

**BIG
COUNTRY**

ISSUE 6

feb '84





WONDERLAND

If you could feel how I must feel
The winds of quiet change
If you could see what I must see
Still hidden in the rain
But when the thunder rolls
It comes and covers up my soul
And you will take my hand and be with me in Wonderland

I am an honest man, I need the love of you
I am a working man, I feel the winter too

If you could hear what I must hear
Then nothing would replace
The fifty years of sweat and tears
That never left a trace
But when I look at you
I see you feel the same way too
And you will take my hand and be with me in Wonderland

You still remembered other days
When every head was high
I watched that pride be torn apart
Beneath a darker sky
With innocence within ourselves
We sing the same old song
And you will take my hand and make believe it's Wonderland

I am an honest man, I need the love of you
I am a working man, I feel the winter too

Wonderland, Wonderland

words and music by BIG COUNTRY
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Editorial

With the exception of Barrowland in December, Big Country have not played on British soil since September, nor are they likely to until March at the earliest. Whilst five months is a long time, it must be borne in mind that in 1983 Big Country played over one hundred dates in Britain and America, and spent two months recording *The Crossing*.

Issue 7 of the magazine is not due out until April, and it is very possible that some dates could be announced between now and then. If you want to make sure that you find out when and where the shows are going to be, this is what you do:

Send a S.A.E. to Martin Somers at the Information Exchange address, which in case you've forgotten, is:

15 West Hill Road
Putney
London SW18 1LL

Mark your envelope "tour details". Martin will file your S.A.E. and send you details of any confirmed shows as soon as he receives details himself. This ensures against having to rely on the music press or running the risk of missing the show altogether.

Whilst on the subject of the Information Exchange, here is a brief explanation of how it is run: The service is free, but a S.A.E. ensures a quick reply. If you have any specific enquiries about Big Country, and/or the Country Club, or if you have a problem concerning buying one of the band's earlier singles, then please use this address. Also, birthday cards to the band, personal mail, and any articles for the magazine should be sent to the Information Service, and not the Country Club address in Northampton.

The Country Club address is purely for membership and merchandise enquiries. Everything else should go to the Information Service in order to avoid delays.

Lastly, please note that the Information Service address is a private one, and not an office, so please - absolutely no telephone calls. If you need to speak to Martin urgently, then send him your telephone number and he will endeavour to contact you.

BIG COUNTRY OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

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written by:
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Chris Parkes at Acme.

news news news

Big Country's plans for 1984 run along the following lines:

Stuart and Bruce are busy demo-ing new material at the moment. If everything goes well, the foundations for the second album will be laid in the next few weeks. All that is known at the moment is that Stuart and Bruce are working around ideas that originated during the "Crossing The Fall" tour. Wonderland and Giant are early examples of this excellent new material, and you can be sure there's more to come.

Mark is also keeping himself busy, and will be flying to Paris to put in a guest appearance on an album being recorded by Frida. In case you don't know who Frida is, she's the dark haired girl from a group called Abba (who you may just remember from a year or so back!). They had quite a few hit singles, and were very successful until they split up in 1982. Frida has chosen to continue as a solo performer, and Mark was her first choice as drummer for her forthcoming album.

Steve Lillywhite will be mixing the tapes from the Barrowland concert. If all goes well, we could be hearing some vintage live Big Country on vinyl in the not too distant future. Lost Patrol has been added to the Wonderland 12", but there are plans for more tracks to be released soon.

R.P.M. recorded a documentary about Big Country in September of last year. The finished product is scheduled to be broadcast sometime this Spring, and is well worth watching.

The documentary is excellent, and entertains from start to finish. Big Country are obviously the main subject of the programme, but what is unusual is that the band do the interviewing, and ask the questions. Various members of the road crew and management company are asked about their roles in the Big Country set-up, and what part they play in the day-to-day events.

The concert footage which appears at intervals was recorded at Hammersmith Odeon on September 28th, and includes Porrohman and Fields Of Fire. It all adds up to a very polished programme, which shouldn't be missed. It is unfortunate that we don't know yet the precise date of the broadcast.

Finally, we at the Country Club hope and trust that 1984 will be a great year for all of you. The problems that beset the fan club in 1983 have now been dealt with, and everything is running smoothly. Please don't hesitate to write to the Information Service - we are already collecting articles for issue Seven, and all contributions are gratefully received. All letters will be personally replied to by Martin, so get cracking with those pens!!!

