

Let's Go! (And Keep Going!) Pipeline Instrumental Review Turns Thirty-Five

Overview

In January 2024, the British magazine Pipeline Instrumental Review turned thirty-five years old with no fanfare other than the publication of its 127th quarterly issue, carrying their ongoing coverage of an international musical scene and tradition that most other music magazines assiduously ignore: rock and roll instrumental groups of the early 1960s, their influences, and their progeny. Whether writing about current groups and new releases or first-generation artists and reissues of early “instro” groups from around the world, Pipeline’s writers bring a passion and an attention to detail with which ARSC members can engage and identify. Although the electric guitar instrumental scene is its primary focus, Pipeline also publishes articles and reviews on other rock, R&B, jazz and country instrumental styles from the 1950s to the present.

“Young teens are always looking for the latest thing, for their own music” notes Alan Taylor, co-founder and co-editor with Dave Burke of *Pipeline Instrumental Review*. “And it just so happened that a combination of rhythm, melody and excitement with electric guitars to the fore was forged in two places, thousands of miles apart, at the same time.”¹

He was commenting on a remarkable musical coincidence that occurred in the third week of July, 1960. A thrilling guitar instrumental called “Apache” first appeared on the English pop music charts, the first hit by the Shadows, well known in England as singer Cliff Richard’s backing group. At the same time, an all-instrumental band in Tacoma, Washington also comprised of two guitars, bass and drums scored their first hit, “Walk Don’t Run,” an up-tempo rock and roll version of a piece written by jazz guitarist Johnny Smith that they learned from the version recorded by Chet Atkins.

Both were major hits in their home countries. The Ventures’ “Walk Don’t Run” was also a big hit in England, though in the States, it was a version by Danish jazz guitarist Jørgen Ingmann that became a top ten hit. Still, both groups were just getting started, and would record numerous best-selling singles and albums throughout the decade, defining a new genre and inspiring countless youngsters to pick up instruments and play.

Electric guitar-based instrumentals were not new in rock and roll. Duane Eddy had already scored several hits on both sides of the Atlantic with his low-register “twangy” guitar style, and while that became an enduring part of the rock vocabulary and an inspiration to many artists, only he could build a career around it.



Figure 1. Pipeline 1 – cover. January, 1989. The first issue featured The Rapiers, one of the best groups then playing in the classic early 60s instrro manner.

The Shadows and the Ventures not only created their own styles simultaneously and independently, they also provided templates that crossed all borders and soon inspired countless groups around the world. The “instro” era had arrived.

Pipeline Instrumental Review debuted in January of 1989, long after the genre’s golden era, but at a time when its foundational artists were still performing, sometimes for two or three generations of fans, including younger ones starting groups of their own. Even in that pre-internet age, there was a network of outlets to serve fans and players. Alan Taylor remembers:

“For records, some imports were available in London’s larger record stores such as HMV, Virgin and Tower Records but we also relied on magazines such as the USA’s *Goldmine* and the UK’s *New Gandy Dancer* for information. The editor of the short-lived revival of the UK’s *Rumble* magazine had been importing some Scandinavian releases and there was also Rockhouse Records in The Netherlands which sold via mail order. Pre-internet, our feature articles inevitably focused more on UK bands and the bigger international names.”

Pipeline’s website is at www.pipelinemag.co.uk, though it remains a print-only publication. There are indices of past articles and reviews there and physical copies of back issues are available, though the early years have sold out.

Even the first issue cast a wide net, with several reviews of compilations from the Swedish Triola label running alongside coverage of the UK’s See For Miles imprint’s recent reissues, as well as a track-by-track analysis of a recent Surfari’s compilation, noting original versions, re-recordings, previously unreleased material, b-sides and the first UK release of “A Surfer’s Christmas List.” The reviewer also helpfully notes that the cassette version of this vinyl LP included a cover of “The Rise and Fall of Flingel Bunt,” a classic hit by the Shadows, showing that this American band—and they were not alone—was well aware of the English instro scene, even though the Shadows never had a hit in the US.

The initial print run was 200 copies. It sold out quickly and had to be reprinted. Soon, their print run was up to a thousand, with an international subscription base and even a few retail copies making it to stores like Manhattan’s Midnight Records on East 23rd Street where I first encountered it. Their print runs have held steady over the years and, in addition to the UK and USA, Alan Taylor notes that they have subscribers in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden and The Netherlands.

