

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

Thirdear: Is your new album out on Atlantic yet?

Lou: No, it won't be for a long time. (To Doug) You should get over here 'cause it's not going to be an all Lou interview. I ruined my voice in the studio the other day that's why it sounds so funny.

Thirdear: Is the new album finished?

Lou: No, won't be finished for awhile. It's fantastic.

Thirdear: The second set you did last night, you told me all that was going to be on it.

Lou: Yeah, right.

Doug: Yeah, all those.

Thirdear: That's about what, six or seven songs you did?

Doug: Was it that?

Lou: Yeah, we did seven songs.

Doug: Seven?

Thirdear: Seven?

Doug: One of them ran together, two songs ran together.

Lou: We do lots of songs, it's really weird.

Doug: That was all new stuff. We have new stuff we haven't recorded yet that we've been doing almost a year, you know, over the period of the last year it's been gradually worked in. Like new new stuff that's just been written, like in the studio before we recorded.

Thirdear: Is the atmosphere better now working with Atlantic?

Lou: It's fantastic. Can't say enough for it. One is a record company... you know... great studio... great producer...

Thirdear: Who's producing?

Lou: Adrian Barber. He's also the engineer so that...

Doug: ...cuts out that...

Lou: ...five or six people there. It's really nice... we're doing... uh, writing a lot of stuff while we have the tapes going.

Thirdear: Are the songs generally long in length?

Doug: No.

Lou: No, all short.

Doug: Offhand, everything's under five minutes. As long as it takes to get the song across, got a lot of two and three minute ones.

Lou: It's just fantastic because we've never really made a record before. All our records we made in one or two days, you know, and we kept the tape running, sort of cut them live. We didn't do that for this one, you know, all our albums sound like basement tapes. So it's a new experience and it's fantastic, it's really fantastic.

Thirdear: The music you're into now, can you relate that back to, say, the first album.

Lou: Yeah, you could tell it's us. There won't be any difficulty spotting it.

Thirdear: It's easy to place in the progression?

Lou: Oh yeah. Everything has its own time. But I like this the best. This is the closest that the reality ever came to matching the concept, because what we're hearing in our heads is finally coming out on record, one thing that never happened before 'cause nobody understood how to make a record and we never had any producers who understood what we were talking about, so we always did it ourselves and since we didn't know what to do we just let the tape roll. We were happy if it just got on the record.

Thirdear: Can Barber relate to what you're doing or is he just the man they chose to do it and he's doing a good job?

Doug: No, once we got used to each other, like we had these songs and he didn't hear them like we did, so we sang them for him, then he heard it and then he could go ahead and help us make it work, we just had to get him to understand.

Lou: He has to translate through the machine. It's more than just some-

body being assigned. ... all we're doing is really simple things, it's been very difficult for us to find somebody who understood us in the studio.

Thirdear: Lyrically, how do the songs compare with your older material?

Lou: They really are rock and roll songs. ... more so than ever before.

Thirdear: I noticed in a couple of your songs there were some chord changes that you wouldn't expect to find in a regular rock and roll song.

X Lou: We're always toying with, you know, me and Dougie, the idea of doing symphonic rock and roll songs without being tacky about it, so, you know, if you were conducting an orchestra and you went ba-ba-ba-baaam, you know, well how could you do it with guitars. We've got a couple of those things in there. They come across sounding simple and they are kind of, but if anybody decides to track down what we're actually doing they'll have a hard time. The whole idea is to make the thing sound easy so that anybody can listen to it... they'll not get caught up thinking it's complicated and the same with the lyrics.

Thirdear: Did you find yourself turned off by the fact that a lot of people tied you in with the heavy scene in New York?

Lou: Not turned off. Just a lack of information. But it was mainly our fault, I mean, from the information that was given to the people that's what they thought and that's what anybody would think, you know, with the information that was available.

Thirdear: Based on record sales, did you find that more people were showing an interest in what you were doing, by buying your albums as time went on?

Lou: They've always sold for some reason.

Doug: They sell very steadily. Consistently. As opposed to some albums that sell a tremendous amount for a few months and drop off. They just keep selling.

Lou: The first one's been selling a long time. We don't get played on the radio and we haven't had a record out in a year and a half now.

Thirdear: Do you think you'll pull a single off this one?

Lou: We're not going to pull one off. We're specifically making one. We've never made a single. This time we're making a single specifically to be a single. It's so dynamite, it's unbelievable. If you heard it you'd just shit.

Thirdear: I heard the set last night and that was tremendous, ... except for that little confusion on the drums that one time. [Bassist Doug Yule had taken over for drummer Maureen Tucker who was sick.]

Doug: I was practicing the other afternoon and I got carried away.

Lou: The stuff is just tremendous. And for the first time it all sounds like we want it to.

Thirdear: Do you think people will accept that after hearing three Velvet Underground...

Lou: Well, there's a whole new audience around...

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: ...one that doesn't even know about the other three albums. As for the other people, most of them hated the third album. People who would have liked the third album didn't buy it because of the first two and people who bought the third because they liked the first two felt burned. So, which really didn't affect us as far as we were concerned. But the new one is right where it's supposed to be and it's so much fun. The new one's really fun. Yeah, 'cause we were so involved in all that and it just got a little too serious for our taste and being a rock and roll group shouldn't be too serious. We realized that we had to do what we were doing 'cause someone had to do it. We had vast objections to the whole San Francisco music scene.

Thirdear: On what basis?

Lou: It's just tedious, a lie, and untalented. They can't play and they certainly can't write.

Thirdear: Is that the top groups you're talking about?

Lou: Yeah.

Thirdear: The Airplane, the Dead?

Lou: The Airplane, the Dead, all of them, with the exception of Creedence, who I like a lot. Like he's doing this incredible link up between that old force and he's still got a contemporary feel, he's right there.

Thirdear: The amazing thing is they all feel the same. They're different lyrics and they're different riffs, but they all feel the same.

