

Zipper

ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

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MONTI ROCK III
JEAN LONDON SHOW
TROY WALKER
PYRAMID MARKETING

Zipper Interview: TROY WALKER

a candid conversation with the ballsy young sardonic satirist

by Tom Lee with photos by Roderic Vickers

Troy Walker is in the vanguard of a new movement, a new breed of comedians who tell it like it is. Only difference is that he's been doing it longer. He makes people laugh at him, with him and ultimately at themselves. Many comedians have tried to copy his style, but fail, simply because Troy means every word he says. His humor is truth.

At a recent show, a burly Marine shouted, "Your a fag." "We could have a battle of wits," Troy replied, "But you're un-armed." His put-downs are funny, effective and meant. He wears extravagant and colorful clothes and hats, flaunts his long hair and liberated life-style. He doesn't preach gay liberation, he endorses freedom of spirit for all people and against all meaningless prohibitions.

His home in the Hollywood Hills is a large one and features a heart-shaped swimming pool at the back. The interior is an elegant clutter of expensive ornaments and works of art, interspersed with not so expensive gifts from fans. He has a house-full of wards, a large dog and a dotting neighbor called Nancy who makes much of his wardrobe.

He is a night-person, invariably rising late. The drapes are usually drawn. He doesn't like the glare.

He owns real estate and a part of a Hollywood fashion store, drives a Mercedes and doesn't smoke or drink.

He is almost brutally honest and deeply committed to fighting hypocrisy. He is kind and generous, but has learned to hold back until needed. He is not frivolous with his

affections but he is a warm and wonderful friend to those who he finds to be genuine and true.

Troy curled up on a lounge, wrapped in an oriental gown to chat to us, while Nancy prepared some lunch in the kitchen and a couple of his wards were painting the drive-way. They all obviously idolised him and frankly, having chatted with him and having seen him perform, their affection is not difficult to understand.

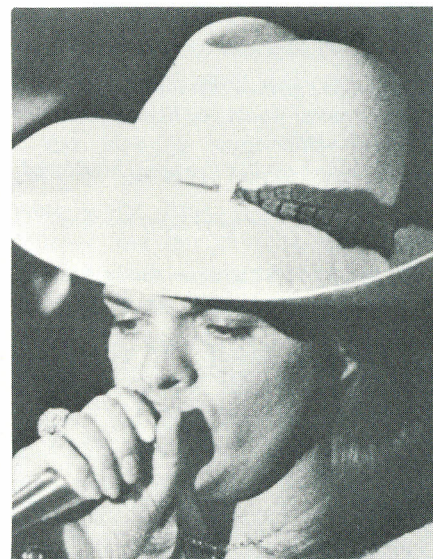
Getting into show business was an accident. I was valedictorian of my class, the whole thing. High school completed I was offered six scholarships to the University of Arizona, went, became bored with academic endeavors and came out to Hollywood, just to get a job and exist without anybody but myself and without the influence of my Dad who's a very powerful man in Arizona. The act alone got me raised eyebrows from my family and my peers and until I attained a degree of success, which I have now, they didn't hold me in the highest of esteem. Even now I wouldn't say I'm held all that high in esteem, it's just that now they respect me. I guess if you succeed at doing your own thing, that earns a degree of respect.

I had no real intention to become a

performer. I ran out of money, was stone-cold-broke and found that when I walked down the street, people found me interesting. At eighteen I was kinda cute. I walked into a bar on Hollywood Boulevard and told the guy that I'd mop his floors and wash his windows if I could eat and he called the police on me.

So along with being disheartened and disappointed and too proud to write home, I went out to sell myself. I walked into another bar and the chap behind the piano asked me "Buddy, can you sing?" and I said I'd sung in school but I'd never sung professionally. So he asked me to sing and then a little later the owner came over and said if I came in every night and sang a couple of songs he'd give me forty bucks a week. That's how I started. It turned out that I didn't have to prostitute myself as a performer or with my body.

