

## More On Pynchon On Record

Laurence Daw

Pynchon, so fond of the kazoo, has had some small effect on the contemporary music scene. The nature of this effect has been analyzed by Steven Moore in "Pynchon On Record" (Pynchon Notes, 10 [1982], 56-57). However, in documenting various groups of musicians who have been influenced directly or indirectly by Pynchon, Moore has neglected one group: The Insect Trust.

Their record-album Hoboken Saturday Night was released in 1970 by ATCO (Atlantic Recording Company). It features a song called "The Eyes of a New York Woman," and lists the song's composers as Thomas Pynchon and Jeff Ogden, lyrics from Thomas Pynchon's novel V. The lyrics to this song are, of course, actually first sung by Benny Profane when he, Angel, and Geronimo are trying to pick up some girls (Thomas Pynchon, V. [1963; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1979], 127). When he sings his despairing song, all the girls can say is: "'It doesn't have any beat'" (128). The song is as follows:

The eyes of a New York woman  
Are the twilit side of the moon,  
Nobody knows what goes on back there  
Where it's always late afternoon.

Under the lights of Broadway,  
Far from the lights of home,  
With a smile as sweet as a candy cane  
And a heart all plated with chrome.

Do they ever see the wandering bums  
And the boys with no place to go,  
And the drifter who cried for an ugly girl  
That he left in Buffalo?

Dead as the leaves in Union Square,  
Dead as the graveyard sea,  
The eyes of a New York woman  
Are never going to cry for me.  
Are never going to cry for me.

The Insect Trust uses exactly the same lyrics as those given in Pynchon's V. The song is sung by a woman, however, in a clear but haunting voice which follows a blues style. She is accompanied by a soft electric guitar, also in the blues style, and the percussion and bass lines of the piece are unobtrusive and underplayed. The most startling and beautiful thing about the piece, however, is its use of a descant recorder solo. This acoustic part is played in a virtuoso fashion and follows a jazz/blues style, something rather difficult to achieve on a Renaissance instrument. The whole piece is moody and lazy, just like a hot Hoboken Saturday night, lost, perhaps, in the streets with the Whole Sick Crew.

The University of  
Western Ontario