Lou: That's one of the problems...

Doug: They lose track of where the music comes from... they start thinking it instead of playing it. Especially the Dead. Now I saw the Dead when they just started and they were just a bunch of scuzzy kids just having a ball playing rock and roll... they were a lot of fun. But then they started thinking about what they were doing too much.

Lou: I can get off understanding the kick it was to play "Love Light"... anybody who was in a rock band knows like when you get out there what a goof it is. Then on the other hand there's the professional, now you're not an amateur and, like to me, they're amateur, like our whole thing, I like to think we're professional. I remember, you know, they used to say the definition of an amateur is doing it purely for love, well I think the definition for professional is you do it purely for love, but you don't have any of the excuses of an amateur. I mean, if you're going to do "Love Light" you've got to cut Bobby "Blue" Bland or else you've got no way to do it.

Thirdear: Right.

Lou: Or else you've got no, no way to do it. Now they're playing for, on the other hand, you say they're playing for the whole audience that would not get to hear it and all. They can't play, they can't play. He's not a good guitar player. I mean it's a joke and the Airplane is even worse, if that's possible.

Doug: Jerry, like he'll play a solo like a half an hour, but if he'd done it for like two minutes... literally, he plays the same notes over and over again.

Lou: You listen to the Beatles, or you listen to "Gimme Shelter" by the Stones and Keith isn't playing many notes, but the notes he's playing are so thought out, so perfect, you know, maybe he doesn't think them out, maybe it just happens, but whatever occurs there, there's not that many and what's there is perfect, just perfect. And you know, you just admire them no end. The Stones are just... just so good. And you just can't take these other groups seriously.

Thirdear: Yeah, but don't you think a lot of people get off on something like the Dead because it's so loose? That's the way a lot of people are, they are so loose that they get these notes in there that don't belong in there, they just ignore them.

Lou: They're settling right now, it's what people are settling for... like they're getting third hand blues and all that. It's just a fad.

Doug: Back when the Beatles were just beginning, when they were really big and how the people, the vast numbers that really got involved and just had such a ball screaming and yelling and everything. And nobody does that now.

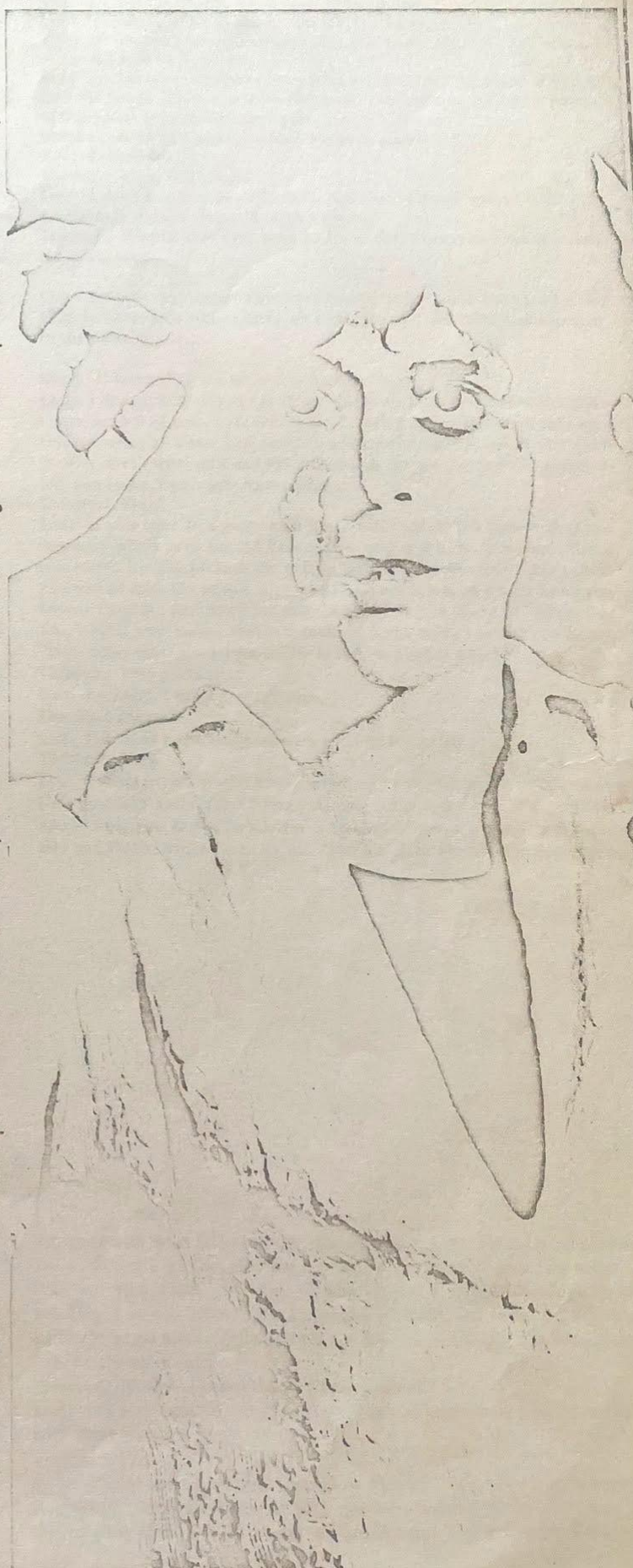
Lou: No one learned the lesson of the Beatles which was that within two or three minutes you can do all you have to do and if you have a groovy guitar thing there's no reason it's got to go on forever. You know, some of these people into drugs, like they can't go on straight and that's it. So a lot of people are putting out records literally for heads and forgetting about everybody else, about the people who aren't heads and you shouldn't have to get that way to get into a record, a record should get you right off. You shouldn't have to work to get into a record. That's why I love AM radio.

Thirdear: You love it?