I'm from Arizona, half Irish and half Apache Indian, I'm thirty-four, and my ambitions and dreams are too large for space. There are so many things that I've tried and done and there's nothing I don't want to do. My scope is very large and I'd like to try everything. Normal desires to climb



mountains and to ski and things like that I find boring, but as far as my quest for involvement with different kinds of cultures, peoples and music *of course*, music is my first trip, I love music, I like to experience.

I guess I'm fairly good at prose. I've written a lot of songs and I've sat-in on the writing of some that have been big hits. But I'm sort of a conglomerate of many people that I admire and I think we all are. We borrow from other people and I do that and yet I've been credited with writing many things that I haven't written. Songs that I write are usually me, I mean really me. I've written very heavy romantic songs when I was engaged in the art of love, I've written tear-jerkers when I've been engaged in the art of losing. I've written gentle protest songs, from protesting man's inhumanity, to protesting war. I wrote a song called *Eight Hours a Day* which is a protest at just that.

My song *Hello Stranger Would You Like To Spend The Night With Me*, that's kind of my contention of the whores in the world, not wanting to be alone and I consider myself one, a whore, in the idea that, if you can't love the one you love, love the one your with. With me that's apt to change consistently and I'm the first one to say so. I have the capacity for being in love and I do not advocate promiscuity. I was in love for seven years and when you lose, well, I wound up "hello stranger would you like to spend the night with me," and I wrote about it. The song sort of speaks for itself.

*"Where do I go now that love has left me
Hello stranger would you like to spend the
night with me.
Can you love me like I've never been loved
before
Touch me like I've never been touched
before
Say things to me I've never had said before
Tell me stranger what can you do for me."*

I'm recording it. The when's, if's, how's and what's I don't know because that industry itself has given me nothing but headaches ever since I can remember. I've had the major companies after me at different time in my career. But they wanted ridiculous committals out of me. Not that I'm

hard to work with, it's just that I couldn't adhere to signing for seven years which is one situation that I ran up against. That's a long time of my life to be giving up and another situation I got in was; I was to sign on the contingent of recording a song that I just *would not* sing. It was a child's song that I didn't even relate to. It would be a big hit for somebody else whose voice suited it, a thirteen year old.

This Is My Life I wrote partially, and when I sing it, I mean it.

*"I've got my own sin and my own sex
I've got my own pain and it's my way
And if you look closely you'll see nothing
more*

*Than a gentle person here.
I'm not all the man you've been looking for
Probably don't meet the standards that
you've set for yourself
But I'm holding out my hand.
If you have the guts to love me
I'll show you enough love to break your
heart, forever
And don't think because I make love to
you tonight
That you have a right to my tomorrows."*

They arm us with very little when they turn us loose you know, and maybe that's good. I'm a firm believer in the concept that children should not be put at the mercy of one set of parents and when you say that, most people go "Hugh?" But when you think about how many kids are made into mental invalids because they were put at the complete mercy of only one set of parents that made it only *their way*—the Oriental philosophies on that are interesting. The children are spread around throughout the family and they get a well-rounded education. I was raised on the Arizona Boy's Ranch, my Dad ran it, and I had that kind of existence. I was exposed to different house parents and different kinds of children, different races and from all walks of life.

Something else I don't relate to is race. I've had impositions made on me in regards to black, white, yellow, pink and blue and I don't give a damn. I relate somewhat to race like I do to sexuality. If it looks good or if it feels good, enjoy it and that can mean a mental feeling as well as a physical one. If they feel good and look good to me mentally, then super, that's

where I'm at.

I got a beautiful lesson at Boy's Camp. I was working with kids, I had about forty boys around me and I'm a graduate and I'm a success and therefore they look up to me. One little boy says, "Ya know you don't look as good as your picture" and I says "Well maybe the picture's a little old." He says, "Yeagh, well you've got some wrinkles." So a little black boy was standing there and I said to him, "Hey, you gonna let him talk to me that way" and the little black boy looked at me and flipped me a peace and love sign and says, "Don't sweat-it Troy baby, call him a nigger."

