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1982
Music Poll

Best Single _____
Best Album _____
Best Group _____
Most Overrated Group _____
Best Local Band _____

JAMAICA FAREWELL

By Susan C. Orlean

THIS just isn't going to work. The pilot wasn't born yesterday, and he's taking pains to point that out. "We want you to have fun," he intones, "but we won't tolerate the use of any illegal substances. We can see it and we can smell it. We saw what happened in the bathroom at the airport. If we catch you, we will land immediately and have you taken into custody."

About 179 of the 180 passengers ignore him; nonetheless, the plane charges down the runway and upwards en route to Montego Bay. An hour goes by before the exasperated pilot gets back on the intercom.

"Lookit!" he barks. "I'm serious. We are landing in Miami if you don't cut it out. I told you we wouldn't put up with this. That's it." He does sound annoyed. "Hey man," giggles Row 26, seat C. "Just try to relax. Why don't you come back here and smoke a joint with me?"

Let it be noted here that it is Wednesday, November 25, and that some 10,000 Americans are heading for the Jamaican World Music Festival. The pilot's ire is only a minor inconvenience. Everyone is braced for a full-bore party: three days of beach action, three nights with dozens of bands, everything laced up tight with Jamaican grass and Red Stripe beers.

Like Corinne and Paula, two New Jersey girls next to

me who devote the three-hour flight to fiddling with customs forms, craning to stare out the window, murmuring "Oh, God" and grinning at each other, this is the first big trip for a lot of people, and they have positively wrung their savings dry for it. They are a little nervous.

come (read farewell to sleeping under the stars and hello to hotel bills), it's a fast bet that whichever tropical paradise secures the youth vote has got it made. Jamaica has always had, on the average, younger travelers than the rest of the Caribbean, partly because there is no gambling,

the great and good question of how this loose-jointed collection of bands—The Clash, Aretha Franklin, Skeeter Davis, The B-52's, Peter Tosh, the Grateful Dead, Black Uhuru, The English Beat, Gladys Knight—will hang together. Of course, the first thing they teach you in

One glance at the cheery sign proclaiming victory over cholera, and your American cool withers. It's just a matter of minutes, though, before everyone recovers. "Hey, um," ventures one young man at the back of the cab, "where can I get some, um, lamb's bread? You know, *lamb's bread*?" The cab driver smiles. "Ya, ya, no problem. Leave your name and hotel, and I get to you with some top-notch stuff." The young man scribbles and leans back smugly. "Unbelievable," he nods to his companion. "I mean, unbeeceeeevable."

There are charter groups from everywhere—New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Miami. There's even a Dead charter from San Francisco organized with the Grateful Dead partisan in mind. Every hotel in Montego Bay is fit to burst with young travelers. Old guest houses, moldering since socialist Prime Minister Michael Manley dampened the tourist trade, are being roused and aired for the overflow. Even as far away as Negril—50 knee-rattling miles from the concert site—every room is packed. During Manley's tenure, Negril's biggest resort, the Negril Beach Colony, served its guests on paper plates and, along with a half dozen of Jamaica's most luxurious hotels, was nationalized as part of the effort to send the island bounding into the vanguard of the Third World. 11►



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They figure Jamaica to be a little strange.

Jamaicans are a little nervous, too. They have been gussying up for the most notable surge in tourism in the five years since the nation did the cakewalk with Cuba and found Americans turning in their Kingston dance-cards.

What's notable about this surge isn't only the numbers. As the baby boom generation hits the age of disposable in-

come and partly because of music and drugs. The Jamaican government would like to see to it that we want to come back after the festival, so the whole place is plastered with "Welcome Back Jamaica" t-shirts and "Make it Jamaica. Again." bumper stickers. Still, there are rumors of anticipated violence and the reality of dispute over how much Jamaicans should have to pay to see the show. And there is

Jamaica is that no matter how knotty a mess you're in, it can be summed up with a sigh and a statement: "No problem."

