



MAY 1980

MARK ANDREWS

Big Boy the debut album of the U.K.'s Mark Andrews and The Gents, conforms everything you've heard about England's New Wave. And then some:

- Its rough/tough raw edged vitality.

Don't expect any concessions here to the sticky/sweet schmaltz of MOR, no soaring strings, no melodic meadowlarks. The music harks directly back to Buddy Holly and Bill Haley, maybe very early Rolling Stones. *Big Boy* is strictly rock 'n' roll. U.K., 1980.

- *Its essential silliness.*

If you're going to probe for the existential message hidden in a song like "Laid On A Plate," you're probably on the wrong track. The songs, all written by Mark Andrews, except for a slinky, low-slung rendition of the classic "Born To Be Wild," are intended to make you smile, feel good, and if the spirit's willing, bop around a bit. Whether it's "In A Jam" or "Don't Let Go" or "West One" or "Let Yourself Go." It's clean, punchy, visceral rock. And roll!

- *Its semi-bizarre bow to show biz.*

Mark Andrews looks a bit like a misplaced Martian, circa 1955. He combs his hair forward to a point in the middle of his balding forehead and wears fancy shirts and a formal dinner jacket in performance, while "The Gents" appear in maroon dinner jackets. On stage, in the clubs and pubs in the U.K. where the band has enjoyed its first taste of recognition. "Even when they play a venue where the band isn't known yet. Mark always manages to get his audience going." Little wonder he's most often compared to Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson. It's in the tracks.

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Mark Andrews, 26, hails from Portsmouth and began his musical career as a drummer, switched to acoustic guitar, and while making the rounds of folk clubs began writing his own material. In time he added electricity and formed a rock band with a keyboard man and electric violin "for Frank Zappa excursions." That aggregate evolved into a cabaret band called Edward Bear with a lad named Joe Jackson on piano. Edward Bear became Arms and Legs (with Joe Jackson) and had a couple of airplay hits including "Any More Wine."

When Jackson departed to launch his solo career, Andrews decided to give it another shot as Mark Andrews And The Gents. The band consists of Larry Toltree on drums, Martin Sawtell on bass, Jap Kemp on organ and bass and Barry Lines on lead guitar.

Manager Jazz Summers heard an early demo tape which he immediately took to Mike Nobel, who heads up A&M for A&M U.K. The resulting album, *Big Boy*, was produced by Simon Boswell.

Check it out.

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