When I did a crippled children's hospital, a young kid, from his chest down he's in braces and he comes up to me with five miles of smile and wanting to give me a little doll that he'd made me. Spent his time with his little hands. My concepts of peoples hangups with all their bullshit says that you're all just beating the hell out of yourselves and you've got it coming as far as I'm concerned, because there's a little boy who *has got* every reason to hate and here he is, wall-to-wall grin and happy and you see these little twisted bodies clapping and singing and enjoying themselves. But just walk out and you see these other kids wiping out their minds with dope. You see them snivelling and crying about their loss and no money, no freedoms, no this and no that and you just want to say "Jackasses, open your eyes and look around, because there is so much to be gained by having the guts to gain it."

The only time I really get depressed is when I see a definite inadequacy about someone and I know it's gonna show and I know it's comin' right at me or right at somebody that I'm relating to and there's nothing that I can do but sit there.

I do a lot of charity work which I enjoy doing. I work with kids a great deal. That's probably my biggest trip in life other than performing. I think the only time I'm really alive in my existence is when I'm on stage. My other trips are kids who *aren't* problem kids, it's just that nobody seems to give a damn about *their* problems. Their problem is usually just existing

in this world as is. I've been lucky in being able to help a lot of kids get away from dope, not through anything spectacular other than existence without it, and a good existence. It's been a lot of enjoyment and laughter. I've put my sister and my brother through school, I had my other brother here with me for quite some time and I've got my nephew with me now and I've got several wards that I have legal custody of and I think that's kind of unheard of for a single man to be doing that sort of thing.

I was made *Man of the Month* and then *Man of the Year* in Arizona and I was kinda ridiculous, because I accepted it in a white full-length fringe leather outfit and by all standards, I didn't look like the boy-next-door or the astute businessman and I accepted the award as a dubious distinction to say the least. I represented anything *but* what they expected.

I was voted two years in a row, *Performer of the Year* in Arizona and of course, Hollywood has been very kind. Hedda Hopper said that I was "the freshest, finest talent Hollywood had seen in quite some time." Louella Parsons said that I was "an inspiration to the up-and-coming performers in Hollywood" and Harrison Carol said that I was "a must-see for my generation" and called me "a well-toned warbler." I've really been very lucky considering that I've had no training in the field.

I've been somewhat of a rebel ever since I can remember as far as doing what the mass expects. I hate to say *society*, but I just never concurred with the double standards of a lot of the things around me. Like telling kids, from the time they're old enough to conceive any ideals or any ideas of good or bad, "Love thy neighbor and thou shalt not kill" and then when our boys turn eighteen we tell them, "It's time to kill." That's kind of a double standard. I've seen five young men die that I watched grow up on Boy's Ranch and they died in Vietnam. Five fine young men; *poor*, they couldn't get out of the service, that was it, they were going. Perhaps not mental giants and so therefore they had guns in their hands and those boys are dead now and they weren't given a chance. That



makes me want to stand up and say, "Damn it, just stop it world," it's heartbreaking. I find myself choked, I want to cry, because I knew the boys too close. I mean, there is no return and when you have to sit and discern in your mind that our government is not all that sure that it's a just cause we're fighting and people you love are dying because of it, it throws your values out of focus. I can see where the kids are at with their protesting. I can't say that it's right, no more than I can say that it's right for police to be standing four deep with helmets on and totally prepared to beat the hell out of those same kids. I don't know who's right because they both have strong points of view and I'm right in the middle. I'm a member of the establishment and I feel like a fifteen year old.

I only wish there was a way to bridge and who knows, it may take

something catastrophic to bring about the bridging. If we could only teach kids in humor and adults for that matter, the fallacies that they live under. There are so many things to be laughed at. We don't attempt to educate, we just teach. And it's a pity because there is so much to be learned that you can never get out of a text-book.

But pick up some authors—read some of our great authors and make your scope wide. Teachers in this country and our churches too, they have the balls to regulate our reading material. And censoring; how about nudity? I wonder if anybody ever thought what it would be like if, when we were kids, everybody ran around nude and nobody made a big thing about nudity. I wonder how interesting the body would be. I wonder where the fashion world would be. I wonder where all these build-it-up and



push-it-out and shove-it-in and tuck-it-away companies would be if we had absolutely no hangups about bodies. I wonder where all the pill manufacturers would be if nobody cared about losing weight or gaining weight. And you can sit and ponder these

things and yes, they throw reality out of focus, but I think our concepts would be far different if we weren't given all this garbage in the first place, because it turns out to be just that.

