DALTREY & THE WHO:
Ain't no cure for the Summertime Blooze
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One of the sad things is that Pete and I are probably never gonna be able to communicate.

"Yes, very much. You're putting words in my mouth, ain't ya?" He laughs.

Well sure. But only if there's room with the press.

"Right. That's the impression I got. And it rules me when he generalizes to say the Who, they never played well. The Who can play as well as they ever did, if we can get down to it and take it for what it is. He's just trying to make the Who something it isn't."

"I can understand his musical frustration," he continues. "He must be so ahead now with just writing songs for The Who. But surely if The Who isn't a vehicle to get those frustrations out he should find another vehicle, you know?"

But use the Who for what it is. It's a good rock 'n roll band, that's all. And that won't be progressing."

"I say we don't have done anything for such a long time. Hopefully when we get back on the road we'll progress. But if we have any more statements to make we can't. I don't know how we can. Cos I know it's taken a lot of steam out of the tank and I'm sure it did with the others."

But Roger said, why? progressing, which strikes me as a rather strange comment to make as you complete a new album.

"I'm just talking about the road side of it," he clarifies.

"I mean, we are still pro-

Tape Op: TONY STEWART
Camera: JOE STEWART
A few weeks ago PETE TOWNSHEND, in an interview with NME, got all hot and steamy and despairing about his role with The ‘Oo’ — and about The ‘Oo’ themselves. This week ROGER DALTREY, also in an exclusive NME interview, returned Pete’s fire — with interest. And after this furious exchange of invective, the question on all our lips is: can The ’Oo survive... in any shape or form at all?
Pete was being held back by two roadies... he was spitting at me and hitting me with his guitar... I was forced to lay one on him.

thing really. It didn't come before Lizzi but it was a group thing. I said, 'What do I do?'

- I thought Lizzi would. The Who are good as well. That's one of the main things in my mind about it, because people - especially in the States - are gonna start thinking I'm Tommy. And I'm not, Tommy. I don't think 'Tommy' is - Tommy's best piece of work.

- 'Lizzy' is a quick way of showing people that I ain't Tommy. Which is, at least, a start in destroying that whole 'Tommy's stigma.'

But again, when discussing his career in the movies, Daltrey is prone to relate it to his musical pursuits and his role with The Who. For instance, working with Russel, he says, has given him a better understanding of PT's song writing. "Ken is very similar to Pete," he explains. "He's very visual and thinks all the time. But un

- it's hard to say what it's like to be a part of the band. I don't want to be in a group with anybody else, although I could if I choose three friends to go about with it wouldn't be those three.

- It's a very weird situation, but it does lead to frustrations. But it's always worked because it's led to creating something.

And also led, it should be noted, to fights. On occasion.


- Well, your knuckles aren't bruised so the recording ses

- sions must have gone well.

- "Look!" He cries. laughing and holding up his right fist.

- "That's a mosquito bite. Believe me or not."

- A likely story.

- No. We didn't have any fights this time. We had fights in 'Quadrophenia'.

- Tell us more.

- I've only ever had one fight with Pete and that was during 'Quadrophenia'. It was a bit of a shame because it was a con

- argument and the last thing I wanted to do in the world was to have a fist fight with Pete Townshend.

- "Unfortunately", he adds pe

- tulantly, "he hit me first with a guitar. I really felt terrible about it afterwards. Can you say?" Pete should never try and be a fighter.

- But when he was being held back by two roadies and he's spitting at me, calling me a dirty little cunt and hitting me with his guitar I became quite angry. And I was forced to lay one on him. It was only one.

- That was sufficient.

- "When", he roars with laugh

- ter, "when he came out of hos

- pital..."

- But according to Daltrey there has always been a clash between him and Townshend - with Entwistle and Moon as mediators. And perhaps for this reason Daltrey is able to con-tend with being laughed at in the radio that he hears people's esti

- mations.

- "Like I say," he explains, "I can put up with being just the singer. It doesn't really bother me that much. It's just one of those things that make you feel - what's the worst? - makes you feel a bit of a misfit.

- I've always felt a bit of a misfit in the Who. That's an

- other reason why solo things are good for me.

- Cut. Change of reel, and subject.

- Everything seemed to be going well for Roger Daltrey, the solo artist.

- He's now grabbed himself a prestigious slice of the Movie Biz. I do believe Daltrey now has "Tommy" and "Lisztomania" with a number of producers, nothing except he has to have his hair cropped, on the starting block.

- Even his solo-singing career has been augmented by the excellent "Daltrey" album, "Ride A Red Horse,", however, er, isn't too good.

- The vocal performance is good and the material is good, OK, but the material just doesn't have that stamp of qual-

- ity.