The early issues were dominated by reviews and news items on active artists. Longer form articles began in the fifth issue with a Duane Eddy interview and short bio, along with coverage of recent English and European tours by the Shadows, the Ventures and Booker T. and the M.G.s, though reviews still tended to fill more pages. Interviews, profiles and histories of artists started to balance out the reviews and *Pipeline* began to make stronger and stronger contributions to rock and roll scholarship, though still maintaining its passion for the music. Indeed, *Pipeline* should receive a great deal of credit for inspiring so many reissues, playing a role in many of them. “It was also a thrill to be asked to write the booklet notes for the first ever CD compilation of tracks by The Tornados,” Taylor recalled. “And we went on to write many more and also to create the “Ventures In The Vaults” and “Birth Of Surf” CD series for Ace Records.”

RUMBLE

for collectors of instrumental music

volume **5**
number **3**



INSIDE FOR THE FIRST TIME ANYWHERE - THE FULL STORY OF THE BARONS with EXCLUSIVE PHOTO'S, the FOUR-FOURS from New Zealand, The BEACHCOMBERS and The VIGILANTIES from the UK, plus all the usual reviews, views, articles on The SHADOWS, VENTURES, SPOTNICKS, DUANE EDDY, and lots more

Figure 2. Rumble – Volume 5, Number 3, 1988. One of Pipeline's predecessors.



Figure 3. Pipeline 17 – Nero and the Gladiators



Figure 4. Pipeline 18 – John Barry Seven



Figure 5. Pipeline 24 – Brian Bennett of The Shadows.



Figure 6. Pipeline 38 – Sandy Nelson.

By the 10th issue in the summer of 1991, they had run cover stories on Americans Duane Eddy and Link Wray, as well as the Hungarian guitarist Faragó “Judy” István, and the Atlantics, surf rockers from Australia who rank with the very best instrumental groups, establishing themselves as a reliable voice and source:

“In the late 1980s there were UK newsletters for individual acts such as The Ventures, Duane Eddy and Jet Harris but only one English language magazine covering rock instrumentals in general,” Taylor recalls. “Both my co-editor and I had written for the UK’s *New Gandy Dancer* and relied on it to keep informed of new instrumental releases. When its frequency dropped to about one issue each year that became a problem as some releases were sold out before we had a chance to buy them. We started with the aim of publishing quarterly and had reached issue 126 after 35 years. In addition to maintaining a fairly regular publication schedule we had the benefit of two enthusiastic writers from the outset, each with a different approach and slightly differing tastes, and we soon attracted written contributions from other enthusiasts so we have never been short of copy.”

Early contributors included Roy Simonds. For three years, starting with issue #5, *Pipeline* incorporated his newsletter *Boss*, in which he published his detailed research on the great saxophonist King Curtis, as well as other top players in the R&B and soul fields. In the Spring, 1993 issue, they published “The Early Years of John Barry,” covering his work with the John Barry Seven in the late 1950s when they were a fixture on the youth-oriented TV series *The Six-Five Special*, playing instrumentals variously flavored with rock, jazz, pop and show instrumentals, with covers of Duane Eddy’s *Rebel Rouser* also in the mix, though at times they anticipate the film work where Barry soon be making his mark again and again. Many years later, the authors published the authoritative *Hit and Miss: The Story of the John Barry Seven* (Bristol, UK, Redcliffe Press Ltd., 2018).

Since then, *Pipeline* has run many such articles filled with unique, first-hand accounts that speak volumes about this supposedly shallow period dominated by inconsequential pop on both sides of the Atlantic. But this was when a generation of English kids were learning to play from the records of the Shadows and guitarist Bert Weedon’s *Play In a Day* instruction books. Weedon, born in 1920, was England’s most prolific session guitarist, and one of the few players of his generation who genuinely liked rock and roll and played it well. His book was a bible and roadmap for guitarists as different as Hank Marvin of the Shadows, Eric Clapton, and Mike Oldfield of *Tubular Bells* fame.² Burke would interview Weedon for issue 42 in 1999.

From the beginning, they’ve also covered the contemporary instro scene around the world. The Rapiers, a 1980s band from England inspired by the Shadows, graced the cover of the first issue. The Spacemen, from Sweden, had the cover of the third issue. Toronto’s Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet were profiled in the seventh issue.