The Royal Canadian Air Force did a thorough study on exercise and I've

followed it and lost a great deal of weight and some people wonder how I do it and my exercise program takes less than eleven minutes a day. That's all I put in and I guarantee that in three months I'll be trim without an ounce of fat on me. But our concept of exercise is two or three hours in a gym and all this garbage. It's all so out of proportion that I can't relate to it.

People have been my career. People come to see me and they keep coming back. I've built a following which doesn't put me in a star category but I'm in demand. I know a lot of stars that are not working and I'm never out of work. I've been lucky that way. I think one of the bad things that established stars do is, they demand ludicrous amounts of money. People can't afford it. I find that by getting a decent amount of money, I remain working and I've never been fired and I've always been asked back.

As far as my humor, I like to poke fun at myself. Obviously when you walk around looking like I do, people form in their own minds certain images of me and I like to play on that. I laugh at myself first and then I laugh at them laughing at me, and make them laugh at themselves laughing at me. Plus I like to laugh at every-day hangups, *no-no's* that have been inflicted on us. It's the reflected mirror bit. I enjoy making people laugh at basic things like eating with your hands or passing gas or any of the many things that are normal functions of our bodies. I like to point at *propers* and make fun of them. I don't like *propers*.

I've been got up with some of the biggest names in the business and I'll sort of tear the house apart and they'll have a hard time. And I've found that people think that it's an act. "Oh, Wow! Troy's act—he's putting on a show!" Basically that's me. Basically I'm not putting on an act. I'm usually calling pretty much where I'm at and if I feel like being dippy and dumb up there I am. If I'm in a bad mood they're gonna know it, if somebody starts in on me they're gonna get it and if I feel happy, well I call it like it is.

I've been accused of putting someone in the audience to heckle me

because I cut 'em apart. But it's all just improvisation and even though I've got set things that I've used for a long time, when I get up there I never know what I'm gonna do because I don't know what's gonna come at me. I'm just liable to say anything. You get four or five or six hundred people in front of you and you've got to play on almost everything that you can possibly play on to win that audience and I contend that there's almost no end that I won't go to to get their attention, whether it's using a word that has a degree of shock value or doing something that will just shut them up.

I would like to become a heavy-weight as far as the business is concerned. Comedy has been a God-send with me because I love to make people laugh, but it's really not my forte and what I'd like to do. To be a concert performer as a singer would be marvelous. In the interim I'm happy doing whatever I'm doing. I make the best of what is here and tomorrow will take care of itself I'm sure.

I have a ridiculous range as far as doing the impersonations, a four and a half octave range. I think I did my first impersonation just being a jackass. Somebody in the audience probably asked me to do one of Elvis' songs or one of Diana Ross's songs and I found myself, rather than doing the song, doing the singer too. To say that I sat down and said "I'm gonna start impersonating people is b.s. because I never did. Even other artists that I'll add periodically, it's something that just comes out of the wall at the moment and I'll start doing it. I never plan to put in a new voice and I do Johnny Cash, Johnny Mathis, Diana Ross, Della Reese, Johnny Ray, Judy Garland; I run the gamut of singers. In fact, if I could find bands that were qualified I'd do a great Morgana King.

My entire existence has been an accident. I think that's probably what I enjoy most about life, the almost consistent non-planning that I do. I have no managers, no agents. It's not that they're all that bad, it's just that I haven't run into anybody or anyone that has given me enough personal feeling to give them X amount of years of my life to promote me and that's kinda where I'm at on that trip.

I relate to a magnificent concept of Christ and I imagine it's my own to a degree in that I just don't believe that such a super human being that spent his entire life standing against all odds and holding true to the concept of peace and love and understanding and all them bitchin' things we learned about as kids, should be burdened with the snivelers down here—and that's just where I'm at. If we can hold true to those concepts, I just don't believe in constantly calling on him for help.