Over the past few months, Martin has gathered together the answers to his album survey competition, and has found that there is a noticeable variation in peoples' opinions of the ten tracks on *The Crossing*. Over seven hundred replies were received since September, and the final poll is as follows:

1st	IN A BIG COUNTRY	3005 points
2nd	CHANCE	2929 points
3rd	THE STORM	2567 points
4th	HARVEST HOME	2283 points
5th	FIELDS OF FIRE	2133 points
6th	CLOSE ACTION	1910 points
7th	PORROHMAN	1865 points
8th	A THOUSAND STARS	1770 points
9th	LOST PATROL	1690 points
10th	INWARDS	1276 points

What is immediately apparent from this result is the lasting popularity of the four singles. It had been expected that numbers such as *The Storm* and *Porrohman* would achieve the highest marks. To see *In A Big Country* and *Chance* top the poll was indeed a surprise. Why then did these tracks do so well, whilst *Inwards* fared very badly in comparison? Here is a selection of comments from fans who took the time to review the album, song by song:

1. IN A BIG COUNTRY □ □

"The Scottish National Anthem - enough to raise the dead!" was the comment given by one fan, who put this track top of his list. Most fans commented that it was an excellent track all round, and gave various reasons for liking it so much. The flowing guitar, and drum beat, appealed to many, whilst a lot of female fans regarded the lyrics as inspirational and optimistic in their content. It was pointed out in a couple of letters that this song in particular held a "message of hope".

"Pull up your head off the floor - come up screaming
Cry out for everything you ever might have wanted."

The overall popularity of this song when played live, is obvious even to the most ignorant observer, and it is good to discover that fans haven't tired of it in any way at all. Finally, Donald Mitchell of Wolverhampton had this to say about *In A Big Country*: "Remarkable track: I always find the melody unusual. The band ask the listener to make the effort to get to know the song properly, and then find a reward beyond their wildest dreams. A total celebration of love and life."

2. CHANCE

The voting for this track was very erratic. It received more Maximum 10's than *In A Big Country*, but was also placed at the bottom of many people's lists because they felt it was out of context to the rest of the album. (The remarkable popularity of this number when played live was a key factor for many of those who voted for it favourably). It was interesting to note that there was a high divergence of opinion about *Chance*, and that many people were quite harsh in their criticisms: "The mellow side of *Big Country*; a great song to share, especially at gigs". "The best single of 1983; it has a beautifully clear sound that shows Steve Lillywhite's production at its finest". "It's brilliant! Definitely my favourite track on the album, and the best choice for the fourth single. Stuart sings the brilliant lyrics so well, and the guitars are fantastic, especially the power chord chorus at the end. Excellent song!" These were just three of many glowing reviews of the song. Here's one that wasn't so good: "The song appears to represent a compromise to commerciality - I would have been much happier if it came out as a B-side instead of as a single".

cont:

2. THE STORM

The Storm provoked very emotional comments from some people. It was pointed out by many that this song created images of Nature at its most beautiful. "A song to fall in love to. A very powerful song with good lyrics and brilliant guitar playing". "The haunting lyrics, powerful melody and wonderful tempo create a song that lives up to its name. When I play this song, I can see a remote village in the Scottish Highlands whipped under the lash of violent tempests. A song for the imagination!"

4. HARVEST HOME

Another popular choice; most people expressed their amazement that this wasn't a hit for the band back in 1982. "With a song like this, Big Country can kick as high as any group in the country. A brilliant Lillywhite re-mix has certainly injected life into what was an unfortunate first single". "Why can't Phonogram re-release the single. It's brilliant". "This has a good message - just as you sow you shall reap". "It should have done a lot better in the charts, but I think it took everyone by surprise".

5. FIELDS OF FIRE

Martin was surprised to see this track being placed as low as number five. But that's because it's still his personal favourite. "The first time I heard this song, I realised that this was a band with a future. It's still brilliant ten months on". "A song in true Big Country style. Music to move mountains by!" "An epic, a classic song, a great single - what more can I say?"

The voting for Fields Of Fire was steadier than any of the other songs. Most people placed it in about fifth or sixth position. Absolutely nobody voted for this as their least favourite track. This was the ONLY track to achieve this.

6. CLOSE ACTION

"Excellent lyrics and a good all-round song", was the view put across by most people. Some people regarded it as a very romantic ballad, and felt the guitar work served to accentuate the overall mood of tenderness within the song. "It has the edge that every classic record should have. A record for those who are in love with love". "Tony's backing vocals are brilliant; the song's position on the album provides a tasteful contrast to the stormy 'Fields Of Fire', which follows hard on its heels".