Lou: Love it, I adore it. 'Cause on FM radio to hear one decent cut I have to listen to six bad ones plus the DJ coming on as my hip friend. And I'd much rather hear AM radio which is really honest, like I love the jingles and I love the songs being played real quick and the fast talking DJ, I like it. AM radio is what it is, FM radio is coming on with so much nonsense, you know...

Doug: There's one good FM station in New York, which is CBS, 'cause it's almost an AM station.

Lou: I'm the same way, when a record's really popular, if I like it, I like to hear it a lot. Bill Drake's programs are fantastic, and I like "Spirit In The Sky" and I never hear it on FM. They never play the groovy AM hits, like



they just don't play anything and some things are just tremendous.

Thirdear: I think it's because most of the people who are FM disc jockeys are hip, but they're not heads.

Lou: They're not hip, they know the words, they're not hip.

Thirdear: Yeah, they know the words.

Lou: I don't think anybody's hip, I think the AM guys are much hipper. You know, I like it when they say "WABC loves you".

Thirdear: Have you ever met any of them?

Lou: No, we don't move in the same circles.

Thirdear: Yeah, right.

Lou: But it's... I know where they are on AM.

Thirdear: They're very obvious about it.

Lou: And I like where they are on AM. And I know where they are on FM too and I don't like it. I've met a lot of FM dj's who are really nice, and



then there are a whole mess who aren't, but on the other hand, there's a lie going on... like I'd rather hear a Therablum commercial 'cause a Therablum commercial is what it is, a Therablum commercial.

Doug: Right.

Lou: You know, and some of the dj's will really goof you, but on FM you start getting a whole explanation, when they sit there explaining... turn it off...

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: ...just turn it off. And those who play us too and they play us for all the wrong reasons. We get played for supposedly being a drug group. We're not representing drug culture, we're just a rock and roll group. That is why I thought the third album totally ended all that. It was so obviously from the other side.

Thirdear: Is there any symbolism in, say, progressing from the drug thing into the Jesus thing?

Lou: No, except that's where we were at. You know, you always amplify things you're reflecting. So, you know, I was thinking things seemed so negative, things that we were putting down were rough, but it was what it was really all about. You know, all the time everybody was running around saying flowers, we were saying "are you crazy, look at what's going on, look what's going to happen" and then it did happen, how many years after we put all that out, but to show the other side we put out the third album, which is all the way on the other side. It just seems normal, you're not going to stay in the same place.

Thirdear: You were saying last night that you enjoyed doing the old songs because they were good and everything. I was thinking today things like "European Son" and "Venus in Furs", things like that, that when John [Cale] left...

Lou: We've done those, well not recently... just got tired of those... didn't really like them that much.

Thirdear: Did they lose the effect without John's playing?

Lou: No, not especially. I personally am much happier with the way it is now.

Doug: It's like you can't live in the past. You have to keep...

Lou: That was all then. Those were good for something to do then, but I wouldn't want to stay there, I wouldn't want to stay in the state of mind that's represented on those albums and so we didn't.

Thirdear: Are your songs now as honest as the songs you used to do?

Lou: Now that's a silly question.

Thirdear: No, like uh... like when you did uh...

Lou: That assumes I could do something dishonest.

Thirdear: In other words, are you satisfied with them.

Lou: Oh sure. The whole album should speak for itself.

Thirdear: I haven't heard anything about you know, heard the new album or haven't seen a set so I don't...

Lou: No, but three albums of everybody being up front, you sort of figure that the fourth album would be the same. Those albums are over a period of five years. We only did one a year.

Thirdear: John Cale produced Nico's albums, right?

Lou: Yeah, right.

Thirdear: Yeah, that's right.

Lou: I don't like that esoteric stuff. Like we've never wanted to be that far out even though people thought we were.

Thirdear: It's just that they were so far in that where you were appeared far out to them.

[Here the interview was overwhelmed first by police sirens and then by two German Shepherds who insisted on singing second and third part harmony to the sirens' lead.]

Doug: It sounds like the hounds of Baskerville.

Lou: I like stuff that you can sit and listen to, like I think Joni Mitchell's album is kind of nice, but, you know, I can't listen to that stuff very long because when all's said and done I'll put on the Stone's 'cause that's the power. That's what rock and roll's all about. Lyrics that get too complicated, you know, Dylan gets on my nerves.

Thirdear: Yeah?

Lou: If you were at a party with him I think you'd tell him to shut up. Anybody who's been around knows how easy it is to do that whole thing, you know, it's like fucking the people on a mass level. And I don't think you should fuck the people on a small level much less on a mass level, you know, 'cause it's just mind fucking. And, you know, listen to "Blowin' In The Wind", you know, that just makes you go stale, I mean, you know, "How many miles must a seagull fly before you call it a bird?"

Thirdear: Very poetic.

Lou: Lyrically, I think Jagger's tops.

Thirdear: Jagger.

Lou: I'm much more intrigued with what he has to say.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: I mean anybody who knows anything knows what he's talking about. He's up there havin' fun. More yet, he's doing it for you as a goof, you know, like, you know, he's lettin' you kind of know where it's at on his side and that's tremendous. In, uh, "Jumpin' Jack Flash". I'm much more



intrigued with what he has to say. I'm intrigued, I am, I'm interested. You know, like if I had to pick my top ten, they've got at least five songs... "Jumpin' Jack Flash", "Gimme Shelter" is just unbelievable. Like an intellectual I sit and listen to the Kinks and that stuff and really get off, then I just get bored after awhile, can't listen to it for too long. The Beatles are, like, on the other side.

Thirdear: Have you heard the McCartney album?

Lou: It's very smooth, very... boy, you can hear where a lot of Beatle's stuff came from.

Thirdear: Right.

Lou: Really incredible, but just oh so smooth. It's, uh... he's a great songwriter. We were listening to... we were hearing this original tape of the original CET BACK album before Spector and it's really fabulous.

Thirdear: Like the bootleg copy?

Lou: Yeah. Like the single that got out, the stuff was overdone.

Doug: Well, you should hear the album.