*Figure 7. Bert Weedon’s pick illustration
from his book Play in a Day.*

And *Pipeline* also dug into the days leading up the intro explosion of the early 1960s, and other facets of the early English rock scene as it emerged from the Skiffle Craze. In issue 12, Dave Burke's "The Ted Taylor Four Story," incorporated his conversations with keyboardist Taylor and guitarist Bob Rogers about their late 1950s work. Though little-known outside of England, they were among the first to whet the English appetite for forward-looking instrumentals in a rock and roll influenced style. For instance, with the modern touch of Ted Taylor's clavioline, a forerunner of the synthesizer that would be heard to great effect around the world on the Tornados' 1962 instrumental hit "Telstar."



Figures 8 & 9. The Tornados. Clem Cattini at lower left, during the time of their international hit "Telstar" in 1962.

Rogers' and Taylor's comments on the music business in England in the late 1950s included how their records were made, and in Rogers' case, his crucial contribution to the iconic early English rock and roll record by Johnny Kidd and the Pirates, "Shakin' All Over," as he explained to Burke:

"In those days, there was a tremendous amount of 'ghosting' that went on. The whole thing centered around Denmark Street (Tin Pan Alley) and the music publishers. They would come up with the material, get in a dozen or so players and make a 'demo' which was farmed out for the kids to learn. The "sessioneers" would also ghost on the actual recording too, if the kids couldn't hack it in time. I came up with the "Shakin'" riff after I had been working [the Taylor group's] "Shazam"—learning it for live dates with the band. The runs on that use a lot open strings—it's simple stuff—and I just worked out this variation with the same idea of using open strings."

But it was session guitarist Joe Moretti, who contributed the menacing guitar work to Vince Taylor and the Playboys' classic "Brand New Cadillac" in 1959, who played lead on the Kidd record, and while he did not address Rogers' account directly, his recollection a few year later in Issue 57 makes clear how extensive his own contribution was:

"I created the introduction, the backing figures, the solo, and slid a cigarette lighter across the strings to get that shakin' guitar sound. We had it down in a couple of takes."³

Pipeline Magazine proudly presents

PIPELINE 2005

The 13th Annual International
ROCK INSTRUMENTAL CONVENTION
from 1 p.m. on Easter Sunday, March 27th 2005
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Record and CD sales plus great live music from 5 bands!

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payments to Alan Taylor, 12 Thorkhill Gardens, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0UP, U.K.

Figure 10. Pipeline convention, 2005. From 1993 through 2014, Pipeline held an annual convention on Easter Sunday, with international instrto lineups.

The strong response to the early issues may have surprised Taylor and Burke, but there was more to come:

“The biggest surprise was Shadows guitarist Bruce Welch turning up at our first Pipeline Rock Instrumental Convention in 1993. To be there, standing right next to him, watching a young band playing *his* music was quite an experience. My co-editor Dave Burke managed to track down and interview members of several ‘60s bands and many reunited for one-off performances at our Conventions.”

Taylor also recalled to Hungarian writer István Varga that:

“Other ‘60s groups who have played for us including The Tornados (of “Telstar” fame), The Cougars (“Saturday Nite At The Duckpond”), The Fentones (“The Mexican”), The Hunters (“The Storm”), The Moontrekkers (“Night Of The Vampire”), The Packabeats (“The Traitors”), and Bert Weedon (the godfather of British rock guitar). Both Brian ‘Licorice’ Locking and Alan Jones of The Shadows have headlined shows for us. Perhaps the most memorable was when Nero & The Gladiators played wearing their Roman togas just as they did back in the ‘60s! (Mick Jones, co-founder of Foreigner, was in a late line-up of the group, but apparently didn’t make it to this gig.)



Figure 11. *The Shadows – bullfighting. On tour in Spain in 1963, the Shads took time out to record an EP of Spanish tunes (see page ###) and learn some bullfighting moves.*

“The Shads” have loomed large throughout *Pipeline’s* run, and the key members have all given thoughtful interviews, several, in some cases. They last performed together in 2009, but collections of rarities, unreleased material and live performances are still being issued, and *Pipeline* keeps up with the activities of the group’s founders and their successor. When keyboardist Francis Monkman died in 2023, music papers highlighted his contributions to progressive rock bands such as Curved Air, 801 and Sky, as well as his film and library music work, but *Pipeline* was probably alone in highlighting his 1970s time with the Shadows.