7. PORROHMAN

Some people regarded this as Big Country's answer to Stairway To Heaven. Others regarded it as long, repetitive and, dare I say it, dull. The low placing of this song was a surprise when one considers that it is in fact the band's favourite track. Nevertheless, some people remained unconvinced and voted accordingly. "This track requires effort. It goes on for too long and begins to weaken halfway through. The blitz at the end is the only highlight of an otherwise mundane effort".

However, not everybody felt the same way, and praise was in plentiful supply. "Death-defying. I love the guitars and their enchanting effect on this track. The result is total splendour. The change of rhythm before the end leaves me breathless!". "The originality and full-bloodedness of Porrohman conspires to make it the highlight of the L.P.".

8/9/10. A THOUSAND STARS/LOST PATROL/INWARDS

Unfortunately, these three songs were given something of a hammering by a number of fans. Outright condemnations were few and far between, but it was clear that the general consensus of opinion is that A Thousand Stars, Lost Patrol and Inwards are not nearly as good as the rest of the album. Most fans stated that whilst the three songs were good in their own right, they failed to achieve the standard set by Chance, The Storm, and

In A Big Country, Lost Patrol and A Thousand Stars did, however, receive favourable comments from a sizeable minority. "A Thousand Stars comes over really well on the L.P. with a really loud sound and powerful production. A wonderful set-opener". "Stuart's voice is stretched to the limit on A Thousand Stars, but my God! How well he stretches it. Excellent song!" "Lost Patrol is a catchy sing-along number with a thumping drum beat, and catchy guitars. I love it!"

Inwards was, unfortunately, mauled by many people. It was placed last on so many people's lists that it eventually became embarrassing. The one good point that was raised by nearly everybody was that they thought the song was great, but unfortunately failed to shine on the L.P. Most people touched on the fact that the L.P. version of the song failed to do justice to what is a brilliant track live. "This one lost all my interest completely. It lacks the excitement, fullness and meaning that the other songs hold so well. A total disappointment which comes over as being far too tame and lack-lustre".

* * * * *

Thank you to everyone who took part in this survey. It was certainly interesting reading comments from all parts of the country, and from all age groups. It certainly wasn't an easy task to compile a list - we sent Martin off to give it a trial run, and he came back with five different lists in as many days!



In response to numerous requests from fan club members here is a picture of Stuarts young son Callum. In the next issue we shall be publishing photos of Tony and Jackie's young son, Alexander.

Barrowland a celebration

It is a pity that the majority of fan club members were unable to travel up to Glasgow for this day of celebration on New Year's Eve last, as the air of expectancy that surrounded this concert had been built for quite a while. The two performances were announced by the music press in early December, and tickets were unobtainable within a week of going on sale. It certainly was going to be a night for everyone to savour. The Glasgow papers heralded the event as "the Hogmanay Homecoming", whilst the official t-shirts proudly bore the slogan "Barrowland is Wonderland". This clever play on words certainly proved appropriate - it was definitely a "wonderland". It was not a concert in the strictest sense, but more of a celebration and everyone joined in the fun.

The band turned up at the Barrowland Ballroom at noon, and were clearly taken aback by the number of fans who had braved the dreadful weather in order to meet the lads. The doors were not due to be opened for at least three hours, but this didn't deter the hoards who had been waiting since the early hours for an autograph, a handshake or even just a glimpse of Big Country. Such dedication has to be highly regarded when one considers that Glasgow had been subject to torrential rain for the previous two days. In short, the weather was awful!

Many fans had travelled a long way to see the gig, and an adventurous few had even come up from London and the Home Counties and faced a five hundred mile drive home as soon as the gig was over. Most of the audience hailed from Glasgow, but regardless of where the fans came from, they all had the same intention: "to have the night of their lives".

The matinee performance was a three band affair, and kicked off with Run Rig. This Scottish band have a large following north of the border, and it's easy to see why. Their songs were even sung in Scottish! Their set started magnificently, but began to flag halfway through, and never really recovered, but the partisan crowd loved it, which was the whole point anyway.

Second Thoughts came on next, and were treated disgracefully by some factions in the audience. One doesn't like to dwell on such unpleasanties, but spitting at pop groups went out years ago! However, Mike and Paddy, who are veterans of fourteen Hammersmith Odeon shows in the last four months, persevered and managed to complete their five number set with dignity intact.

