

# The Embryo of a Man

THE CHARLIE PICKETT INTERVIEW    STORY: FISH    PHOTOS: JIM JOHNSON

**EDITORS NOTE..** For the uninformed, Charlie Pickett is a local legend, an outstanding guitarist, and plays tough passionate classic R 'n' R . Period. His band, the Eggs have gone through more personal changes in 2 years than let's say Fleetwood Mac have in 15. This weeks lineup consits of John Salton, guitar; Eddie O'Brien, bass (on loan from the Eat); and John Galway, drums. Two singles are available on Open Records (Feeling/"White Light White Heat" and "If this is Love"/"Slow Death".) For information contact Open Records, 901 Progresso Drive, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33304

**FISH:** We all know that the Pickett legend began in Dania, Fla. Lets start at the beginning; what was your first car?

**C.P.:** I got my first car when I was 16. It was a 65' Volkswagon; but after 2 months I lucked into a 65' Mustang. Much better for picking up girls. Before that I walked to the Dairy Queen for my dates.

**FISH:** You've lived in South Florida for a long time; wasn't there an early Miami music scene?

**C.P.:** When I was growing up there were a lot of dances at the high schools and teen centers. This was in 65' to 67'. A number of big bands were popular then. The Birdwatchers, Mark Markham and the Jesters, The Beaver Patrol, The Body Shop. Great dance bands doing good covers of Vanilla Fudge, Young Rascals, a lot of soul. These were weekly dances, too. But, in 1968 intergation came in which occasioned big fights after ball games and dances so it killed them. Also, maybe because pot became popular, and who wants to dance behind pot? Actually, this was the death of a social mechanism which was very important then, just as now. Sad. To my memory, this is the only new scene since it's demise. The Gichlids, Screaming Sneakers, Reactions, Eat, and the Eggs.

**FISH:** Barry Elliott? Do you feel his loss from the original Eggs line-up? Or, if the music is strong enough, does the personal really matter?

**C.P.:** Yeah, Cause Barry was definately the main character of the old band. A lot of girls liked him. He was a good white guitar player. Of course the personal is important; because the guys in the band have got to know the difference between executing Chuck Berry ala Johnny Winter or Keith Richard Johnny Winter played it very Exciting, But white; an Extremely caucasian feel. Where as Keith whumped and pumped the songs into life.

**FISH:** Did you ever notice how guys tend to become individuals and dance alone to the Eggs?

**C.P.:** I don't know. Never noticed. Our music is sort of guy's music, but, on the other hand, I don't think there is such a thing. Girls love Van Halen but are just too afraid to go to their concerts alone. Scared of the guys who go. I guess. Your're asking me to define the obvious, but I can't. This thing about the subject matter of songs; I don't like songs that whine about loves lost. Insinuations of be and do something great appeals more to guys than girls. On the other hand, we certainly don't put down girls. We like em! It's sort of obvious.

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FISH: What was your first band?

C.P: The Eggs was the first band I was ever in. Never been asked that question before, by the way.

FISH: Reviews? good, bad, indifferent? Have they effected your musical direction?

C.P: Yeah. Especially with the second 45. Right now I'm being tagged as a 'cover artist; which is like being a minor league ball player. And I feel it. So the next 45's going to br two originals. "Phantom Train" and a second original which I hope Eddie O'Brian will co-write.

FISH: Local bands. Be honest; who's gonna run?

C.P: I would have said the Reactions before they broke up. A great romantic hard pop band. Their music, their lyrics. People wom"t beleive it, but it's true. One of the top 50 bands in the world. The Eat are a success

right now, in my

FISH: What about in R&R? Are you pleased(proud or not) 'new wave' or 'punk'?

CP: Very proud of the punk ever meant to rock and roll. To me Smith said "we take it over."

we weren't making Roll has something to people dress. Go into Flamingo or what have reflection. Now, Adam dressing more the music. Like the mentality; idolizing such a short career. thing. What the is that it's out tonight, kinda something.