Anything that gives a man peace of mind to me is marvelous and that's not my own line either, it's my Dad's. I walked out of my Dad's church. He's a very big man in the church and he told his parishoners, "My son has always been able to discern right from wrong and it's his prerogative to walk out on any hypocrisies of the church if he chooses." And when I talked to him about it he said, "Religion is for those who need peace of mind and I'm fortunate in knowing that you don't need peace of mind." So my own Dad endorsed my existence on that level. I think that anything that works for somebody is marvelous. If standing on your head and pounding it against the wall works for you, do it. That's where I'm at. I hate anything that is shoved down peoples throats, whether it's religion—someone coming down the street shoving pamphlets into my fist or beating on drums and annoying me as I'm walking by or whatever.

The largest selling book in the world, the *Bible* and the second largest selling book *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran—if you know the advertising that goes out on the two books you sort of learn to believe in the concept that if it's a good thing, people will walk to it, you don't have to sell it. The concept of *The Prophet* is beautiful. I like that. That's kind of my belief and I love the strength of Indian beliefs, Indian folklore and ritual fascinate me. They were much fairer than our beliefs—related to natural things. Like riding with a saddle. It would just turn my stomach. I just couldn't do it. I think man has put such great impositions on himself that he has burdened *himself* with ulcers and unhappiness.



I like Aldous Huxley's ideas about a *Brave New World*. I like Mark Twain's *Letters From the Earth*. It's an incredible book, just turning over all the fixed notions that we have. Fixed notions, I think, have a tendency to imprison the mind.

And we're imposing them on our youth. There's no way to say I'm right but I've had people walk up out of an

audience and say "Thanks for saving our marriage" and I say "What have I done" you know. Someone said to me recently that I was a student-teacher and that sort of hit home. I am credited with helping so many people and I am constantly a student. So I think the idea of existence is just to reach out and help and do whatever you can for whoever you can, as long as you don't cripple them. A lot of that's done too. I think a lot of people are crippled by help. That's something I learned the hard way.

I've had parents accuse me of being the downfall of their children, as the children thank me for saving their lives. I've been accused of everything that there could possibly be an accusation made about and I'm sure I'm



guilty of most of them. But hooray for the guilt and hooray for the mistakes that brought about the guilt because through them you do learn. All of us are so multi-faceted and whenever you are put in a limelight existence it's hard to look at people and say "Hey man, you're no different, you're just as complicated as I am, you're just as interesting as I am, you're just as wonderful as I am, you're just as

lovable and talented as I am, in your own way, and just as important, just as necessary and just as valued. That's a hard thing to tell people because they think you're either being slobbery or they think "You're just saying that." But I righteously feel it and I've always felt it. I will develop, sensitivity wise, a standoffish attitude, because I will not let other people's hangups infringe on my existence. But by the

