BIOGRAPHY

BILLY RANKIN

In the last few years, Scotland has proved itself a potent breeding ground for musicians and songwriters. Billy Rankin certainly fills both those roles more than capably. With its hard-edged guitars, contagious melodies and non-stop energy, Rankin's debut album for A&M, *Growin' Up Too Fast*, combines the best of both the rock and pop music worlds.

A native of Glasgow, Rankin served his apprenticeship in various local bands, one band at a time. At 17, he was invited to play guitar in a band called Zal, fronted by ex-Alex Harvey Band guitarist Zal Cleminson. Although enthusiastically received by the press and public alike, Zal split up when Cleminson took his leave. Rankin went on to a series of other groups and projects all of which gave the young musician invaluable experience.

Billy's next major break came when he was asked to join Nazareth. Within days of accepting, he was on his way to the United States for two days of intensive rehearsals for Nazareth's next tour. For Rankin, that tour was a genuine trial by fire, as it was both filmed and recorded for a live album and video. Yet it wasn't only Nazareth that recognized Billy's talents. On that same tour, he also came to the attention of A&M Records, who signed him to a worldwide solo deal after hearing some of Rankin's demos.

Growin' Up Too Fast—a mixture of vibrant pop, razor-sharp rock and soulful ballads—was recorded during the summer of '83. The album's songs, from the drive of "Rip It Up" to the pathos of "Burning Down," make it clear that Rankin's style cannot be easily pigeonholed. Nor is he a musician who forgets his past; Zal Cleminson, Billy's former bandmate, contributes guitar to both "Rip It Up" and "Call Me Automatic."

Growin' Up Too Fast is a testament to the power of good-time music. More than that, however, it is an album that will surely imprint the name of Billy Rankin on the mind of anyone who hears it. By next year, it may be apparent that Rankin didn't really grow up too soon—just faster than anyone else.