The Ventures have received a comparable amount of attention in *Pipeline*. Like the Shads, they seem like family at times, through interviews with all key members and news of their doings in and out of the group. Don Wilson’s 90 year old mother Josie was interviewed

in 2005 about her ongoing role in their story, which include naming the group, releasing the original “Walk Don’t Run” on her own Blue Horizon label, and setting up the group’s production company.

Guitar bands and guitarists have dominated *Pipeline*’s cover stories and interviews over the years, but not completely, with bassists, keyboardists, producers and others getting their say frequently too. Many drummers have spoken to *Pipeline* writers, such as Sandy Nelson and Clem Cattini of the Tornados. Brian Bennett was only 21 when he joined the Shadows, replacing original drummer Tony Meehan, but he was already a seasoned professional of five years’ experience from coffee houses to television. Speaking of live work in those times, he told Burke:

“There were two types of tuning in those days. When you were in a theatre there was no PA system like there is today. The singer had a microphone and the guitarist had their amps, that was it. So you had to tune and re-tune your kit according to the size and acoustics of the venue. If you were somewhere like the Liverpool Empire without a microphone, then you’d got to have a big, loud ringing kit. You’d have to, to get the sound 600 yards up to the gods. I liked a high, light crisp sound. It wasn’t really until Ringo came along with that low tuning that everyone one started change their ideas. Before that it was always a high bright sound.”⁴

Recent issues have included an ongoing chronology of the Shadows itinerary, starting in the days when they were known as “The Drifters” and solely as Cliff Richard’s backing band. This may seem like deep trivia to many, but from it I learned that they had played three nights in Stockholm in 1959, where they might have been seen by Swedish guitarist Bo Winberg and other members of his group the Spotnicks, who drew considerable inspiration from the Shads in their early years. Like them, they would enjoy international success in Europe and Japan, and even toured England for the first time in 1962 behind hits such as their driving version of “Orange Blossom Special.” They wore stylish spaceman outfits that were unfortunately offset by their downright goofy foam rubber helmets, but it didn’t seem to matter, and the group continued to record and tour until Winberg’s death in 2020. *Pipeline*, kept up with them all along, covering tours of 1990s and 2000s and interviewing Winberg and the others when they were available.

Unbeknownst to them, in late 1961, their manager licensed some of his demo tapes he’d made with future Spotnicks organist Peter Winsnes on the drums for release in Finland under the name “The Feenades.” One of these was “Theme from Leningrad,” an adaptation of a Russian song that had become an international hit in an instrumental Dixieland arrangement by the English trad band Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen under the title “Midnight in Moscow.” The Feenades’ guitar-driven setting of it anticipates the spy music of the James Bond soundtracks and other espionage film scores.

The records inspired many young Finnish artists who developed their own instrumental style known as *Rautalanka* which means “iron wire” in Finnish. One of the most popular was The Sounds, whose version of “Theme from Leningrad” became a hit in Japan, setting up a tour for them there. *Rautalanka*’s heyday was in the early 1960s, but it’s never quite gone away, and has enjoyed considerable vitality down to this day, well covered in *Pipeline*.



Figures 12 & 13. *The Spotnicks – plainclothes .and in costume. These shots are from the back cover of the group’s first album, recorded in London on tour in 1962, in the wake of their first hits outside of Sweden.*

Meanwhile back in the States, Duane Eddy’s string of hits continued, and the success of the Ventures was opening the door to national hits by other instrumental groups. Prior to the Ventures’ breakthrough, many instrumental hits had been the work of studio musicians. Some were quite inspired, though many weren’t much more than simple riffs or old chestnuts played in a rocked-up style. Michael Z. Gordon was a young guitarist who did studio work and also lead road bands when his work hit the charts and a proper group was needed to play out. In 1962, after a successful stint with the Marketts and their hit *Surfer’s Stomp*, he took part in the sessions that produced the single *Let’s Go* by the Routers, even contributing handclaps to the song’s enduring opening, as he told *Pipeline*’s Dave Burke:

“The clapping was done by me, Ron Goldstein, Mike Daughtry and Gene Pinchuk plus a few more of my friends who were there. That was the first time that clapping sequence had been heard anywhere, and everybody was doing it after that – we even issued a license to some publishing company and they sold thousands of copies to marching bands.”⁵

An album was created to capitalize on the success of the single and it was receiving playtime at football games. Though the cover features three airborne cheerleaders, Gordon and the road band he recruited are seen on the back. The album was largely the work of

studio players, but Gordon was proud of the road band and, while on tour, booked them into a studio where they cut a single of their own called *Rumble at Newport* under the name Mike Gordon and the Agates.