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This is not Fort Lee, New Jersey. The heat is ripe and wet; the water tastes funny; some of the porters wear matted dreadlocks; the cab drivers will sell you pot and change your money into black market Jamaican bucks graced by Marcus Garvey.

Bay of Pigs II?

By Jeff Stein

IT was the spring of 1961, with all of official Washington enraptured with the dash and wit of the Kennedy administration, when a top Central Intelligence Agency official showed up at a Georgetown costume party dressed as an inside joke.

Robert Amory, the laconic former Harvard Law

School professor notorious for his irreverent wit, was then the chief of the CIA's intelligence division. When he arrived on the steps of the Georgetown townhouse dressed in green Cuban Army fatigues, with a bushy black beard and a long cigar smoldering between his teeth, the guests roared. Everybody knew that the CIA was plotting with Cuban exiles in Miami to overthrow Fidel Castro's two-year-old revolutionary government.

The expected invasion came a few weeks later. And as the world well remembers, it was a military and political disaster. It is less well-known now that a few shrewd officials within the CIA itself—notably Richard Helms, later to become CIA Director in the wake of a massive housecleaning after the Bay of Pigs—had anticipated what would happen and stayed clear of its planning. 9►

Two years ago, Edward Seaga—known to some as Edward CIA-ga, if you wonder about his Westward leanings—beat Manley, pointed the helm away from Havana, denationalized hotels, and set out to woo Washington. The Negril Beach Colony was re-named Hedonism II, and tourists to Jamaica once again got the big howdy. In fact, the Jamaican Tourist Board collaborated on the music festival, and Mr. Seaga himself is slated to make the opening remarks before the concert begins.

We are lounging on the veranda of a guest home in Montego Bay. We are overflow. The house hasn't been used in years, and it's got problems. Add to that the fact that some of the cab drivers have taken the back route here, through the city's jammed, jumbled, tumble-down neighborhoods, where goats stroll in and out of parked cars, reggae blasts from every window, and every other shop is a tiny, two-stool drinking club; where the men on the street have the blank look of the chronically discouraged, as they lean against hand-scrawled signs warning, "Beware Bad Dogs" and roam through the yard of the ice house, watching boys with beer carts chop blocks of quickly melting ice to cool their Red Stripes. It's all so foreign that a few of the American concertgoers have arrived, luggage in hand, gasping and uncomfortable.

"I mean, we go in this cab, and this guy insists on showing us where he grew up," says Paul, a Long Island college student. "So we go into this area and it's totally slummy and there are these pieces of iron just leaning against each other, and this guy says, here it is. I mean, what are we going to say? Nice place? And there's the totally malnourished dog with its ribcage just hanging eating this piece of meat. It was like Pakistan, I swear, just like Pakistan or something."

"You're so bigoted," his friend snaps. "Here I come with this American imperialist attitude. I guess, expecting a beachfront hotel with the name Hilton on it," Paul says sheepishly. "I don't know. I got real psyched up about this by a guy I work with. I just came for the rum and the sun. I just want some escape-type activity."

We have gathered to watch the concert begin. Security is in evident force here; three checkpoints before you enter the center, three types of guards (security, police officers, and baby-faced young soldiers with rifles and machine guns), barbed wire gates, and plastic hospital wristbands that we get for our tickets. "It's easy to get into Fort Knox," warns the decay running the show. "It's hard to get into here. It's like an iron box, so don't even try it because we don't want anybody to get roughed up."

Tonight is Grateful Dead night, so their fans hover in front. But there are also lots of young Jamaicans, clean-cut and fine-featured, in unthinkably hot American polyester clothes; Rastafarians with heavy, sun-bleached dreadlocks; a few middle-aged Americans; some punks. We have the mutual misfortune of listening to Seaga's drawing, long dedication speech and the mutual discomfort of having nowhere to sit. See, the Bob Marley Performing Center is a huge, level rock garden anchored by the enormous and impressive stage. We shrug it off and lower ourselves gently on to the gravel. The dedication speeches drone on.