FISH: Be honest, need any current line-musicians if you or go to London or

CP: Yes!!! I would It was Barry Elliot's become The Charlie hated the name Eggs.

FISH: Do you believe a name record label would sign you from S. Florida? Better yet, does it take going to L.A. or New York, to make it?

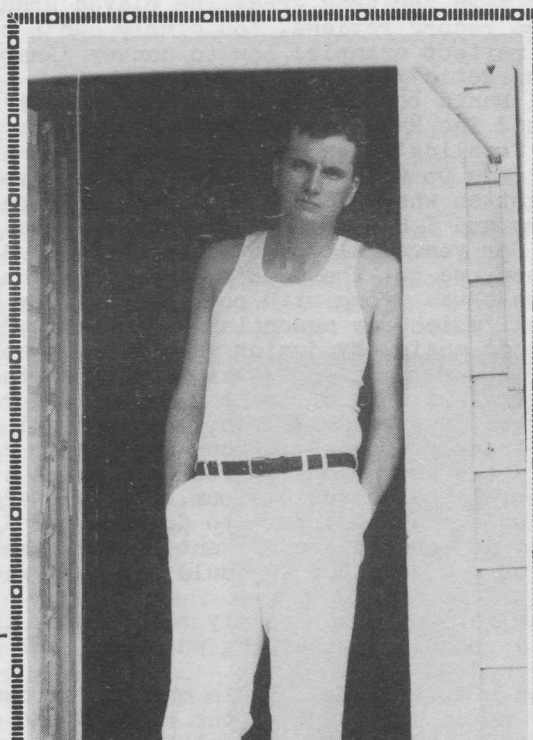
CP: Sure, if we're good enough. I don't really know much about the business end of rock and roll. No, in N.Y. or L.A. you're selling sound. You sound the same here as anywhere else. We'd like to go someday, sure.

FISH: Would you describe yourself as (perhaps) a musical 'anachronism'?

CP: Yeah, but I'm trying to move on. To develop the music that died in 1970. Where the Rolling Stones should have gone. Where Creedence could have gone. Where Lou Reed didn't go. The Stones could have gone much deeper into their original music instead of skimming the past. And talk about disappointment?! Lou Reed lost all of his intenseness after his earlier work.

FISH: Who's your dream girl? Give us the top three or, up to ten if you're into lists!

CP: Still the same as in high school, actually; 1) Pam Sessa 2) Kathy Sessa



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labels. All that me was good, true it's like Patti created it, let's Perhaps she knew anything new. Rock do with the way clothes stores like you. It's a and the Ants make important than living legend Nick Adams for It's a shallow people are saying important to go neat-it means

Charlie. Do you up of local decided to tour New york? never go by myself. idea that the band Pickett Band. He

and 3) Dorianne Reo.

FISH: Rock clubs. What pisses you off? How about Tampa's Cuban Club? Are you mad that there's so much (too much) restriction on 'originals' bands?  
CP: Oh, the same things which make everyone else angry. The owners know that they can fill a club with a garbage cover band. I heartily dislike the 'giving thing' type of club mentality that panders to the fantastic fashionable genre. Why don't people dance as opposed to staring worshipfully at the bands? The Tampa club is great, I just wished that people danced more.

FISH: Exposure? The rock press?

CP: Everyone loves rave reviews, sure. And seeing themselves in print; that's only human. I don't particularly care to read reviews. How do you translate from one media to another? You can't really write about something you heard. The reviewer says "he sang great, he played great". It's a personal peeve and I loathe record reviews. You simply can't convey what you heard on the record. A perfect example: how to convey 'Anarchy in the U.K.'? By saying "it's very energetic??!" That's pure irony!

FISH: How did the local Dania boy decide he could 'make it' in the rock and roll world? Inspirations? The Mascaro mystique? How much or how little did Robert Mascaro (former Cichlids' manager -ed) have to do with your direction?

