



ROCK



With so many people saying that "the scene is dead," it should come as no surprise that so many bands, promoters, record companies and club-goers have chosen to resuscitate the past.

You can hear the echo of late Seventies punk-pop, new wave and power pop ringing through the clubs as of late, but for the past couple of years, the flavor of choice has been early-mid Seventies pop and (ahem) disco. Yes, the Ghost of Music Past has reared its polyester head and is shaking its booty on the dance floors of Los Angeles via bands like Boogie Knights (supposedly comprised of members of an Eighties Sunset Strip hair band), who have become so big that they've spawned offshoots like Disco Inferno and Bootie Quake. And now, the musical time machine has gone back a few years to the early Seventies, and hot on the heels of the Brady Bunch resurrection, it looks like the Partridge Family is experiencing a huge popularity comeback. Pictures of Keith Partridge adorn flyers for Seventies clubs and stare back at you from the covers of local underground fanzines. The Number One smash single "I Think I Love You" blares out of club P.A.'s, patrons sing along to "I Woke Up In Love This Morning" and wear pins with the face of former teen idol David Cassidy.

There's even a Partridge Family tribute band called Sound Magazine, who plays every Wednesday at 9 p.m. at FM Station, opening for the aforementioned Boogie Knights and/or one of their incarnations. Get there early—it's packed by 10:00. Call FM Station at 818-769-2220 for

details. It's been happening in New York City, too, where the Razor & Tie record label has reissued five CDs by the band their catalog calls "America's first family of pop"—The Partridge Family Album, Up To Date, Sound Magazine, Shopping Bag and the highly sought after A Partridge Family Christmas Card.

Razor & Tie works hand-in-hand with the Seventies Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to Seventies disco and pop music (you'll see their ads in the Partridge Family CDs and their logo on the free pins they hand out at local clubs). All five albums include new liner notes, rare photos and a remarkably high level of sound quality. Check out the Razor & Tie catalog for more information. Contact them by e-mail at razntie@aol.com or by snail mail at 214 Sullivan St. Suite 4A, New York, NY 10012. You can also call them at 212-473-9173.

On the other side of town, Thursday nights at the Viper Room—dubbed Mr. Phats Royal Martini Club—are going for the swing sounds of the Thirties and Forties. DJ Dean "The Sultan of Swoon" Miller digs into his massive record collection to play songs your parents danced to, or "cut a rug" to, as they used to say.

But what's been packing them in for the last few months? A local dance troupe called the Pussycat Dolls, who do a 20-minute routine that combines elements of neo-cabaret, drag, burlesque and the Ziegfeld Follies. Organized by local choreographer Robin Antin, the troupe features five central members, including Christina Applegate of Married...With Children fame. Call the Viper Room at 310-358-1880.

The Coconut Teaszer will be hosting a benefit concert for local musician/songwriter/producer Parthenon Huxley, whose wife has cancer. The fine folks at the Teaszer—that's Len Fagan, of course—will donate 100 percent of the door to help offset the huge medical bills. Already confirmed for the February 19th gig: John Doe, Edna Swap and the Eels (featuring "E"). Call the Teaszer at 213-654-4887 for more information.

—Tom Farrell



Pussycat Dolls, w/Christina Applegate (2nd from right), and Dean Miller

COUNTRY



Kathy Robertson, Stranger Abe Manuel and Bonnie Owens

Congratulations are in order: Big House (featuring lead singer-songwriter Monty Byrom) has been signed to MCA/Nashville Records by none other than President Tony Brown himself. It seems that the Grammy winning producer and his top A&R man, Larry Willoughby, came out to L.A. for a private showcase at SIR Studios and signed Byrom and the boys on the spot. Big House, who are managed by Robbie and Deb Randall (who own and operate the always hip alternative roots rock hot spot the Alligator Lounge), are scheduled to release their MCA debut sometime before summer. This is good news, not only for the band, but also for everyone out here on the West Coast. Another Bakersfield boy makes good!

Another California honky tonker has also inked a deal with a major in Nashville, as Gary Allen has signed with Polydor. His band, the Honky Tonk Wranglers, includes top songwriter Jake Kelly.

The legendary Merle Haggard released his 69th album on January 26th. Simply titled 1996, the early word on the street is that this one is very special. Merle was in town recently for a two-night stand at the Crazy Horse with his band, the Strangers, along with the incomparable queen of the Bakersfield sound, Bonnie Owens. Owens is a songwriter whose work is finally getting the attention it deserves, and you can expect to hear more from Bonnie in the future, as she shows up on Kathy Robertson's soon-to-be released CD, along with Big Sandy, Rosie Flores, Katy Moffat and an array of big guns.

Speaking of Rosie Flores, she was victimized by an unscrupulous agent recently and left with a pile of bills. Look for local manager and community leader Allen Larman to join forces with Kathy Robertson on February 11 at Jack's Sugar Shack in order to put on a special show to help Rosie cover some of these expenses. Wanda Jackson, Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys and some surprise guests will perform.

The Shack also hosted an all-surf band benefit put together by Robert Douglas for Toast of the Neptunas. Douglas, the man behind one of radio's best weekly hours, Happy Trails, raised over \$300 for Toast, who lost most everything in a fire. Look for Robert every Thursday at midnight on KXLU (88.9 FM).

Look for a big record release party at Hollywood's favorite and best honky tonk, Jack's Sugar Shack, on February 29, when Wagon Wheel Records, one of Southern California's historic C&W labels, releases the first solo CD by L.A.'s "King of Twang," Cody Bryant. The party is open to all and will include the Losin' Brothers, the Barry Holdship Band, the Plowboys, Brantley Kearns, Rick Shea and some special treats. Be there—it is also "Sadie Hawkins Day," which could mean almost anything!

Steve Cochran performed recently at the Barndance, along with the Byron Brothers. There is always good rockin' when Steve's in town. He also showed up at the January edition of Western Beat, hosted by Robin Pearl, along with the wonderful Reeva Hunter.

Ronnie Mack recently celebrated eight years of Barndances, as well as his 10th year at the annual Elvis Birthday Bash. While both were a success, the Elvis party suffered from some stale performances and a slow pace. Highlights of the night included Wanda Jackson, Rosie Flores, Dwight Yoakam, Florida Slim and the Barry Holdship Band, all of them seemingly "channeling" the King. Also of note was the inclusion of L.A.'s most beautiful and talented bass player, Ruth Gunderson.

Finally, some acts to watch in the new year include not only Florida Slim, who is hot, hot, hot, but also Chiachi Cisco and the Hula Monsters. —Jana Pendragon



The Byron Brothers, Steve Cochran and Cody Bryant