Lou: They just make the songs up bing, bing, bing. They have to be the most incredible songwriters ever, I mean, just amazingly talented. I don't think people realize how sad it is that the Beatles broke up.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: That literally means there's not going to be anymore Beatle music.

Thirdear: Yeah, but you listen to McCartney, you get a good chunk of it there.

Lou: Yeah, but it's not the same, you see, you don't have those Beatle harmonies.

Thirdear: Like *ABBEY ROAD*.

Lou: Even if it's just knowing that it's not the Beatles. Even if it literally, the way it really was with the Beatles was Paul would sit down and do one whole thing and then John, just knowing it's not the Beatles changes it. Thirdear: That was a major mind fuck.

Lou: Very sad. Like for me. I liked them. Really there's nothing like sitting around here listening to those songs.

Thirdear: Do you think Spector's going to pervert their sound?

Lou: If the one released is any indication, Christ, it's got tons of violins.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: I wish the Stones would put "We Love You" on their 'hits' album. I love to hear that.

Thirdear: It's like "Old Black Shoe". Nobody turned over their [Beatles] single it was on. It's on the album and everybody's diggin' it. It's on the *HEY JUDE* album.

Lou: That's the incalculable damage done by low-lifes like Zappa. I think audiences are finally understanding what they were paying money to see, which was somebody that had the gall to be putting down an audience.

Thirdear: Right.

Lou: You know?

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: You know, audiences are fabulous.

Thirdear: What do you think of his music?

Lou: I think he's probably the single most untalented person I've heard in my life.

Thirdear: Really?

Lou: He's two-bit, pretentious, academic, and he can't play his way out of anything. All he does is bring in little classical things and that's supposed to show you're educated. And the thing is he can't play rock and roll, like he makes fun of "Louie, Louie", but he can't go up there and really do it. Like it's one thing to make fun of "Louie, Louie", but try and actually do it. You know, like nobody's ever cut the Kingsmen's version, you know, that great music of its' time guitar solo, and you know, so, you know, it's so easy to make fun of these things, but you know, try to do it for real. Like, you know, make fun of the Beatles, try to do a song, try to do a really pretty song they did.

Doug: That's the hardest thing in the world to do.

Lou: He can't do that 'cause he's a loser. And that's why he dresses up funny. He's not happy with himself and I think he's right. [laughter].

Thirdear: Have you ever heard anything of the 13th Floor Elevators?

Lou: Yeah, I didn't like them. They're just sick. People take drugs and go off and they think anything they're playing is tremendous, you know, electronic effects and...

Doug: If you can't get up on a stage and be absolutely straight and get off on what you're doing, literally, and move an audience, then you're no good, then you can't do it.

Lou: There's nothing higher than actually playing. And if just the sheer thing of just playing doesn't do it for you then you're really in serious trouble. You know, because there's nothing like getting up there knowing that you're just there on IT, you know, no outside stimulants.

Thirdear: Is there a time in your music when you had to be wrecked to do it?

Lou: No, when you're wrecked you play bad.

Doug: It's more of a setback really. 'Cause I've gone on stage just a little bit, you know, like a little bit drunk, or a little bit high or something and you don't know what you're doing, literally, 'cause you lose track of things.

Lou: We've done it together for such a long time and know everything so well that we, you know, really avoid anything like that happening 'cause, one, you want to be able to depend on everybody being a hundred per cent

and you don't want them hearing funny things on a funny level. They get very self-indulgent, you know, people like that get into hearing these things, well, the audience isn't hearing them. You know, like who cares, you know, you're just playing for you, and that's not what you're up there for, you're up there for them. They're the ones who paid the money.

Thirdear: Do you get the feeling when you play that you're playing for a bunch of people who came to see four junkies?

Lou: No.

Doug: No, not anymore.

Lou: 'Cause I know a lot of people... well...

Doug: Every now and again you get one...

Lou: All the people that would have done that have seen our show and just don't come back because it's so obvious we're not. They used to show up but they were so disappointed they left.

Thirdear: How about when you play a place for the first time? You've been here several times.

Lou: It's very interesting what happens then 'cause they yell out they want to hear certain things and we say no. So, usually, they hang around, they hear the music, they fail to understand the intelligence in back of it, you know, I was telling him [Mike] before, "Heroin", you know, the kind of person singing that, which, you know, really isn't us, you know, I'd hate to think that was really totally where I was at. But, you know, it's sophomoric, and it's kind of hostile, and it's not much fun, but that's the way people take it, the audience, a certain segment of it. But it's not us 'cause if we were really that way there wouldn't have been a second album.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: Same thing with "Sister Ray", if that's the way we really were there wouldn't have been a third album.

Thirdear: Is that just a riff, just a, I mean, when you listen to it, it's heavy, but when you think about it later it's...

Lou: It was supposed to be a musical novelty, like, it had characters and...

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: We, you know, hang around a very funny scene 'cause it's New York City and all, you know. You know, we just had to get certain things out of our systems and we did. And we feel there were certain things happening

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...somebody should say something about so we did and got killed for it.
Thirdear: Yeah, do you identify less with what's going on in New York now?

Lou: I don't identify with anything. I identify with myself.

Thirdear: Didn't your music at first identify with that?

Lou: No, it identified with us. That was us... who happened to be going through whatever we went through in New York City.

Thirdear: It was just you relating the impressions and experiences made on you through your music.

Lou: We don't lie, that's the whole thing. All those other people are lies, untalented lies, I keep telling everybody and nobody cares. We used to be quiet, but I don't even care anymore about not wanting to say negative things 'cause things have gone so far that somebody really should say something. You know, people like Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead, all those people are just the most untalented bores that's ever come up. Just look at them physically, I mean, can you take Grace Slick seriously? It's a joke, it's a joke. And the whole thing is the kids are being hyped on this on the FM radio. All... well, now it's finally dead, the whole San Francisco thing is dead. Like you know what was really funny about it? The first Moby Grape album I thought was good and then they got sucked into the whole thing and you know...