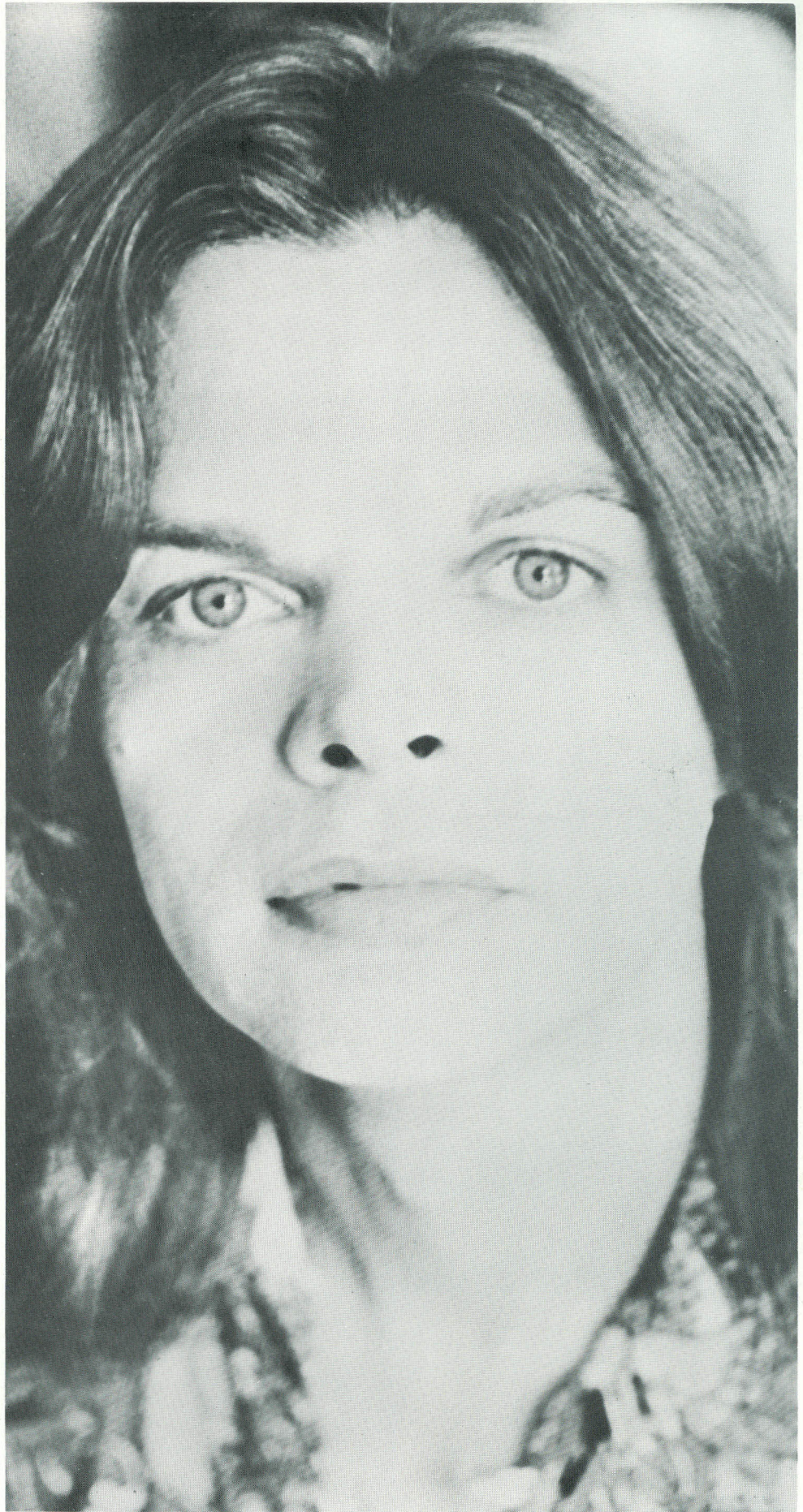
same token I don't care to infringe on theirs. Many times I walk away from a situation because of the harm I might be doing whoever I'm contacting. Not so much the harm that they'll do me, but just hanging around *me* might mess them up. So I wouldn't impose my friendship on anybody. I just wouldn't do it. It's like coming over without calling. It's like taking prerogatives with nicknames or taking prerogatives with sexuality.

People with psychic understanding greater than we have in front of us fascinate me. I'm triple Cancer. My chart has been done by innumerable people and it always comes up pretty much the same. All concepts are fascinating. I have a dear friend, a white witch, a good witch, a happy witch. She's read Tarot Cards on me and she's been pretty accurate.

I think they make a little more of the Occult than should be made of it because I really think it's just a genuine effort of a human being that has a perceptiveness and a humanity *properly* helping his fellow man. Those that I have come in contact with are just gentle people doing gentle things for their fellow men that might not have such a gentle existence without them, and I think it's kind of marvelous and I kinda relate to it.