- And to date, business has not been brick with the set, which is certainly not the kind of appeal that Daltrey's music is (techni-

- cally or sales-wise) following his two immediate predecessors.

- "I'm pleased with it," comments Roger. "I like it. But then I'm bound to, ain't I?"

- "It is a very American kind of album and it's not particularly the English people's taste. But that was intentional. I aimed it at America."

- "Maybe I aimed it too much at America."

- Perhaps, though, Daltrey, who at a permanent British vis-

- ital would have the world's established writers scrambling over each other's backs to get him to use their songs, has taken even more of a chance with the material than he did with the first. For his next album he's used unestablished writers (like Leo Sayer was).

- "I know it's a gamble and maybe his time it hasn't paid off, but I'm gonna carry on doing it."

- "It's just that I get so many..."

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Who's Last?

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Kids coming to with songs — and they're not all good — but occasionally you get the good ones, and I think it's worth taking a gamble. Maybe I've picked the wrong numbers this time... I don't know. Obviously I haven't in America. It's in at 60 this week.

"With a bullet."

"So my judgement's right somewhere.

"I just remember the days when I would have done anything for a helping hand. If I can help somebody who can't get a look in elsewhere... then it's a valid thing to do."

"Not, I wouldn't have thought, if the album bombed, along with Daltrey's solo reputation.

Polydor (who can improve your image as Charles Atlas helped build your body) do seem to be putting the big promo wheels in motion. This when discussed, moves onto Roger's own reluctance to be drawn into the area which he describes as "pathetic".

"But that's the business, I suppose," he remarks mildly, "I don't suppose kids want to buy records wrapped up in paper bags. They want a bit of glamour."

"You do need your Jaguars and Rod Stewarts, but they're trying to make me into one, and I'm not. And I never will be."

"Just why is he in the business in the first place then?"

"You guessed it. "Cos I sing in a band called the 'Oo and I like it. And That Is It."

"But according to Townsend (in That Feature) Daltrey would like to believe rock and roll was "making records, pulling birds, getting pissed and having a good time."

"That" retorts Daltrey disgustedly, "just shows he doesn't understand me at all. Because that proportion of my life which is devoted to that kind of living is such a minimal proportion. If he thinks that's what rock and roll is to me he must be kidding."

"Just cos I don't live in a studio like he does doesn't mean to say I don't like rock and roll much."

He pauses.

"There's a terrible battlegoing on between me and him, ain't there?"

In fact you could say this last quote of Townsend's proves to weigh heavily on Daltrey's mind. It isn't until near the end of the interview when he decides to elaborate on he point. "I'm just thinking about what he said," he said. "That I'd like to believe that rock and roll was birds, booze and fun. The naivete of that is that he last few bad gigs the Who did were, in my opinion — apart from his head trip — bad because they were physically out of control and bailing all night. And by the time it got to the show and they were physically incapable of doing a good show."

"So... put that in your pipe and smoke it."

"Was that all of you?"

"No. That was Townsend. Moon does it, but he can control it. On a few of the last gigs Townsend was pissed and in capable."

"Now Daltrey's anger is rising.

"So don't talk to me about booze because I've never been onstage drunk in the last seven years. Mr. Townsend! I don't know if you've ever noticed, maybe he hasn't but I have. I remember every show we've ever done!"

"I'm just getting a bit fed up with these left-handed attacks."

And now he's retaliating.

"One of the sad things is that Pete and I are probably never gonna be able to communicate," he explains coolly. "I think I'll have to sit down and write a letter to the band, because there's no way of ever speaking to them about it."

JESUS. What's the future going to bring then? Maybe Daltrey is outspoken, vitriolic and often enraged by the circumstances surrounding The Who, and yet underneath it all runs a devotion for the band. He may criticise Townsend for what he describes as "pathetic" guitar playing on one gig, and yet he'll get back up on stage and work with him again.

"The only other way is to give up, isn't it?"

"From my point of view... I think I've got better on stage in the last six years... and it really frustrates me that the people who were heads, hands and feet above me before are starting to fall by the wayside. I think it's unnecessary."

"That's why I want to get back on the road and do it. Because I know they can do it."

"And if they don't, then the Who breaks up. We're not a government. It's only a rock and roll band, after all."

"It'll be a terrible shame and a lot of people will be disgusted with us for letting it break up. But what can you do?"

"In a way," he continues, "I don't mind if the Who do finish, because I think we've done a helluva lot and I'd hate to see if fizzle. I'd hate to see anything mediocre come out by The Who."

And in a more dispirited moment he comments: "If I feel I've come to the stage where I can't give anymore into rock, and I can do the things I like, then I might as well take it up."

"I might as well."

""Cos I sing in a band called the 'Oo and I like it. And That Is It."