Big Country bounced onto the stage at 5.30, and the roar that greeted the opening bars of 1000 Stars confirmed the party atmosphere. The set progressed from strength to strength with In A Big Country, Lost Patrol and Fields Of Fire standing out as highlights. One young Glaswegian lass, 17 year old Fiona Green, had this to say of the performance: "The place was in uproar, and the amps in front of me began to rock and sway as the dancing became frantic. At some points in the set, the band had to stop playing because of the noise - the audience cheered 'here we go, here we go, here we go,' after every song. No wonder Stuart said 'It's awful great to be back home!' Stuart speaks to the audience as if he's known them for years; he makes you feel like a friend and not a fan. Such friendliness made the atmosphere improve even more. It was EPIC!! On behalf of Glasgow, I would like to thank Big Country for making it a 'BIG' afternoon for all of us."



The matinee performance ended quite early, and it was soon the turn of the Over 18s to fill Barrowland. The noise was unbelievable, and when Big Country came on stage at 11.00pm, the spontaneous cheering and dancing reached manic proportions. The dance floor was actually moving up and down, and walking to the bar was an achievement in itself! The audience at the front and around the stage were beyond caring, and bopped, jiggled or merely jumped up and down on the spot. Five thousand fists hit the air as one whenever a chorus was reached, and by the time the set had reached In A Big Country, the atmosphere was positively electric. It was hot, loud and very exciting. Big Country delivered an excellent hour's worth of music before stopping midway through Inwards in order to welcome in the New Year (courtesy of a live broadcast by Radio Clyde). Massive cheers erupted when Big Ben struck twelve, and the famed Scottish celebrations really took off. Balloons fell from the ceiling, as a Pipe band took to the floor, and welcomed in the New Year in the best way possible.

The feeling of unity and celebration was very infectious, and for half an hour people danced, embraced and danced again, whilst the Pipe band maintained the atmosphere with suitably chosen melodies.

Big Country came back on stage to deliver the best version of Porrohman I've ever seen. The exuberance of the audience at this point knew no bounds, and when Chance faded to an end, the fans quite simply took over. Stuart led them through a rendition of Auld Lang Syne, and then Flower Of Scotland. Even the bouncers joined in!!

The band finished with Fields Of Fire, and encored with In A Big Country. The two songs provided the icing on what was one helluva cake. Even though the lads were tired after their exploits in the USA, they still managed to maintain the energy and enthusiasm which has become the trademark of Big Country shows. A lot was asked of them on the night, and yet they passed all expectations. It was the perfect way to welcome in 1984!



"Stuart and Mark" bid Heathrow farewell Next stop America.



"The Big Apple!"

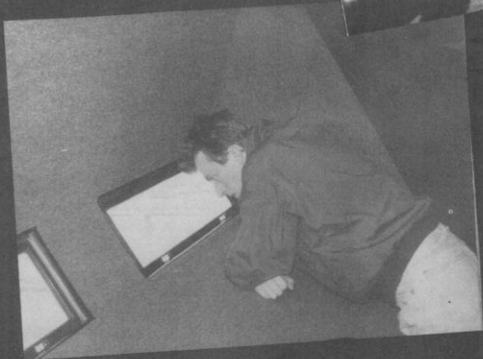


outside the Bus in Seattle

Brice in
the
Gate way
to the West
Arch in
ST Louis.



BIG COUNTRY



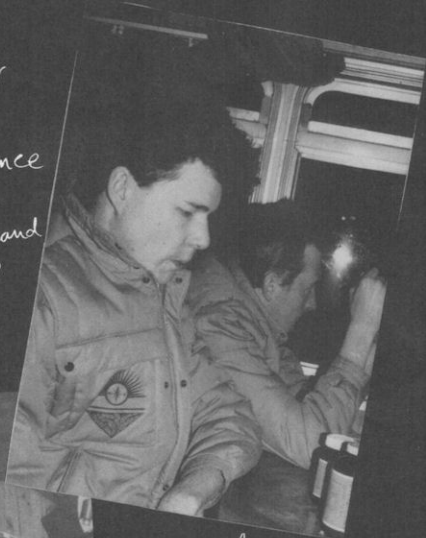
Just Another
Photo Session.



The Set of Saturday Night



Mark in
his Oscar
Winning
Performance
for the
Wonderland
Video



Another
night
in the Tour
Bus.



In the Tour Bus Me +
Bruce.