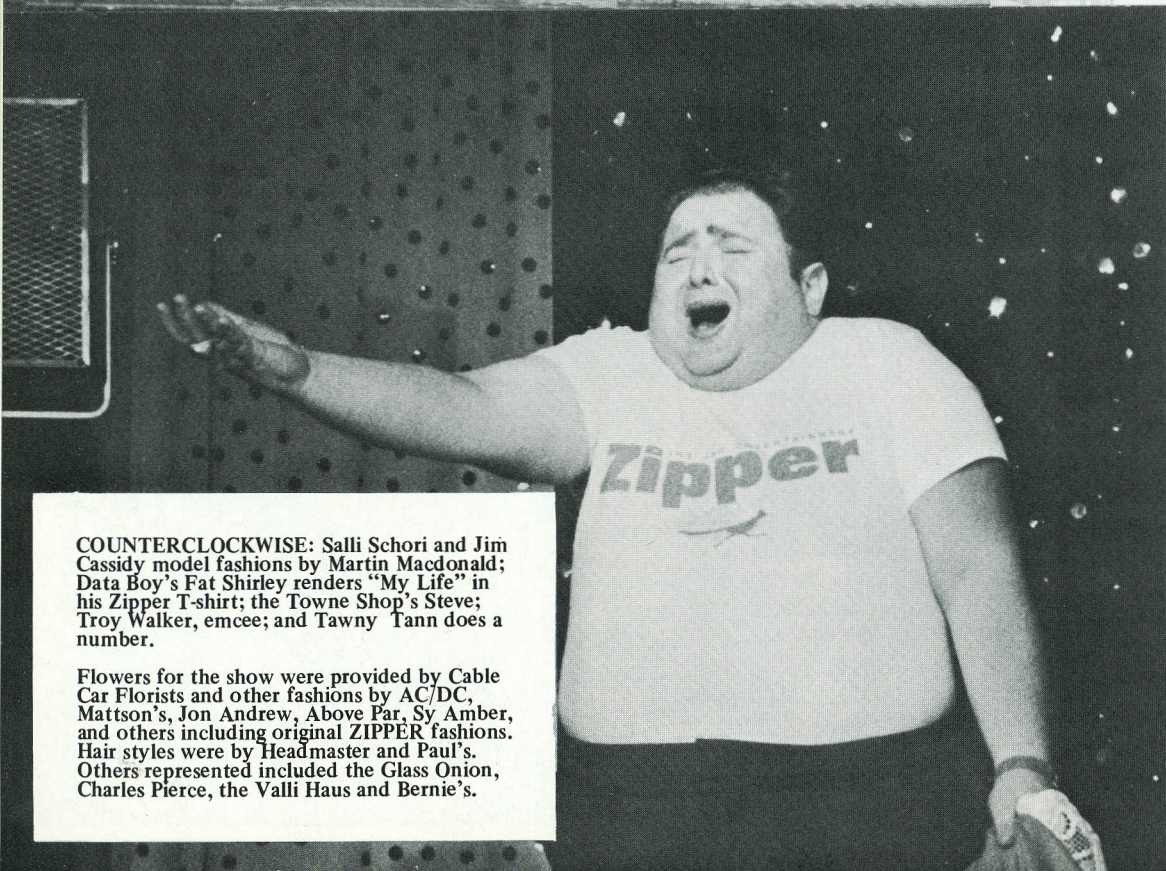
I was called aside when I was nineteen years old in San Francisco by a little old Chinaman. I didn't know him, I'd never seen him and he said to me "Many people will love you, many people will fall in love because of you and many people will find love through you, but you will never know love as you want it. But you will be very happy." And he told me things about my past, he told me what I was going to be, and I had no idea what I was going to be at that time. He's been pretty accurate.

I can't wait for the day when this society can walk and look at its fellow man and not say "Hi there, what you doing between your legs this year." It will be nice when they can meet each other on a more elevated plain of existence. What're you doing as a human, not "Who'd you touch easy this week?" I think there are so many things that you can say. But that's where I'm at.



The Zipper fashion show

at



COUNTERCLOCKWISE: Salli Schori and Jim Cassidy model fashions by Martin Macdonald; Data Boy's Fat Shirley renders "My Life" in his Zipper T-shirt; the Towne Shop's Steve; Troy Walker, emcee; and Tawny Tann does a number.

Flowers for the show were provided by Cable Car Florists and other fashions by AC/DC, Mattson's, Jon Andrew, Above Par, Sy Amber, and others including original ZIPPER fashions. Hair styles were by Headmaster and Paul's. Others represented included the Glass Onion, Charles Pierce, the Valli Haus and Bernie's.

CIRO'S

SUNSET STRIP

