Sweet Thursday

Where is Nicky Hopkins these days? Since he left Jeff Beck's eponymous band, where did he go? And what is he doing now? We are not sure, but we are fairly certain that Hopkins is still active in the music business, possibly as a session musician or producer.

Junk

Listen to the album titles of following three masterpieces: Supermarket by the Flamin' Groovies, The Detroit-Memphis Experiment by Mitch Ryder, and Especially Henry by the Underground All-Stars. Are you excited? Don't worry, you're absolutely right. How record companies can put out this trash is difficult to comprehend.

The first album by the Flamin' Groovies, Supermarket (Epic) should probably have been named Super-natch. The group claims to be a rock and roll revival unit, but it's one thing to be a revival unit and another to be a masonic unit. A group of friends listened to the album and the response to each cut was "I remember that sound; it's...". Treated as pure camp, the album is a success. Judging from the cover and name, that is a fair way to treat it. The prime of rock and roll is a long time ago, but echoes of Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beachboys, Elvis, Eddie Cochran, the Coasters, and the Everly Brothers come through. It's just the thing to help an assistant professor remember his lost youth.

Mitch Ryder lost his Detroit Wheels and has been on the skids ever since. On The Detroit-Memphis Experiment (Dot) not even producer Steve Cropper (of Booker T. and the MG's) could help. Mitch has turned away from the bolly styled material and is pinned to working for Bob Crewe. However, teem-bopper is not a good bag either. The always excellent studio musicians of Memphis just cannot overcome material like "Eenie Meenie Minie Moe," "Sugar Baby," and "I Got Hot." Will he ever be successful again—or is the era of rock which produced Mitch Ryder lost for good?

The album notes of Especially Henry (Dot) ask "What happened when a drummer from Memphis, a lead guitar from England, a rhythm guitar from the depths of Greenwich Village, a bass from one mental hospital and recording studio after another made a pacifying record which is known every festival in these United States last summer, get together...?" That's easy in the case of Especially Henry. They call themselves the Underground All-Stars because they don't want to be associated with such a rotten album. There is not one name on the cover, but there is, however, some of the worst recorded material in memory. It's like a bad sex band and even includes that old mixer favorite "Louis Louis." The absolute low point is the worst version ever of "Get Back," which should make Paul McCart-ney turn over in his grave if he's really there and may send him to heaven if he isn't. Maybe it's a pseudo. Not and Epic, aren't you ashamed of yourselves?—Jeff Gale

Almeida

The guitar, even when electrified, can be a beautiful instrument. In Classical Current (Warner-Sev-En Arts) Lazlo Almeida's material has improved since his material has improved since his past efforts. He is a good guitarist, with a background in both classical music and jazz. He is an innovator—having been credited with the invention of the Nova-prom in Classical Current there is such understanding easy listening one hardly notices the few electronic additions and modifications.

The album suffers from over-orchestration. Sometimes the strings are too thick, though usually a fairly even balance is obtained between the orchestra and guitar—still a pity, since Almeida could stand alone. As it is, the few places where the guitar solos sound out of place.

The music is entirely adapted from classical themes. All of the standard light classics are there, from Chopin's "Polonaise" to Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet." The Tchaikovsky focuses more on Almeida's playing than on the other end, and despite the overworked tunes it makes sound better.

Otherwise, none of the cuts on the record is particularly noteworthy. Each seems to be built to more interesting ones at the end, but not to such an extent that any is spectacular. If anything, the record is unusual in being uniformly, both in quality and sound.

If you are a purist and love classical music, this record is not for you. If you want jazz or rock or electronic music, look elsewhere. But if it's the 101 Strings that strikes the right note, Classical Current is great.

—Luther Barber

Shouts

Scoundrel from Last Summer (Warner Bros-Seven Arts) Achar's film has drawn much to be desired. Highlights (?) include "Temptation, Lust and Laziness" performed by Aunt Mary's Transcendental Slip and "Lunch Band, "by Bad Karma Dan and the Bicycle Bros—a motorcycle gang—and The Electric Meatball doing the ever-popular "Magne- tic Mama."

The Neon Philharmonic (Warner Bros-Sews Arts) Remember riding in your car and listening to "Good Morning Girl?" Composer Tupper Saus- sy's material has improved since then but the deep feeling isn't transmitted. It's better than The Mocking Bird, but still not up to standards.

A New Day (Reprise) — Theo Bikel Can a middle-aged Jewish folk singer shorten his bit name from Theodore Zelig to Theo Bikel? Yes, but echoes of Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beachboys, Elvis, Eddie Cochran, the Coasters, and the Everly Brothers come through. The Beatles, Stones, Donovan, and Joe Mitchell? Voilà! the overworked tunes it makes sound better.

Almeida, Sweet Thursday, and junk