Same
Photo
Session.

at 'live'

COUNTRY CLUB

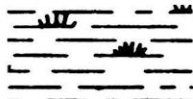
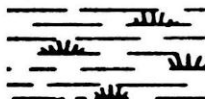
Notebook

The recent trip to the USA by the band was not without its mishaps. Whilst the band were in Cleveland, Ohio, Bruce was involved in a road crash that nearly had very serious consequences. The accident occurred after the band and crew had finished a concert in Detroit and were making the short journey to Cleveland (when I say short, in fact the two cities are 150 miles apart, but in America that's nothing!). Bruce decided to sample Cleveland's nightlife, and duly jumped into a cab to visit one or two nightspots. He barely got to the end of the road when a fellow motorist shunted his cab, and promptly wrecked both vehicles. Bruce quickly recovered from the shock of being the target of a battering ram, and was soon able to laugh the incident off. Unfortunately, Bruce soon discovered that his shoulders had been badly damaged, and a doctor diagnosed torn ligaments. Needless to say, such injuries make guitar playing more than a little painful, and the scheduled show at Cleveland was cancelled the following night. Thankfully, Bruce recovered very quickly, and was back on form within 48 hours!

Whilst in the States, Mark realized a lifetime's ambition when he met Charlie Watts from the Rolling Stones. The two hit it off immediately when introduced, and spent the next ten minutes engrossed in conversation. Other personalities who crossed paths with the group included Adam Ant, Paul Young, Bob Dylan and Tom Petty. The lads also met Larry Holmes (see photo) and Muhammed Ali was charm personified when he met the group and willingly signed autographs for all who were present. Larry Holmes was just as obliging, and willingly posed for photos. Larry met the group when they were appearing on "Saturday night Live", a show which won the lads a legion of fans over in the States. Successful TV appearances such as this one caused the tour to be a virtual sell-out, and the band were very well received wherever they went.

Back home now, and Mark has been receiving acclaim from some unexpected quarters back in his home town of Slough. When he returned from the States just before Christmas to spend a few days at home, Mark was both surprised and honoured to be asked for his autograph by the Postman, the Milkman, plus a number of neighbours. The reason for the sudden attention is Mark's father, who is so proud of his son's success that he has been showing all callers the Gold Disc of The Crossing which hangs on the living room wall.

On the subject of Gold Discs, Bruce and Stuart asked for theirs to be delivered up to Scotland as soon as they were ready. Martin was assigned the task of packaging the four discs in question, and delivering them by "Red Star" up to Edinburgh. Martin was very careful to write "fragile" all over the packages, but this didn't stop British Rail from playing volleyball with them when loading them onto the 1740 to Edinburgh. Bruce arrived at Edinburgh Main Line Station next day to pick up the discs. Instead, he came away with a parcel full of broken glass!!



Talking of mishaps, Stuart was the subject of a lengthy and arduous photo-session recently. The photographer spent an hour telling Stuart to look this way, and that, before discovering that he had no film in his camera! However, the photographer in question did make up for his oversight by taking some excellent shots of the Barrowland gig a few hours later - a few of which appeared in a music mag a few days later.

Now for a quick tale about something that has absolutely nothing to do with Big Country, but is about fan clubs. The Rolling Stones have been top of the music tree for twenty years now, but, surprisingly they have never had an official fan club. Well, not until recently anyway. During last summer, a fan club was established to coincide with the release of the "Under Cover" album. Response to the advertising sheet was understandably heavy, and people from all over Europe have eagerly coughed up the £7.99 membership fee. Except ONE!! A young lad in Austria misread the information sheet, and sent in an International Money Order to the tune of SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY NINE POUNDS! The Money Order was duly sent back, and the young lad was informed of his "slight" error, but it still leaves you wondering "would he have paid a thousand pounds for a sweatshirt???".

The Crossing has now been in the charts for TWENTY SIX weeks, and has just turned Platinum (300,000 copies sold). Congratulations to the band from the Country Club.

The album has notched up incredible sales all over the world, but I'm sure you'd agree that it's no more than Stuart, Bruce, Mark and Tony deserve, and with Wonderland entering the charts at 13 on January 17th, it looks like 1984 should be a very good year for all concerned.

Whilst Big Country's American tour was in progress, many observers compared the shows to a past Scottish invasion - that of Rollermania! The Rollers being, of course, the Bay City Rollers, who had lots and lots of fans, and sold lots and lots of records many moons ago. Seriously though, the connection is obviously there, and there are many American pre-teenagers who've eagerly picked up on this and consequently gone berserk at the gigs. In A Big Country stormed up Billboard's charts in October, and audiences have reacted to the live shows in a fashion which can only be described as "Going Wild In The Country".

