

New Revolutions

by Jerry Morrell - Record Reviewer

'What's in a Name?'

Although it's easy to make a good record — let's face it, all one needs are some good songs, several fine musicians and a dandy singer or two — it's not so easy to *title* a good record. In fact, as I look back on the thousand-year history of rock 'n' roll, it seems that it's darned hard to come up with a good album title.

The thought struck me as I was looking over one of the best-titles albums of this decade, Metallica's *Kill 'Em All*. Now there's an album title — three simple syllables, yet it says ... uh, *so much*. Plus, it kind of flows off your tongue. Say it a few times and see if you don't agree.

In any case, it goes me wondering about album titles in general, so I chose to look into the matter. Surprisingly, or perhaps not, I can find no correlation between neat titles and great music therein: The Doors' *Alive*, *She Cried* is a fine title for a live album, but surely not their finest work. Conversely, the dreadfully-titled *Plastic Ono Band* is a very respectable John Lennon album.

I have guidelines, and they're admittedly subjective, but they're not unreasonable. The way I figure it, eponymous titles are bad if for not other reason than to stop rock writers from using word eponymous. Pretentious titles, which seem to be in vogue, are also bad. Thus it is fair to condemn America's *History* and R.E.M.'s *Document* to the same bad-title hell, where they join all the Police and Rush titles, but not Uriah Heep's wonderfully named *Very 'Umble*, *Very 'Eavy*. It's safe to assume that the title of almost any live album is a bad title. It's also safe to assume that any Yoko Ono title is every bit as good as the music it contains.

... sic it contains.

I've got a bunch of other rules, but they mostly boil down to this: if I don't like it, it's a lousy title. Like I said, not unreasonable at all.

So what are some of the great and not-so great album titles? The Beatles had some good ones, with *Revolver*, *Rubber Soul*, and *Beatles for Sale* heading the list. Their worst was *Let It Be* — and to show you the perversity of album title aesthetics, *Let It Be* was a great title for the Replacements, mostly for the same reasons it was so bad for the Beatles. It's all rather mystical. Of course, the Replacements have never had a really bad title yet, even avoiding the live curse with their puckish *The Shit Hits The Fans*. And *Tim* was sheer inspiration for an album that it, as far as I can discern, devoid of Timness, while *Tommy*, and *Arthur* were terrible titles for The Who and Kinks, respectively. Both albums were filled with songs about people named Tommy and Arthur. Tragic, in its way.

To be fair to The Who, *The Who Sell Out* was a splendid title, easily their best. To be fair to the Kinks, their album titles don't get much worse after *Lola Vs. Powerman And The Money-Go-Round, Part 1*. Didn't get much longer either.

But on to some really great titles. 1969 was a great year — if neither the Grateful Dead's *Aoxomoxoa* nor Pink Floyd's *Ummagumma* surpassed the Everly Brothers' incredible *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us*, it wasn't for lack of vowels. Slade's back-to-back *Slayed* and *Slaydest* could've only been improved by issuing *Slayder* in between. Speaking of back-to-back titles, can we ignore Lightin' Hopkins's *Dirty Blues*, which was followed

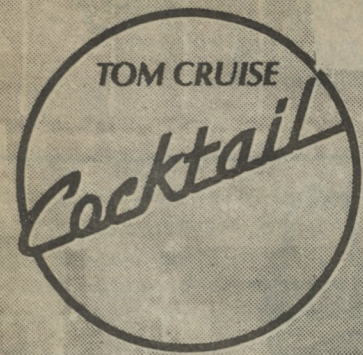
by the presumably niftier *Low-down Dirty Blues*? And if you want a statement, what could be bolder than *There But Four Small Faces*? And, as much as I like Joe Walsh's *You Bought It...You Name It*, I must say it was topped by the Pink Fairies' immortal *What A Bunch Of Sweeties*. Poison could spend a good chunk of eternity simply thinking about that one.

Great titles, it seems, come out of nowhere, and many exceptional artists have fumbled the ball when it comes to naming the product. Were I Bob "Planet Waves" Dylan, I'd certainly be humbled by AC/DC's *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*, one of the most Swagging alliterations in rock history. Were I Mick Jagger, I'd feel the same way about Cream's *Disraeli Gears*, the Jesus and the Mary Chain's *Psychocandy* or War's *The World Is A Ghetto*. And were I Elvis Presley, I'd be dead.

