

American Beat

STORY BY BOZ



PHOTO BY LESLIE

REAL PROFOUND QUESTION: Is there hope for rock n' roll in America today?

ANSWER: There better be or else why are we jacking around here?

Rodeos, skyscrapers, Cadillacs, Marilyn Monroe, cowboys, and Gene Vincent. According to Ronny Weiser this is what America's all about. While a certain, Mr. Lydon is out to destroy rock n' roll Ron is the head guru of a mission organized to preserve REAL Rock N' Roll and the American way of life. While he was in town a while back he explained to me his plan on converting OUR YOUTH through his bona fide record company, ROLLIN' ROCK RECORDS.

Ron was born in Italy and since the age of six has set his sights on America, "the land of justice and freedom". After getting kicked out of school for wearing bluejeans and getting in trouble with the Communists for exposing Anti-Moral Little Richard records to the neighborhood, he decided to move to the U.S.A. in 1965. His goal was to; "Americanize those Americans".

It was in 1969 that he started Rollin' Rock, a fanzine or "fagzine" (his term not mine), designed to promote "the real rock n' roll music". This was the era of "Crosby, Shits, and Trash". He despised the straight rock n' roll press of the time and "the damn hippies who had Rolling Stone who had billion dollar hit records." To this day he still hates hippies along with....hmn....maybe this will get us some letters... PUNKS who he calls "hippies with short hair." He offers that hippies and punks can be defined in one word, "pencil neck geeks" but is quick to add that "they're welcome to buy my rockabilly records and some of my best friends happen to be hippies or punks." What a guy!

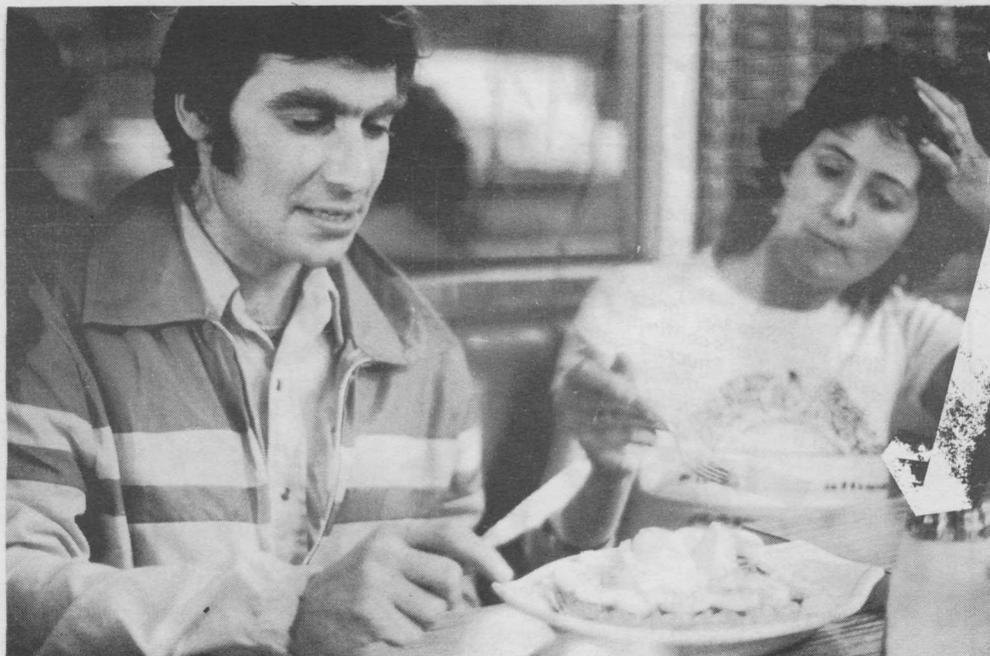
Not content to merely continue writing about the music, in 1971 he started Rollin' Rock Records and began re-releasing such rockabilly classics as Jimmy Patton's blistering, "I'm Movin'". Like all great success stories, it was shortly afterwards that he met a kid at a flea market with an arm full of 78's by Gene Vincent, Pat Cupp, and Muddy Waters. The young kid was Jimmy Maslon who happened to play guitar and became Ron's first recorded artist. Since then he's gone on to record such rockabilly pioneers as Gene Vincent, Ray Campi, and Jackie Lee Cochran along with such newcomers as the Blasters, Magnetics, and Johnny Legend.

Ron considers Ray Campi "the king of rockabilly." He discovered Ray in California, a schoolteacher at the time and after their first meeting figured, " what a freak this guy is, what a nut." He then convinced Ray to record again, and they've since had a string of hits in England (where else?), where tunes like "Rockin' at the Ritz" are dance floor faves.

I was curious how Ron felt about all the new rockabilly bands recording. He seemed to like the Shaking Pyramids and was particularly fond of Tex Rubinowitz, but felt that " the Stray Cats have major flaws" and are "weak in some respects." He feels they need more distinctive songs and they " have to have a powerful vocal.... it's got to be very emotional." He also felt that their sound is thin and that they should have four pieces. When I mentioned the Cramps he sort of laughed but considered them quite fun and certainly more fun than the Stray Cats.

Two "new" bands that have recorded for him are the Blasters and Magnetics. He considers the Blasters great musically but appears angry over some differences that have developed. They wanted out of their contract which he agreed to, and as you probably already know have a new LP out on Slash. The Magnetics are another story and he got quite excited while discussing them. Two LP's are currently available and after listening to "Rockabilly Fools" it's easy to justify Ron's enthusiasm. The LP is a non-stop manic romp featuring Ron's favorite current female vocalist, Raveanna. It's pure, direct, and simple; great slappin' bass, frantic guitar, stutterin' vocals... you can't beat it.

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Ronny Weiser and hardcore rockabilly fan, Maria.

Some people call Ron a purist but he's just trying to record the music the way it should be. You won't hear any heavy metal guitar solos on any Rollin' Rock records. He prefers a stand up bass for rockabilly since it "has the balls no electric bass will ever get." "It's the bloody wood that has that sexiness that only nature can bring." He considers the piano to be one of "the greatest things in the world." "Keyboards? What an arrogant stupid statement. What the fuck is keyboards? An organ is something you should have between your legs or in a church." We didn't discuss synthesizers.

Hippie rednecks still appear to be Ron's number one target of hate and disgust. While we were in his hotel room a Neil Young video came on the TV and he immediatly went bezerk, and launched into a tirade, "it's like a plague, it never goes away!" He also turns up his nose at bands like Marshall Tucker, who still wear bell bottoms and the Doobie Brothers. "The Doobie Brothers is like a name that Don Kirshner would come up with."

Despite the fact that Ron is currently without an American distributor he still remains optomistic and feels his music is the sound of the future. They have tried to suppress HIS music, OUR music, AMERICAN music for 25 years. It's roots music, not Rasta roots, it was radical then and it still is today. Support REAL American music. Gene Vincent is G.O.D.! Rockabilly is the decline of southern civilization. "Viva America!"

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