"We give you music and happiness!" announces the mayor of Montego Bay to the audience. "What do you give us?"

"Money!" shouts back half of the group. The mayor looks surprised. "That's right!" he hollers into the microphone, "good feelings! That's what you give us! I can feel the vibes!" Just as he stops speaking, the wind

kicks up and the finest mist drizzles down. From every corner of the field, you can hear people exclaiming, "Bob Marley is crying!" For a minute, you can believe it's true.

The Wailers, Bob Marley's band, have shuffled through their opening set and then yielded the stage to Toots and the Maytals. Toots, resplendent in a gray leather jumpsuit, does a wild jig before storming through his songs, his manner lively and winning enough to appeal to the many Americans here who know and care little about reggae. Tonight all they can think about is the Dead. And the Rolling Stones, who are not scheduled to appear, but are rumored (along with Jerry Lee Lewis, Linda Ronstadt, The Who, and The Police) to be planning a little surprise visit to the festival. From this point hence, the Stones' visit, or more appropriately, their non-visit, fires up the crowd more than any scheduled performance. There is an impatience about it that colors the rest of the three-day show.

So it is a tough crowd to please: distracted and star-struck, partisan to the hilt, and about as odd a mix as you're likely to find. No wonder The B-52's step up to their instruments a bit gingerly, eyeing each other for moral support. They look totally weird, particularly Kate and Cindy with their outrageous bouffants. "Boy," says one Dead fan in the front row, "real nice haircut." But a beat's a beat, after all, and the band manages to eke a wiggle out of just about everyone there. Then on comes Gladys Knight, glowingly beautiful and confident, and she tears the place up. In appreciation, the audience blows lungfuls of

Even under the best of circumstances, three long nights of music is a tall order. We catch The English Beat opening the second night ("Unity, unity!" calls out the band's lead singer. "Here's your last chance to dance, and you can even dance to it hippie-style!") and watch a rather shaky Stacy Lattislaw, then wander back amid the concession booths. There are dozens of them offering jerk chicken and fried saltfish and ackee and curried everything. One offers "B 52 Special: Fried Fish and Bammy." There are several low-stakes craps games in progress. There is a Kentucky Fried Chicken booth. In front of the curried goat booth, there is a little black goat who is nipping at people as they walk by. He's slated to buy the ranch at midnight or when they run out of goat, whichever comes sooner. Next to the booth stands Carl, a car mechanic from Buffalo. "This is my third helping of curried goat," he says happily. "Never thought I'd try it. I love it. I'm moving back here as soon as I work it out." A few feet away, a smart-alecky kid from Queens is selling the contents of his backpack to a guileless Jamaican. "This," announces the American, "is a cigarette lighter. I will sell it to you for six dollars. That is a very good price." The Jamaican, a shy young man of about 19, nods. Can opener? Four dollars? He takes that, too. How about a new bottle of Visine eye drops? "Gets the red out," confides the American. He decides to elaborate. "Gets The Red Out. You know, red, ganga?" They laugh and complete the transaction.

Aretha Franklin is on stage now. She and



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marijuana smoke at her and cheers wildly when she fans it away. She and the Pips are extraordinarily tight, racing through a medley of her old hits with a sort of breathless energy. And then they're gone, leaving the audience buzzy and charged. Next up is Jimmy Cliff, who looks wasted and tiny. "In the ghetto," he croaks, "survival is the name of the game." He does a herky-jerky dance across the stage, and his voice cracks a few times before he's through, but he continues automatically. He's done by 2:30 in the morning, just in time for the Grateful Dead to begin their marathon two hour equipment set-up. By the time they get on, a little shy of 4:30 am, everyone is punch-drunk and exhausted. But enthusiastic. "It's 4:30 in the morning," says one girl dreamily. "We're in Jamaica, and we're listening to the Grateful Dead. Can you believe it?"