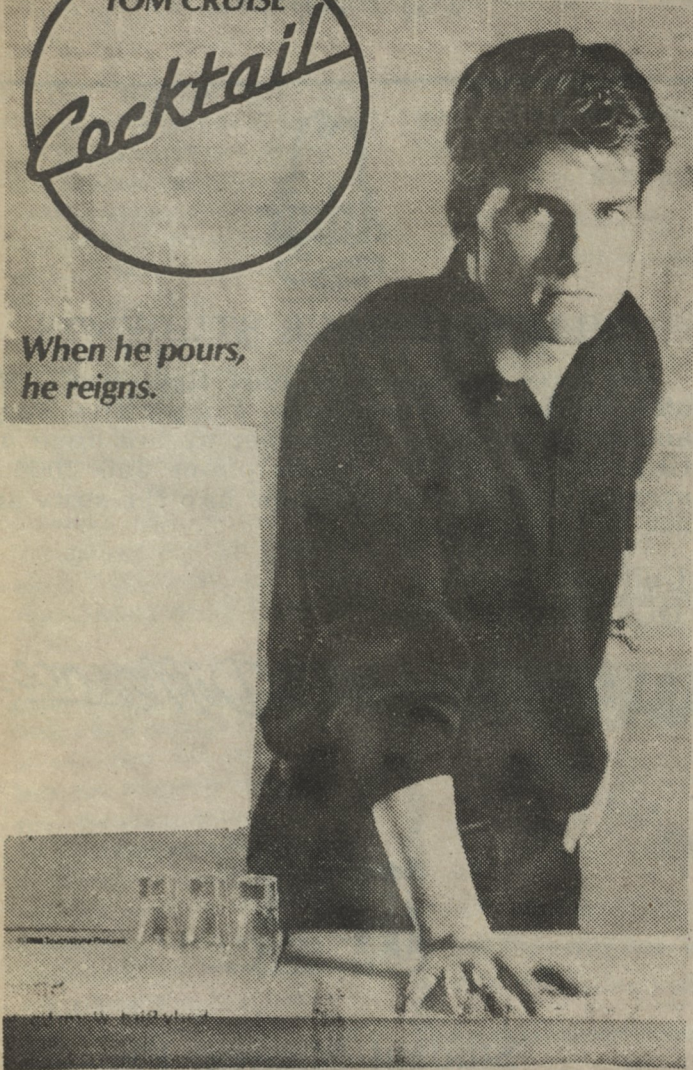
But speaking of Elvis leads us to the all-time champion of album titles, *Bo Diddley*. In addition to his seminal sound, Mr. Diddley churned out titles that can only be described as colossal, from *Hey Bo Diddley* to *Go Bo Diddley* to *Bo Diddley Rides Again*. For years, I believed there simply couldn't be a better title than *Bo Diddley's A Gunslinger*, until I discovered the existence of *Surfin' With Bo Diddley*. Face it, when you think of surf music, who do you see in your mind's eye but Bo Diddley?

Which is where I might've ended this until I discovered — to my astonishment and chagrin — that Pye Records in England released an EP back in 1964 called ... now savor this ... *Bo Diddley's A Lumberjack*.

Jesus Christ, Bo Diddley. Kill 'em all.



When he pours, he reigns.



Cocktail

Prince Edward Cinema

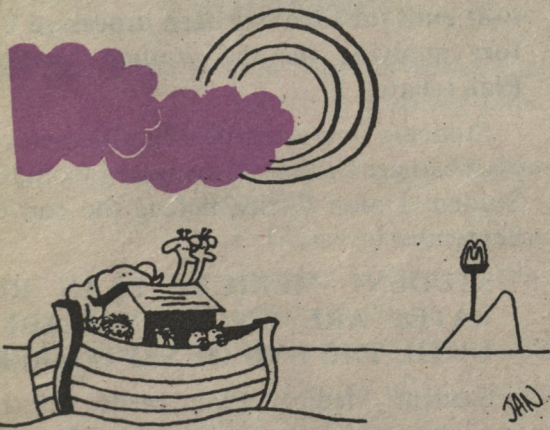
Starring: Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown

Well, everyone in town obviously saw the preview and came to see, or just came to drool, as it took me three tries to get into this one!

I did both and was not disappointed. Tom Cruise is his usual sexy self and one finds it difficult to concentrate on the plot. Plot, yes, there is one. Typical,

boy meets girl, boy chases girl, boy gets girl. In the middle of all this, Bryan Brown teaches Cruise some fancy bartending that I'm sure some of our local establishments will try to emulate for their customers.

If you want blind worship entertainment this is it: for the men - the bar scene, for the women - Tom. One doesn't need a lot of mental capabilities for this one. I give it a B-



Contrary to popular belief, it was not a dove that prompted Noah to believe that the flood was over