Many Americans judge the Big Country sound as a remarkable breath of fresh air, and look upon The Crossing as a major breakthrough into a music scene which is desperately stale. The press has been falling over itself in its enthusiasm for the group, but this keen approach hasn't been matched by accurate journalism. Here are a few examples to amuse you: "Bruce Watson is a fine guitarist, and his lead singing is a joy to listen to", "Big Country are a heavy folk band from Ireland", "Stuart Adamson's previous band was called The Slits (!)", "Big Country are a five piece from Australia". All excellent, and all completely wrong!! If you have managed to unearth any complete misses, send them to us - we'll publish any that we receive!!

MANAGER'S REPORT OF US TOUR

Start date Vancouver November 10. Quite a stiff test for the band tonight - two shows in one night on the opening of their first North American tour. The entourage of Tony, Stuart, Mark and Bruce, plus crew of Sheda, John, Peter, Les, Bob, John, Joo, two bus drivers, two truck drivers, two guys with the P.A. and two with lights, Sandra and Callum and myself! Twenty two people split into two luxury coaches and fifteen thousand road miles to go....

Both shows sell out, and are attended by an obvious collection of Big Country fans, who know the album well. We travel on to Seattle next day (staying in a hotel where you can fish out of your bedroom window! Bruce tried and failed! Def Leppard were the last group who succeeded apparently). The band are pleasantly surprised by Seattle, being the first US city other than New York and Washington they've visited. Interviews are done, as with every city these might be local press, telephone radio interviews or overseas telephone interview.

Next to Portland, Oregon. Strange city... lots of half bred Indians, tramps and drunks, and our gig could have come out of a Western movie if it had been fifty years prior - we even saw a horse tied to a parking meter! Today, the band have to do an in-store, as well as interviews. This is in the town's largest video for "Wonderland". This is filmed one hour out of Portland, on top of Mount Hood (if you saw "The Shining", then you might recognise the scenery)

An hour away, we are in the desert, part of the Indian reservation - quite extraordinary how climates can change so quickly! Now we have a fourtee hour drive ahead of us, so we stock up the bus get down to some serious drinking, and play cards. One game of Switch lasted four and a half hours!

It's 9.00am, and bleary-eyed, we step off the bus in San Francisco. Tonight we play Bill Graham's club (Bill is a sort of Harvey Goldsmith equivalent, that is, the Godfather of US promoters!). Two great shows, and then on to LA. It's an early morning flight, as the band have to do an in-store in Sherman Oaks, California. We all meet at the Sunset Marquis Hotel (just off the infamous Strip), and assemble for the soundcheck at the Palace - our most important West Coast gig. Two nights at the Palace, both well sold out in advance. There are something like fifty interviews to be completed by hand, so obviously some of these are split up. There are telephone interviews to cities to be visited later, half a dozen to Australia (set up by Alan, while he was there), the LA Times, music magazines, etc, and a television recording of Fields Of Fire and In A Big Country for broadcast in January. Spandau Ballet are also in the show, which is called "Solid Gold".

I fly to New York to complete business, whilst the band continue to play their way across America. Tucson was a gig Stuart won't probably wish to be reminded of, as you probably read in the Sun, although account was a gross exaggeration to say the least!

The last time I see the band is in Minneapolis, and only just I might add. The winter weather is beginning to bite hard, and snow has cut off the airport, which is a rare occurrence, as it's used as a military base. Seven hours later than scheduled, I arrive at the Holiday Inn to find no one from the band has checked in. The crew, who are waiting at the gig, haven't heard from them either. The band are stranded 26 miles out of town! By chance, a CB enthusiast picks up their calls for help, and a message is telephoned to the gig by the enthusiast, saying the band's location. In turn, the promoter agrees to hang on, and at 11.15 the band arrive. At 11.25, they're on stage!

Next day Chicago! The band have their usual routine of interviews and so forth, and I wonder if they are getting a little tired of Americans and their way of questioning: "How do you get that banging guitar sound?" and "I was the first to play your single on US radio", etc, but they continue to do their duty - to themselves, me and the record company. So, to make things a little easier, we go to a recording studio and make over 100 messages for radio to be used before and after gigs (e.g. if in Cleveland, the message would be "great to be in Cleveland - we had a superb gig last night. You're listening to WRMS Cleveland, home of rock 'n' roll", etc.