Gladys Knight have ended up staying at the same hotel; word is that they don't speak to each other and hold court at opposite ends of the swimming pool. Gladys, it's rumored, is just as nice as she looks and Aretha just as haughty. She is cool on stage, arrogant almost, running through her songs lazily and only once or twice letting loose with a holler. She is followed by Black Uhuru, who put her—and nearly every other performer so far—to shame with a set that is knife-sharp and riveting. The reggae bass is so muscular and deep and loud that you can feel it vibrating your heart. The crowd, fragmented and odd, seems to melt together at last. For that moment alone, it's really worth being here.

The next performer leaves the Americans utterly puzzled. Her name is Skeeter Davis; she's a minor country singer who had a hit with "The End of the World" and the theme from *Billy Jack* a decade ago and then vanish-

ed. She hasn't performed in public for 12 years, and it shows. Her singing voice is totally shot, and the trembles and coughs as she begins. In contrast to the rest of the performers' elaborate costuming, Skeeter is wearing a pair of faded blue jeans and a dime-store cowboy shirt. The Americans laugh her off. But the clump of Jamaicans at the foot of the stage gets bigger and bigger; even the cops and soldiers move up close to listen to her sing.

"Well, I'm gonna do a good old spiritual song because I've met some folks here with some positive attitudes," she says nervously. She launches into "The End of the World" and a roar, really a roar, rises from the crowd. She stops dead in the middle of the first verse. "I can't believe you know this song! I can't believe it!" she gasps. She can do no wrong; every song is met with cheers and an explosion of applause and every Jamaican sings along. "We love her singing," explains one awestruck woman. "And she's so pretty."

The nights are so long that the music seems endless. The Beach Boys finish up after Skeeter, and once again, we see the sun rise over the stage. The last night begins with Bobby and the Midnighters, Joe Jackson, and then an emotional set by Rita Marley and her children, the Melody Makers. Rick James, who gets a polite but cool response, stalks and clowns around edgily. The Jamaicans seem particularly unimpressed and finally he walks off to only a sprinkling of applause. He is followed by Squeeze, playing their final performance before splitting up. Chipper and bright, it wins them a healthy ovation.

The Clash come on at 4:30 in the morning looking angry and tired. Joe Strummer growls that the Jamaicans should have been let in for free and scoffs at the "honorary citizens of Jamaica" title that has been bestowed upon the Americans at the show. The band then rips into their music, playing several reggae songs along with their own material. A crowd of Jamaicans move forward, amazed that these pasty, fierce-looking white kids can rock. "You better get up," warns Strummer peering out over the field where dozens of concertgoers have fallen asleep, "because if you don't like us, I've got the Grateful Dead waiting in the wings and I'll bring them out if you don't shape up." The music is unbelievably loud and rowdy, but as we walk back through the field, we still have to pick our way through piles of sleeping people. The sun is breaking through the muggy night sky. Peter Tosh is on next to close the festival, and a lot of people are convinced that this is when the Rolling Stones will make their much-touted visit. They are seen on stage but never play. "Well, they were on stage," says one girl wistfully. "That was close enough for me."

We have done a lot of things. We introduced \$10 million into the Jamaican economy in a week. We Americans had our hair cornrowed and sold our baseball caps to the Jamaicans. We cringed when we heard other Americans ask where the bugaloes lived and why everything was so dirty. We heard tons of music. We stayed up late, ate goat, danced with strangers under the damp tropical sky. We learned how to change our money on the black market and we learned one important word, "irie," meaning that everything is just terrific. We watched scores of American girls fall at least temporarily in love with sweet-voiced Rastafarian men, and we watched them break each other's hearts at the immigration counter at the Montego Bay airport. We watched one girl tear herself away slowly and painfully from her man while the plane raced its engines. Did you have a good vacation? We asked delicately. She is in the daze of the fatigued, the dazzled, the lovestruck.

"Oh, irie," she says dreamily. "Irie."



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