Thirdear: Do you consider the Springfield's music honest?

Lou: Buffalo Springfield?

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: They were pretty good. As groups go they were really right up there. They did some really nice things.

Doug: But they didn't have the background to hold it together, you know, just to stay...

Thirdear: They all seemed like soloists... you know, loose people, folk singers who just went out and did their thing.

Lou: You know, having a group is really hard. Like that song "Helpless" by Neil Young is just tremendous.

Thirdear: Young has a great understanding of almost everything.

Lou: I don't know if he understands, I don't really like the lyrics, but I love the chorus. Like, I like the whole song and I switch off his lyrics in my

head, but that's the level I can't get off on. Like, ideally, you should be able not to have to switch off any level. Listening to most people I switch off everything except the drums. With those and other people, lyrically I turn them off, because I don't want to be embarrassed for them. 'Cause the level they're always talking about is on the bottom looking up. And I'm not very much interested in hearing, I'd much rather hear it from the top, you know, or just someone who doesn't even see a top or bottom. If you can, see if you can interview Zappa tonight.

Thirdear: Pardon.

Lou: You can even interview Zappa tonight, he's in town. You know, if there's one more rock and roll group that starts saying well, Stockhausen, ... you know, did these people ever listen to Stockhausen? That's the most boring shit in the world, you know, who are you kidding? That's why rock and roll's so fucking great, 'cause it's right on target, you know, it's the most amazing thing. You know, a room full of people and you put on a single and they'll do the same thing, almost everybody. It's pure magic.

Thirdear: Do you think your new sound will catch on?

Lou: I think it's going to be phenomenal.

Doug: If you'd heard what we've been doing in the studios you wouldn't even have to ask that.

Lou: You know, we're pretty cold with ourselves in the studio, you know, pretty objective, like this is the first time I ever thought an album would sell.

Doug: You know, when you can write a song and then record it and sit and listen to it played back over and over again for four and five hours or more and still not get tired of it then you know, I mean, beyond a doubt, you've got something.

Lou: They're just phenomenal, in the nicest way.

Thirdear: How many cuts are going to be on the album?

Lou: Probably around ten or twelve.

Thirdear: Really, that many?

Lou: Yeah, we got tired... we started long songs and we like to think we ended them. We got in there first and left early.

Thirdear: Just from talking to you I can see that you're probably one of the most misunderstood groups going down, you know, coming from the first three albums.

Lou: Only around a certain group of people, see, most people never heard of us.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: So we're not misunderstood at all.

Thirdear: But everybody who does hear you, like all the junkies have "Heroin" and they play it, and if they come to see you they would be coming to see four junkies.

Lou: But on the other hand, there's not that many people like that around. There are some places in the United States where people are so unaware they don't even know we're around yet. And they won't even know about it unless they discover it and then you're going to have to set four albums that cover a spectrum of experience that beats anybody else on the scene.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: They're all about what really's going on. "Tommy" is such, Jesus, how people get sucked into that, so talentless, and as a lyricist he's so profoundly untalented and, you know, philosophically boring to say the least, you know, like that new record "The Searcher", "I ask Timothy... I wouldn't ask Timothy Leary the time of day, for cryin' out loud.

Thirdear: Somebody said it was a step backwards for them.

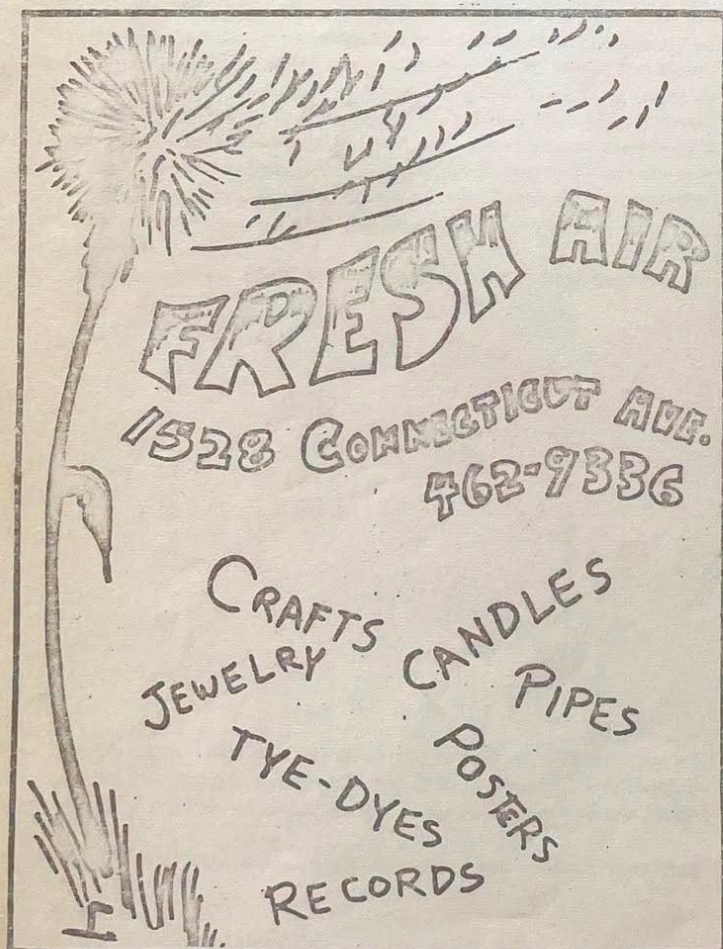
Lou: Who cares what Timothy Leary has to say. Who cares what any acid person has to say. If you play our three albums chronologically it's an opera, it could be staged as a musical thing 'cause it covers the growth of us as people from here to there and in there is a tale for everybody else in case they want to know what you can do to survive the scenes...

Thirdear: Do you see the four as all parallel or just the fourth one like a step up?

Lou: One hopes, you hope to get better. I think we're better than when we started. It's not like we're technically that much better.