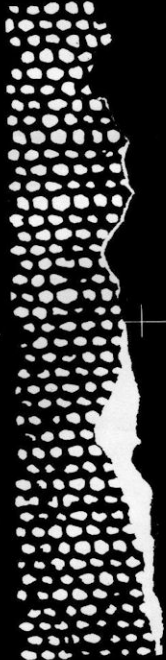
This marked the end of the first half of the tour, by way of returning to New York for Saturday Night Live (see also below re contribution). The rest of the tour continued much the same.

So, the first US tour completed. Top Twenty album and single in the US Billboard charts. Top Five single and album in Canada, triumphant television appearances, and rave press, meant a very satisfying and successful launch for Big Country on a debut album. It sets a very high precedent for us all.

It's now in the process of completing plans for another US jaunt (perhaps the schedule easing up a little for the group?), and Australian and Far Eastern tour offers after the US.

There's still a lot of life left in album number one - The Crossing.

Ian Grant





Notebook cont:

One of Big Country's two managers, Alan Edwards, is a very busy man. During October and November, Alan travelled between Australia, Europe and the USA, and never stayed in the same country for more than a few days at a time. The purpose behind such travelling was to look after Big Country's interests in those countries where the album has been selling well.

Consequently, Alan was unable to meet up with the band until the second week of their tour; here is a brief resume of the other side of touring - from the viewpoint of the Manager:

"I joined the tour two days before the band did Saturday Night Live. This show has very high viewing ratings in America (over thirty million), and everyone was understandably nervous about anything going wrong. Saturday Night Live means exactly what it says . . . LIVE!!! The group were also tired and slightly burned out as too many late nights, long drives and poor food had certainly taken their toll.

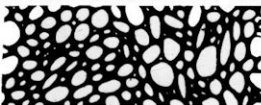
Ian (Grant) and I met the group in the lobby of the Berkshire Place Hotel. Stuart was engrossed in a motorbike magazine, whilst Mark was busy signing photographs. Bruce, Tony and myself went off to find a cafe. One was near at hand, and we settled down to sample some American doughnuts and coffee. I told them some stories about Aborigines in Australia, which caused some amusement - Bruce and Tony also had a few stories of their own about the audiences in the States, and general press reactions to the band -

The Saturday Night Live show was very well executed - the band ran through In A Big Country and Fields Of Fire with a gusto and verve; the performance came across very well on television, and won the band plenty of new fans. We managed to find an Indian restaurant in New York, and were entertained after dinner by Mark who entered into a lively discussion with the restaurant's resident Sitar player.



The next day, the band met Larry Holmes, who willingly signed autographs for the lads. Stuart collected an autograph for Callum who already has those of Kenny Dalglish, Cliff Richard, and Paul McCartney, but this was the heaviest name yet! They all posed together for a photograph, and most of the band fitted in Larry's arms for the shot! Back at the hotel, Stuart met Muhammed Ali in the lobby, who picked up Callum in his arms, much to his proud Dad's pleasure. Two Champs in one night!!

In Long Island, Big Country did an interview before the show with Paul Gambacinni which appeared on the Channel 4 programme "The Other Side Of The Tracks" a few weeks ago. In Pensauken, Philadelphia, which appears to be the home of Smokey Robinson, the group performed Tears Of A Clown and Tracks Of My Tears to rapturous applause from the audience. In Montreal, the club was packed to the seams, which fully reflected the enormous record success they have had in Canada. After the show, Phonogram in Canada presented the band with Gold and Platinum Discs for Canadian record sales. An excellent achievement for an excellent band!!



Questions & Answers

DEAR BIG COUNTRY

I was recently given a copy of In A Big Country marked "Special Edition" 4-track 12" including Heart 'n' Soul COUNT 312C812467-1. The sleeve is orange. So far so good, but although it bears the official Big Country name and label, it has no photo. On the back, it clearly states "photo by Paul Cox, sleeve by JB". Also it cost only £1.50, which is very cheap, as 12" singles normally retail at £2.25. So is it official or bootleg? Is it worth anything?

Yours,
JANE HUNT,
CLEVELAND

The 12" single of In A Big Country was released with an extra track in June last year. Not very many copies were pressed, and it is now definitely deleted, so I suppose it is worth something to someone who wants to be mercenary and make a fast buck! The single is official, and Phonogram-approved and the fact that the credits remained unchanged from the original "In A Big Country" sleeve was purely an oversight - no more, no less!