There was now a national market for the surf guitar sounds of Southern California where Dick Dale had been holding forth for some years. The Surfaris, the Challengers, Chantays and others would enjoy major hits, though Dale really didn't hit the bigtime outside of California until his thunderous version of "Miserlou" graced the soundtrack of *Pulp Fiction* in 1994. As iconic as his 1960s records were, Dale professed to disdain them in his 1997 interview in *Pipeline's* Spring, 1997 issue:

"That stuff sucks...There's only three albums that sound like Dick Dale and they are *Tribal Thunder*, *Unknown Territory* and *Calling Up Spirits*. Those are the only ones that sound like I sound...when *Let's Go Trippin'* came out [1961] I smashed it against the wall because it was so thin. Those engineers were going "I've been an engineer for 20 years, I know how to do this." Then I start playing and they're going "Holy shit, it's bleeding through the board. I can't hold it." They put limiters on it and pads on it and it comes out sounding shitty. So I decided if the people can't hear me the way I sound on stage then I'm not gonna record no more." [NB: Dale recorded several more singles and six albums in the three years following *Let's Go Trippin'*. The later albums he cites above were released in 1993, 1994 and 1996 and were recorded to 24 track analog tape, which remained his preference into the 2000s]

A tough customer, perhaps, but Dale's several *Pipeline* interviews are also filled with his observations about the technical elements of his sound, and the unique, mutually beneficial relationship he enjoyed with Leo Fender that helped him realize it. Such explorations of players' highly personal combinations of instruments, gear and technique appear in *Pipeline* regularly.

But as much of a niche publication as it may seem to be, *Pipeline* is remarkably eclectic at times, especially in its review section. In the most recent issues, you'll find the expected reissue and revival recordings there, but also Karl Barton of Kraftwerk's new electronic score for the silent horror film classic *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. The magazine also reviewed *She Said Mahalo*, a new release from Danish harmonica virtuoso Lee Oskar, best known for his work with the jazz/funk group War.

From time to time, there are reminders of the influence of instro styles and artists well beyond their supposed niche. In the Spring, 2005 issue, Jan Akkerman, guitarist for the Dutch fusion group Focus, spoke of his admiration for Hank Marvin's guitar work and was genuinely moved to learn from writer Robert Silverstein that Marvin had recently covered Focus's *Sylvia* on a solo album.⁶

Camel, an enduring English prog band from the 1970s who were primarily instrumental, was founded by guitarist Andy Latimer, who came up in a 60s instro band called the Phantom Four. Latimer was unabashed in his admiration of Marvin and his acknowledgement of his influence on him. As he told Alan Taylor and Bob Stroud in 2000:

"Mickey Simmonds⁷ calls me the Hank Marvin of the progressive world! Seriously though, Hank's influence is always in there somewhere, so maybe that's why."⁸

Of *Pipeline* and its continued vitality Latimer said, as many would:

“It’s great, every time I get the old *Pipeline* mag I start reading and it’s ‘Yeah! Where’s my Shadows CD with “Peace Pipe” and “Wonderful Land” and all the wonderful echo. I was knocked out to find that Jet⁹ was a Camel fan! I love the mag, love getting it. It takes you back.”¹⁰

Endnotes

- 1 Alan Taylor, May 6, 2024 e-mail to the author. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Alan Taylor are from this e-mail.
- 2 *Pipeline* published a 50th year tribute to Oldfield’s landmark instrumental album in this year’s Winter issue, # 127.
- 3 Burke, Dave, “Joe Moretti,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review*, Autumn, 2002, #57, p.11.
- 4 Bradford, Rob, “Brian Bennett,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review* #24, Autumn, 1994, p. 13.
- 5 Burke, Dave, “Out of Limits with Michael Z. Gordon,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review* #66, New Year, 2005, p 11.
- 6 “Silverstein, Robert, “Jan Akkerman,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review* #67, Spring, 2005, p. 31.
- 7 Mickey Simmonds is a session keyboardist who toured with Camel in the 1990s.
- 8 Taylor, Alan and Stroud, Bob, “The Phantom Four and Camel,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review*, Autumn, 2000, #49, p. 19.
- 9 Jet Harris, the first bassist for the Shadows.
- 10 Taylor, Alan and Stroud, Bob, “The Phantom Four and Camel,” *Pipeline Instrumental Review*, Autumn, 2000, #49, p. 20.