Thirdear: No?

Lou: It's not like we really can play that much better than when we started although we certainly can, but that's not the thing, instead, as people, I think we've gotten better, like just, in relation to each other. You know, we're not the same people we were and, you know, next time we won't be the same people you're talking to now. And that's always a lot of fun 'cause with us you always find it out on record. Everytime we've gone



these changes we've had a year to think it over and then put what represented on the record.

Thirdear: Well, before with the first couple albums, the first three, uh, not having been noticed nobody was writing you up or bothering to interview you, and, like, all they had to go on was the information put out in your albums and they got their interpretation from that and made their judgements and nobody could tell that it was...

Lou: There's more somebody can write about using us without us being interviewed 'cause our natural history starting the light shows, creating St. Mark's Place, putting the extra screens up for Bill Graham, who's another low life, I mean, you know, helping him with the Fillmore, you know, a lot of people don't have principles. Like they say, Bill Graham's a shit, but they work for him. We don't. We say he's a shit and we don't work for him. That eliminates Frisco and New York. That means, uh, putting your money where your mouth is. And these people don't want to do that.

Doug: They're not willing to take chances.

Thirdear: Do you think the media has ever understood you?

Doug: They haven't had a chance, it's not their fault, it's our fault.

Thirdear: Through the records?

Lou: Well, we didn't... they didn't have enough information to work with. People say our early albums are scary and I understand what they mean and I can see why they'd say that. I might even say that now listening to them, you know, I understand what they mean. We reproduced things so accurately we made it scary. There's a tale in it someplace. But, uh, you know, that used to be when we played, when we talked they were scared of us.

Thirdear: Yeah.

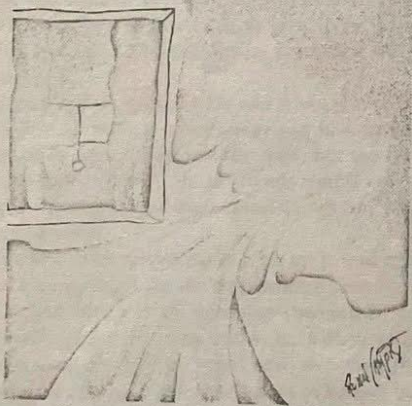
Lou: You know, and there might have been a real good reason, audiences are really shrewd, you know, like I really have this... I really just think audiences are fantastic. Audiences can make you go higher than you ever thought you could go.

Thirdear: Yeah, good response.

Lou: First of all, a group can make you go higher than you ever could go alone. Then a group in front of an audience, an audience can make the group go higher than the group could go by itself. Like when you're in the studio, the machines are the audience and you play to them and you try to recreate the thing. Like, we're tremendously naive in studio technique, about all these things. But what we try to do, is like we're really trying to do the songs. You know, the beginning, the middle, the end, the lyrics, you know, that's why it sounds so good and the one thing everybody's been trying to get out of us is philosophy and all of that and that's the one thing we don't do. And you know, that's, I know everybody wants on the next album and that's exactly what they're not going to get.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: Because, nothing could be more boring than to hear our ideas on



these subjects. Who cares what we think about politics. All we are is we play rock and roll. And, you know, the rest of our opinions, I don't understand why they need them, although I know people ask rock people everything.

Thirdear: Do you think you can relate better to the audience now than you could before?

Lou: Much.

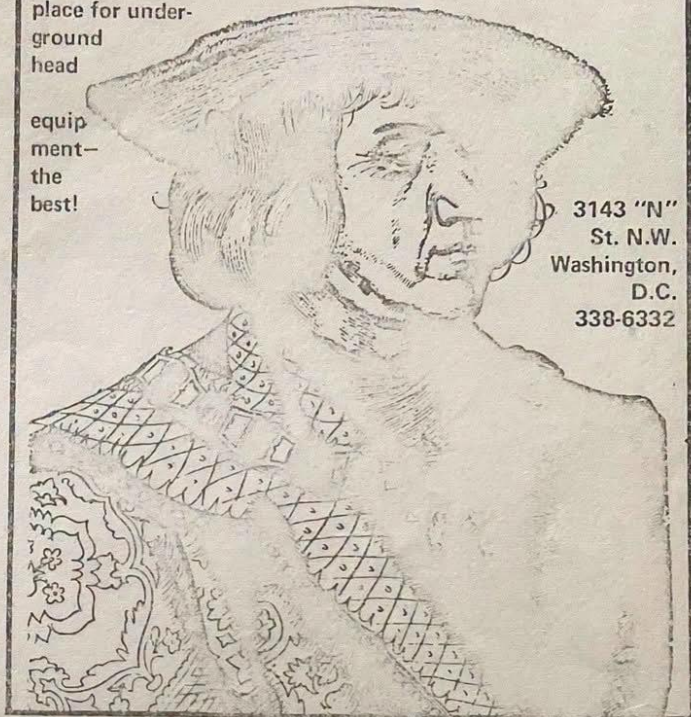
Thirdear: It's a two sided thing.

Doug: Yeah.

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Lou: It took us a long time to understand being on the stage. You know, we were nervous 'cause we were getting hassled in so many directions. And at one point we were so centered in the scene, you know, and all these things were happening to us and we didn't understand what was happening. The main thing is we sat around and realized we really wanted to be a rock and roll group, you know, if God showed up tomorrow and said what do you want to do, I'd say I want to be in a rock and roll group, yeah, if he showed up tomorrow and said what do you want to do, I'd say I'm doing it. Do you want to be president? No. Do you want to be in politics? No. Do you want to be a lawyer? No. What do you want? I want to be a rhythm guitar player.

Thirdear: Do you think you could have made this step with the old label?

