

London, for example, sold out to a storm of adulation from the British press. Meanwhile, Americans shudder in horror every time she spreads her legs.

"I'm really not that heavy," she professes frankly. "I think I'm funny and if you take me seriously you have to be crazy.

"I know for a fact that I give men a lot of hostile vibes, more so than I give women. I guess it's because I'm so aggressive physically and I think I embarrass a lot of people. If a guy is really into getting whapped with a chain and I sing about that up on stage, or if he likes to sniff women's underwear and I do a song about that, it embarrasses the guy who's listening to me sing about his kinks.

"Women are supposed to scream for Mick Jagger and try to pull off a man's clothes on the stage. But men are supposed to be in control on all levels. A lot of them might really want to jump up and pull off my clothes, but they know they aren't supposed to. It makes 'em feel weird and uptight."

Undoubtedly, some brave soul will answer Betty's challenges one night. A great deal of the hysteria surrounding pop heroes is based on sexual frenzy, whether you're talking about the girls who fainted for Frank Sinatra, those who creamed in their knickers for the Beatles, or those who graduated to the ranks of groupiedom. Until Betty Davis, however, no female performer has ever used the stage and used her sexual attraction with such complete abandon. Even the high priestesses of rock stopped short of complete surrender to the sexual ecstasy of performance. Only Tina Turner and the Ikettes were daring enough to take sexuality one step closer to the ultimate wipe-out that Betty Davis provides.

Her candor is a refreshing change from the coy sexuality that is the usual lot of female knockouts. But then, just how much sexual frankness can you take?—*Vernon Gibbs*



New York City's **Television**: "Anybody who thinks we're a glitter band is wrong."

HOLY THIEVES IN THE HOUSE OF GLITTER

Ten years ago in Wilmington, Delaware, a band played a few high school graduation parties. It wasn't your usual, run-of-the-mill garage band. The group's guitarist, perfectly sound of limb, came rolling out in a wheelchair; there were no lurching renditions of "Louie, Louie" or "Green Onions." The kids snarled at them and threw donuts. Today that group's ring-leader, Tom Verlaine, and drummer, Billy Ficca, are the core of the most celebrated, feared, and misunderstood band in New York City.

Television is not to be confused with such groups as the New York Dolls. There are no vials of glitter or eyebrow pencils to be found lodged in their guitar cases, and no chic New York chauvinism in their lyrics. "We're not really a New York group," says Verlaine. "All these groups are theatrical. Their kind of conceptualism isn't sincere. I hate all that decadence shit, and I hate the theater. Anybody who thinks we're a glitter band is wrong."

Their resistance to being pigeonholed has made the music

industry edgy about the group. "The president of a major record company came to hear us at Max's one night," Verlaine recalls. "He had a little boy with him, and he asked the kid what he thought of us. The boy said we were out of tune and the PA system was lousy. So the guy just said, 'Okay, let's go,' and he left with his little boy."

On another occasion, Island Records asked Eno of Roxy Music to produce a demo on Television. Twenty-four hours were spent in a sixteen-track studio, but Verlaine thought the record was a turkey. "It was horrible, dull. Eno changed our sound. I told the company that I hated the tape, and they just didn't want to hear it."

As it stands now, record companies don't know what to do with Television. Some companies think of the group as just another New York Dolls, and fear commercial disaster à la Dolls; some companies think of the group as trouble, and fear gambling on their strange new type of music.

Refusing to wait on record company punks, Television released its own record, "Little Johnny Jewel, Parts 1-2," on its

own label, Ork. A Verlaine original, "Little Johnny Jewel" is a wholly representative taste of what Television is all about. The lyrics are truculent, devoid of pretention, and almost mystic in their breezy concision. The music is a blend of honest, untheatrical rock 'n' roll and freeblown weirdness. Guitarist Richard Lloyd plays unlike anyone else (although there are heavy shadows of Sonny Sharrock in his stylings), and Verlaine sings as if he were sired by a jukebox. Records on small, one-shot labels are usually trite and amateurish. "Johnny Jewel," however, shames most everything issued by major companies.

There is no doubt that Television will, in the very near future, get an album out on a major label. Then all those great Tom Verlaine songs like "Friction," "Poor Circulation," "The Arms of Venus DeMilo," and "Horizontal Ascension" will be appreciated. In the meantime, there's "Little Johnny Jewel," and you can get it for two bucks from Ork, PO Box 159, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003. This is New York's best band, and nobody's throwing donuts.—*Nick Tosches* ○†