a popular entertainer to push for social change.

Given my ignorance about this type of music, my response to Blades' new disc Escenas (Scenes) is a pure gut level one. Supposedly, the new thing about it is that the border beat punched up loud where it should be.

However, the big attraction is Blades' lyrics. He sings in Spanish, but the record jacket is bilingual and reveals a socially progressive artist of enormous literary gifts. Blades says that he was politicized by the Panama Canal riots of 1964, where US troops shot Panamanian protesters. In 1982, his record about US intervention in Central America, El Tiburon (The Shark), was removed from record stores and earned him death threats. For all its slicked-up sound, Buscando America contained several excellent forthright songs about life in Central America, from the disappearances of people on their way home from work to the murder of village priests. Escenas is less specifically topical, but still impressive. Like Latin writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, whom he publicly admires, Blades has a superb knack for narrative, capturing the pain, boredom, sudden joy, and sheer duration of life in a way far more literarily complex than the work of the best equivalent American rock artists like Bruce Springsteen. It's enough to make me want to learn Spanish, so as to be able to feel the full emotional weight of lyrics like "Cuentos Del Alma" ('Heart Dues') hit home powered by their musical context. All is not lost though, because Blades' electropop sound transmits a lot of the intensity.
fffi

Africon music. Now it appears to be happening with Latin music in the person of Ruben Blades. What's interesting about these swells of hoopla is that they don't develop at a grass-roots level, but are instead whipped up by media intellectuals. Part of this has to do with access: people who score free discs through their jobs can afford to experiment with what they listen to. But unfortunately part of it also has to do with the fact that success for these genres is conceptualized in terms of making it with the mainstream white audience. This isn't too offensive in terms of, say, King Sunny Ade, who neither has an ethnic fan base here nor it tinkering with the traditional elements of his sound to make it more palatable to white people. But Latin music has rocked the house in American barrios for generations, and Ruben Blades has tailored his sound for the white mainstream (primarily by replacing brass with synthesizers). So, being part of this media boom, from major write-ups in the New York Times to major airplay on American radio, the hoopla has been loud.

Blades recently appeared in a movie, Crossover Dreams, but he's also returned to law school at Harvard and intends someday to go back home and use his power as a popular entertainer to push for social change.

Given my ignorance about this type of music, my response to Blades' new disc Escenas (Scenes) is a pure gut level one. Supposedly, the new thing about his sound is that a double-barreled keyboard surge replaces the traditional salsa brass. For me, this works better on Escenas than on Buscando America. The early album is too fusionoid for me, too much tinkly jazz piano burying the rhythms. Escenas seems considerably tighter, with good synth hooks, the piano reserved for melodic effect, and that great, chunky, south-of-the-

January 1986 THE ROCKET 25