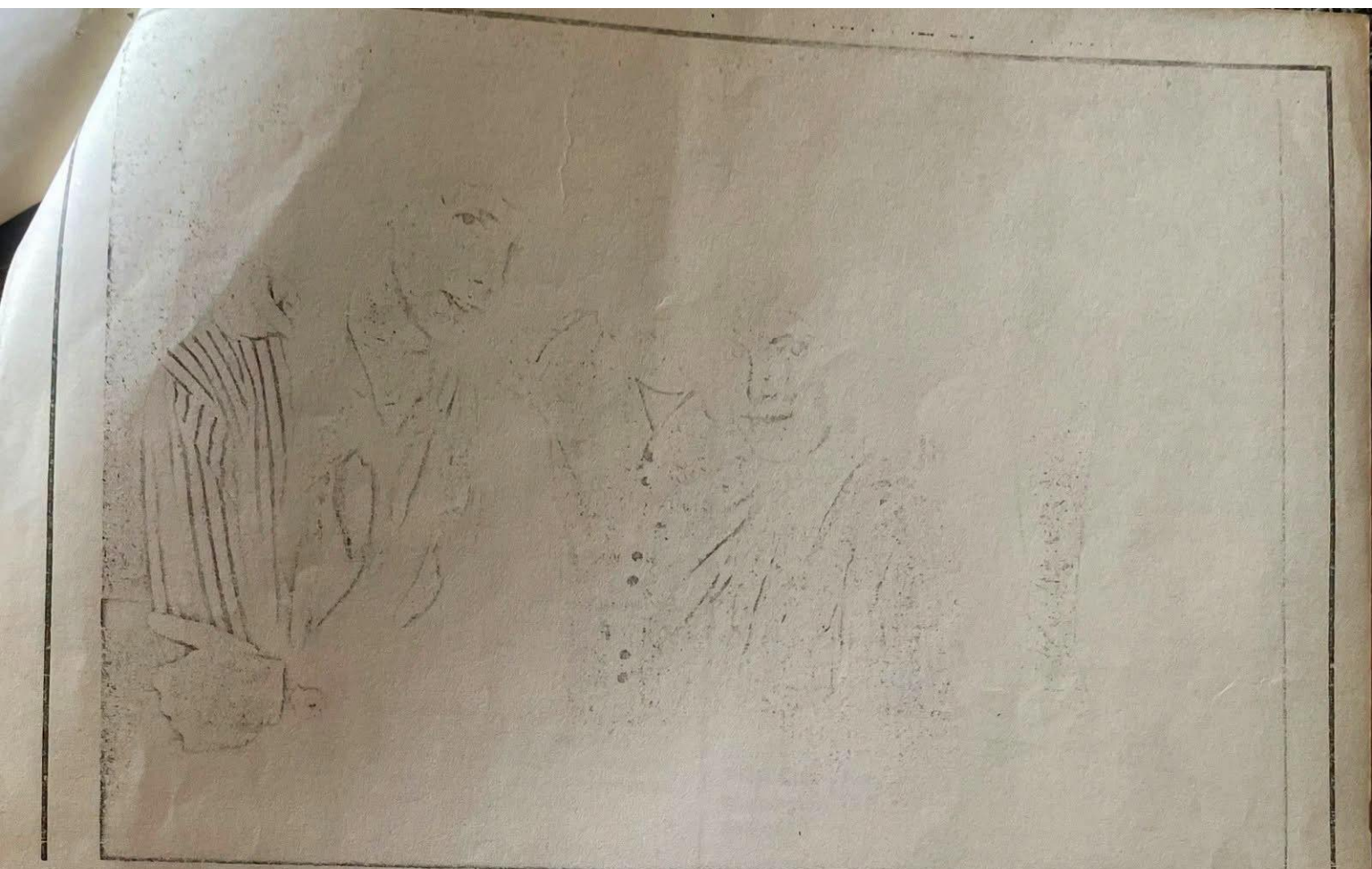
Lou: No. We needed to be recorded, you know, to have a record. You know, a record should not be a tape of people playing live which is like all our three albums were. They were not produced the way you would normally think a record would be produced. They just... we just played it just the way we did live and left. 'Cause we had no producer and we had no time. No choice.

Thirdear: Did, like, the strength of the new material almost require a change of labels, you couldn't do it properly with...?

Lou: We, as people, required a change of labels, we were getting so soundly trounced at that other place.

Doug: When we were there they were extremely, everybody, nobody knew what was going on.

Lou: I understand it much better now. I mean they had no ideas, they didn't care, they weren't interested in anyone, they, you know, noone was there to help us, I mean, you have to understand, we didn't know anything about recording. And we didn't know who to ask: We don't know people in the music business. And we don't hang around with anybody, we don't go to parties. So, uh, you know, people who are supposed to be very sophisticated are suddenly in a very, very naive situation. You know, just us having our songs and arrangements, you know, what the hell are you supposed to do with them. And then you get a couple of days in the studio and just try and put them down and that's what happens. Now is the time, I feel, that now we deserve to make a record the other way because there's



enough that people can get familiar with to be able to follow us into the next album, they'll be able to follow it, and not have that distance. The whole thing is audiences, audiences are just so smart. They really can tell, I mean, they can tell a lot of things. That's why I just despise Frank Zappa in front of audiences telling them they're stupid.

Thirdear: He's insulting.

Lou: Audiences aren't stupid. They have certain information you give them and on the basis of that information they go as far as they can go.

If you want to change it you have to give them different information. Thirdear: Do you think the rock media is relating what's really going on, in the proper way?

Lou: Things don't move that quickly and when you're talking about everybody, you've got to include everybody, not just freaks, or longhairs, or weirdos, everybody, everybody, not too slow, not too fast, for some people it's too slow, so that's where it is. It offends almost everyone so that means it's going right through. You can't speed things up, you can't slow them down either, you know.

Doug: People also need something to look up to and right now there's not very much to look up to. Like the Beatles have been floundering and they don't really know, like sort of searching themselves, and when you see someone you thought knew, you know, back then when they were cute, everybody said like, the Beatles, you know, and then they found out that the Beatles weren't sure so, uh, that left a lot of people in the lurch, so now, people want something to look up to, something positive.