Matthew Barton became the Curator of Recorded Sound at the Library of Congress in 2008. From 1996 to 2003, he was production coordinator of the Alan Lomax Collection CD series. He has written extensively on recorded music and sound, and is a regular contributor to “Now See Hear,” the Library of Congress’s audiovisual blog: <https://blogs.loc.gov/now-see-hear/>. He is past President of the Association for Recorded Sound Collections and currently chairs the ARSC Publications Committee, and contributed the article “So Rare: The Last Days of Jimmy Dorsey” to the Fall, 2020 issue of the ARSC Journal.

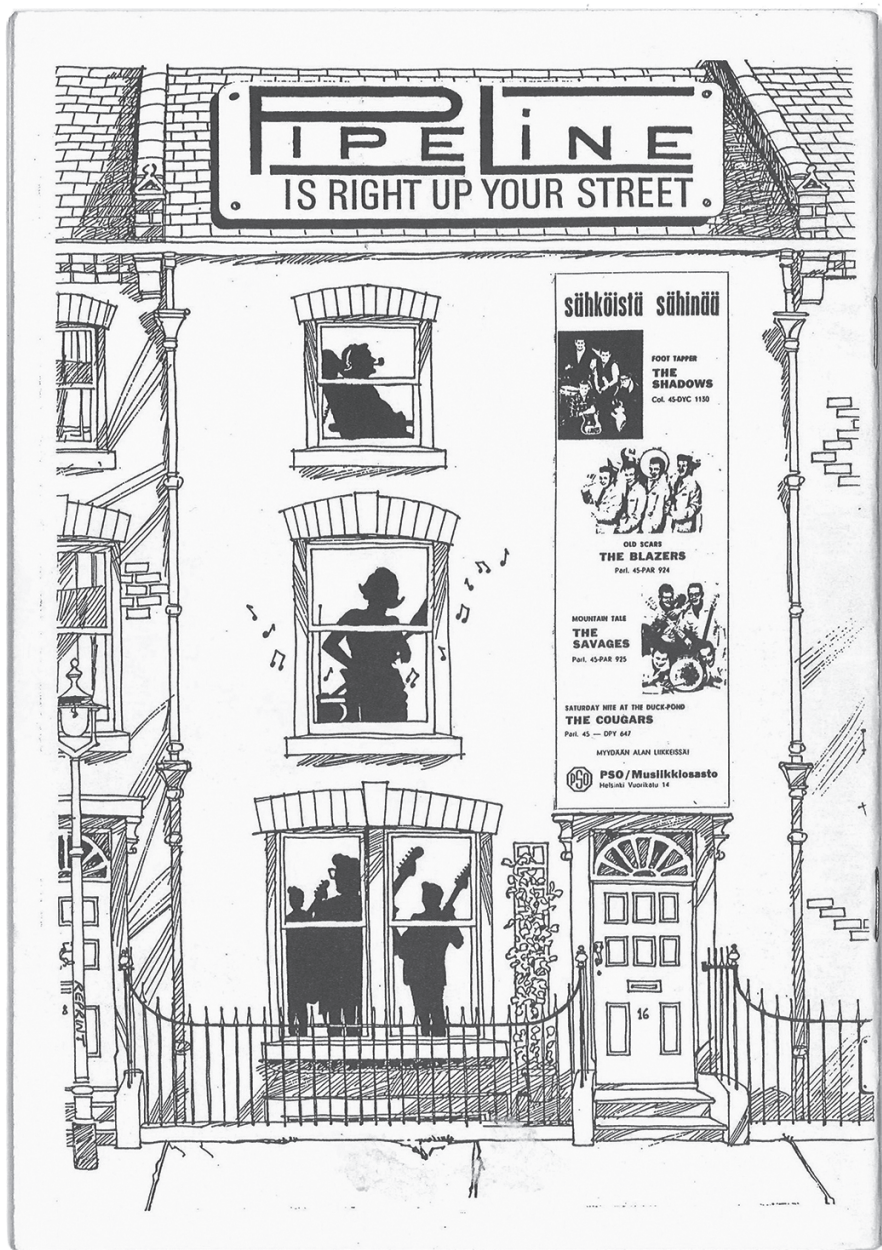


Figure 14. Pipeline 3 – back cover. This drawing appeared on the back covers of early issues. This time in addition to the usual silhouettes in the windows, the building has been adorned with a Finnish advert for guitar instrsos!