DEAR BIG COUNTRY

Where can I buy back issues of the magazine?
Sincerely yours,
STUART RICE,
SHEFFIELD

Back issue orders should be placed with Martin Somers at the Information Service address for the moment. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to the Country Club. Please note that we have sold out of Issue One.

DEAR BIG COUNTRY

At which concert was Tracks Of My Tears recorded?
Has it been touched up in any way at all?
Yours,
JOHN DE CRUZ,
LONDON

The track in question was recorded at Glasgow Tiffany's on 4th July last year. It was recorded at the mixing desk and the quality of the final tape was considered to be so good that it was decided that Steve Lillywhite should "put it through the mix" so to speak. As for it being "touched up" in any way, well the answer is no. No part of the performance has been interfered with in a way that would give an inaccurate result. The levels of volume are exactly in accordance with the levels on the night - the crowd just happened to be particularly noisy that night!

more letters

DEAR BIG COUNTRY

Where can I buy tour programmes from?

Yours,
PETER BEASLEY,
WATFORD

Tour programmes are printed by Acme Tour Products, and should be ordered from them. Three have been printed so far: Crossing The Country tour (Postergram), Crossing The Fall tour (ten page Programme in colour) and Barrowland Is Wonderland (Postergram).

And, finally, a letter from the States:

DEAR STUART, TONY, MARK and BRUCE!

I saw you on November 12th at Wolfgang's in San Francisco. I enjoyed it, despite of overcrowding and lack of ventilation. I sang along to every song. You started off with 1000 Stars - one of my favourites - and improved with every song. It seems miraculous that such a new aggregate can come off with your kind of depth and vibrancy. Big Country is like a breath of fresh air in a music world rank with "sexploitation" bands, whose only concern seems to be tapping into the subconscious minds of listeners so as to have them associate their band with an image of idealism based on sexuality, as Pavlov's dog associated a bell with the reward of food. I hope this isn't too convoluted to follow. This attitude seems so prevalent that to encounter a band offering a different and original set of images, sounds, and thoughts, actually seems miraculous. So I'm writing to you to thank you for opening a window, to congratulate you on The Crossing and its vision. So, thank you Big Country.

Yours,
EVELYN WAGNER
MORAGA, CALIFORNIA, USA

Phew! Some letter! British correspondence has been sparse over the past few months, and we really could do with ideas for Issue 7, so if you have a brainwave, please let Martin know. Reviews of Wonderland and Giant would be very welcome.

BIG COUNTRY

In the polls

The most impressive one to date is the nomination of Big Country in two categories for the forthcoming US Grammy Awards, which are presented on February 28th in Los Angeles. The Awards are the music industry's highest honour, equivalent to an Oscar in the film world. Nominations are gathered from 5,000 industry members.

"Best New Group" - nominations are for Culture Club, Eurythmics, Men Without Hats, Musical Youth and Big Country.

"Best Performance By A Duo Or Group With Vocals" - The Police, Z Z Top, Talking Heads, Huey Lewis, and Big Country.

Even if Big Country don't win, to be nominated alongside such names is indeed an honour in itself. Fingers crossed for 28th February!

Big Country have been voted Number One in the American music paper Rolling Stone's Readers Poll as Best New Band. Rolling Stone is a very important American music paper, as it has a massive readership over there. It can be bought over here, but at £1 a time, is expensive, even if it is a good magazine. Congratulations to the band again from the Country Club!

Back home, the B.P.I. (the British music industry's watchdog) has nominated Big Country as one of the Best New Bands of 1983. Let's hope they win that as well!

In the NME, Stuart Adamson was voted Number 3 in the Best Guitarist section of the Readers' Poll, and Number 14 in the Best Songwriter category (!). The Crossing was voted sixth best album, and In A Big Country was sixteenth best single!



BIG COUNTRY

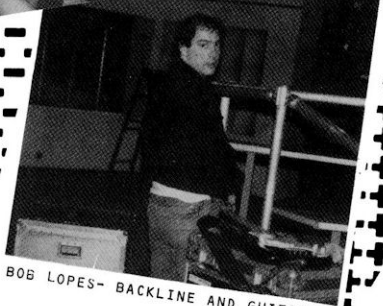
BEHIND THE SCENES



PETE BARNES - LIGHTING



JOHN CALLIS -
ON STAGE MONITORS.



BOB LOPES - BACKLINE AND GUITARS



LES KING - BACKLINE AND DRUMS



PAUL 'SHEDS' JACKSON - SOUND ENGINEER