Lou: Like you had with the Beatles, like on top of the world, all this money, all that everything, turning around telling everybody that they were so unhappy.

Doug: Right.

Lou: Now, what about the average guy beating his head. . . , they're unhappy. . . , what about the poor guy working nine to five in a job he hates and knows he can't get past that. You know, you've got some other character telling you it's awful up here. So, you know, then what, okay, you know, like I think they, you know, I really can't tell, if you got up

there and it really is terrible you should lie, it would make a lot of people happy. Groucho Marx has this great song that Maureen sang, "show me a rose to leave me alone" and absolutely. . .

Thirdear: That line in itself. . .

Lou: That's all there is to it, and, uh, and everybody's trying to do it in their own way and they don't need other people telling them what to do. That's the last thing in the world anybody needs. We just play some rock and roll and people dance and get some rocks off to it. Fabulous! That's enough, that's enough. You know, there's few enough bands that do it, more of them have heavy philosophys than. . . , anybody who was a hunchback would have to write like that. Is there a parallel to emotion in music?

Doug: Ah, who cares, you know.

Thirdear: Does the audience, the way they related to your music before, would that sort of help them along with what you're into now?

Lou: Well, we have, I mean, they knew we weren't kidding and we knew we weren't kidding so, and the only way to go through something is to go right into the middle of it and push hard enough and you should come out on the other side and what's happened to a lot of people they didn't really go into the middle, they went to the side of it and so they're still there. . . , they never came out on the other side, the only way to do it is to not kid around. Storm coming, you go right through the center and you may come out alright. Most other people don't even know there's a center.

Thirdear: Or they have the wrong people showing them where the center is, getting things from Leary and people like that.

Lou: Well, they're taking people like Jerry Rubin and Abie Hoffman. It's really sad if you have got to choose between Judge Hoffman and Abie Hoffman. They're both deplorable, you know.

Doug: Neither is positive.

Lou: It's a shame that some of the things you might believe in and the people who are leaping about and yelling it are just as bad as the other people, you know, I'm in favor of everybody trying to straighten themselves out. Leave you neighbor alone. He's got his own problems. If he's trying to do something for you, help him out. There are a lot of old people

really kind of worry me, people being hostile toward me, instead of understanding. Definite lack of compassion on the side of the law plus the violence and the destruction and all that is going to create violence and destruction on the other side. You can't be violent and expect the other side not to be violent.

Thirdear: Too many are followers 'cause the radicals organize the movements and the people can dig the idea of the movement, but the radicals have ulterior motives.

Lou: They're the leaders on top of everything else. You know, it's an illusion, you know, nobody's talkin' for me that's for sure, you know, I don't want anyone talkin' for me.

Thirdear: How do you feel if someone forces their politics on you?

Lou: How can they do that?

Thirdear: I mean these really heavy radical rappers that come up to you and attempt to maintain a complete control over your mind by just, you know, babbling forcefully into you.

Lou: That doesn't have any effect on me.

Thirdear: Yeah.

Lou: If people want to go along with these things, go on and go. If they don't, that's all.

Thirdear: Weird.

Lou: It's really a weird country when you think about it. Very big, young, neurotic country that's gone through a lot of stuff. What other country would televise all these things, report all these things, absorb this incredible stuff, spew it back out, you know, and it's all very confusing, really, really confusing. I can't imagine people wanting to follow Jerry Rubin or those people.

Thirdear: Blind faith.

Lou: Yeah. I could even understand an extreme reaction, it's just, you know, the left deserves the right. Now watch what's happening, this phenomenal polarization, you know, it's fascinating to watch what happens, it really is. I just know that I don't know enough, I just know enough to stay out of it. 'Cause, uh, unless I want to make it my whole life.

Thirdear: Right.

Lou: You know, and I don't know, I personally don't know how to go about going about that. All I know how to do is be in a rock band and that I can do pretty good, you know, nothing that great, but pretty good, and so that's it, you know.

Thirdear: Have you ever gotten... someone approached you and demand you do something else?

Lou: Sure, they say why don't you do a benefit? We'd say no. And why not? We don't believe in it and I don't do anything for free. I really believe in people paying for things.

Thirdear: Yeah, otherwise they'll expect it.

Lou: Exactly.

Thirdear: That's true.

Lou: Everybody wants immediacy, wanting it right now, and like, you know, we've been working on this thing five or six years and we haven't gotten any immediate thing back out of it outside of ourselves, turning ourselves on ourselves with an audience.

Doug: We have to wind it up so they can put the animals back up here.

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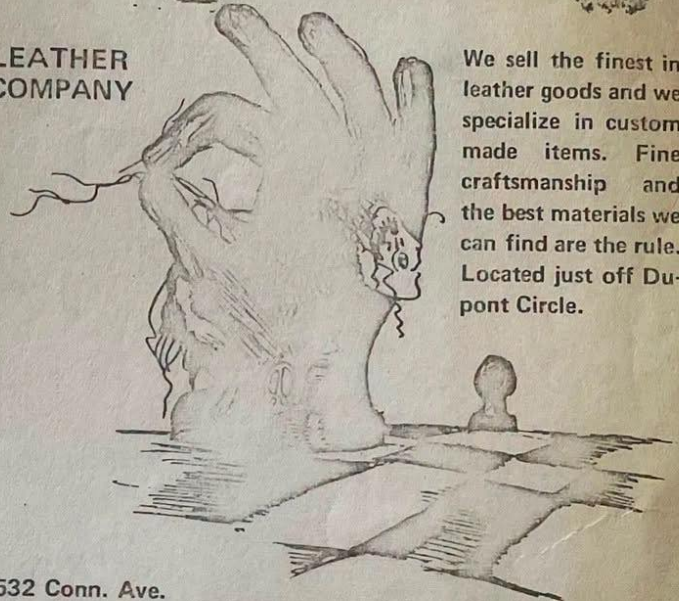
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