CP: I'm not sure I can come up with the out-front answer you perhaps want. I'm fortunate to have gotten where I have and I wouldn't be surprised if it stopped tomorrow. Robert and I have been friends for years. We talked and complained about music for years. All through the 70's drudge, we didn't know what was wrong. Then, we got the CBGB's first compilation album. The Tough Darts summed up what was wrong with rock and roll by playing "All For The Love Of Rock And Roll" which was essentially "Route 66." And this was 1976! Mascaro wanted to do music. My junior year of high school, in 1970, Robert Mascaro showed me four chords. I was in a play at the time called "The Impossible Years" and had lots of spare time between rehearsals.

FISH: The 45 cover formats. Who's idea? Then, what's next?

CP: Ted or Walter's, I frankly forget. The constant color combo? It was kinda a co-idea really. What's the next project after the third single? I don't know. Maybe a live album; maybe a studio album. Mostly, we're just trying to focus on the next single. But if I were to do an album I'd rather it were live cause we could do more covers. I want to do 'Shake Some Action' so bad I can taste it. On a live album we could get away with more, you know?

FISH: The sessions, Charlie. Would you really rather play the guitar parts yourself, than go to the trouble of teaching what you want to the latest guys in the band's line up?

CP: It's just a question of ... in the studio one player can play several tracks. Ok, it's really which player plays the tracks that are right for each particular song. For instance: Johnny Sultan plays a great bluesy lead guitar that I wouldn't be able to play in five years. But, I play rhythm guitar on the records? Confront the obvious. If it's that important Barry Elliott played on 'Feeling.' I played all the guitar on 'White Light White Heat'. Barry played all guitar on 'If This is Love'. I played all all guitar on 'Slow Death'. It only makes sense. Since I know what I want and can do it myself, quicker, why bother to teach someone all the fucking parts?

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FISH: Do you think 'half assed' musician is a fair analogy of your capabilities? And then to amass such a following...

CP: Sure. I so nothing unique. Why is not relevant. I don't worry about it, to tell the truth. People want to have fun on Saturday night. Legitimate rock and roll, boy-girl, bla bla. It's fun music and I hope people realise (I guess they do) and come to see us play. I don't generally like unique music. I like American folk music, which to me spells rock and roll. Some guys want to go deep into expanding the width of rock and roll with chords and synthesizers. I want to expand explore the depth. Like, how deep can you go?! Look what John Fogarty did with 'Born on the Bayou.' I'm just not interested in music which sounds like machines or factories. Rock and Roll is the definitive american folk music. Human. And it should reflect humaness. Not just "everybody around me is a machine but I'm different and lonely. Look at the British thing; the voices sound like machines and they try to sound as such.

FISH: Girls in rock? Come on now. You are an ace iconoclastic when it comes to women. Who are the girls you admire in music?

CP: As an artist? Or who would I like to jump in bed with?

FISH: Both, Chuck; and give us the details.

CP: Melanie, for having the guts to sing with that voice and putting a lot of character into her songs. Debbie Cichlid; she's a great song writer and over all personality. Just like Springsteen, she writes, she entertains, she puts herself into all of her songs. I did not have a crush on her, by the way...Debbie Harry for having the guts. She stands up will under pressure. She was strong enough to be the pressure cooker and withstanding the fame of the whole group. But, there's more legitimate ones; way more legitimate. Janis Joplin, a great super blues lady. Grace Slick provided us with a lot of laughs in the press. Bonnie Raitt plays slide guitar that is world class. Marianne Faithful? I think somebody stood her up to the mike. How many songs did she write? Patti Smith of course. Always.

FISH: The future, Charlie? Will you ever stop playing? If all else failed, would you go into management? Settle for college? Settle, period?

CP: No. I'll always play the guitar. With anybody, anytime, jamming. It's what I truly enjoy most.

FISH: Wouldn't you rather be playing baseball?

CP: I can do both. I played guitar in the garage with Kenny Lindahl, and up at college by myself on slide. It's what I like. The Eggs were the first band I was ever in. I've never been asked that before.



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