Def Leppard: To Hell and back with Hysteria

again and again," says tion triumphed over nearlead singer Joe Elliott of tragedy and adversity. the group's first album Three years ago, Def Lepdidn't like this and we copies of Pyromania in the didn't like that. The album U.S. alone, and only we were putting together Michael Jackson's Thriller wasn't as good as the last, kept it out of the No. 1 so we just didn't release it. spot. They had played to The decision cost us a lot millions of fans on their of money, but we don't world tour. Come late care. It's the final product 1984, however, the Leps that counts. I'd rather go went through a lifetime of down in the history books bad news. than the profit and loss The group set about columns."

wait. "We could have became a nightmare. First easily made 'Son Of choice of producer Pyromania' but that unavailable...Second wouldn't have been good choice incompatible ... First enough," says Elliott. two engineers, ditto ... Self-"We want to show that we production difficult. Then, can grow as a band. We a car crash takes drumwere so convinced that we mer Rick Allen's left were gong to put out an arm ... A year later, proalbum better than the last. ducer Mutt Lange (return-'We haven't been here for ing choice no.1) damages a while,' we said to each his knee in a crash ... Elliott other, 'let's give them contracts the mumps dursomething worthwhile."' ing vocal overdubs.

5

"WE KEPT DOING IT The group's firm convicsince Pyromania. "We pard had sold six million

working on a new album, It was well worth the and the false starts Pyromania's follow-up seemed to be on permanent hold.

"We all tried very hard to save face, we were all smiling and laughing at each other, trying to work," says Elliott. "But it was very difficult to concentrate on what we were doing. We ended up going through nine or 10 months of lethargic nowhereness."

Their stupor shattered as Allen made a miraculous recovery. Determined to continue playing, the drummer developed a brilliant left foot technique to go along with a specially designed Simmons electronic drum kit. "Rick came in one day and played 'When The Levee Breaks' all the way through," the group recalls. "The guy had done it! From then on it was like a massive weight had been lifted from our shoulders."

Lange and Elliott healed quickly as well. A fragmented assembly of songs, dubbed Hysteria, became a cohesive whole. "We came back with a completely different frame of mind," says the singer. "We had a lot fresher attitude, the way it should be when making a new album. We didn't have a problem creating a flow because we were used to taking songs apart and putting them back together again. Every song is credited to everybody in the band we all did our bit for every song."

The group courageously went on tour last summer, adding a second drummer for backup. He was history after four warm-up shows. Debuting on the road were two new songs, and it was apparent the quinter was stronger than ever.

Time spent working on

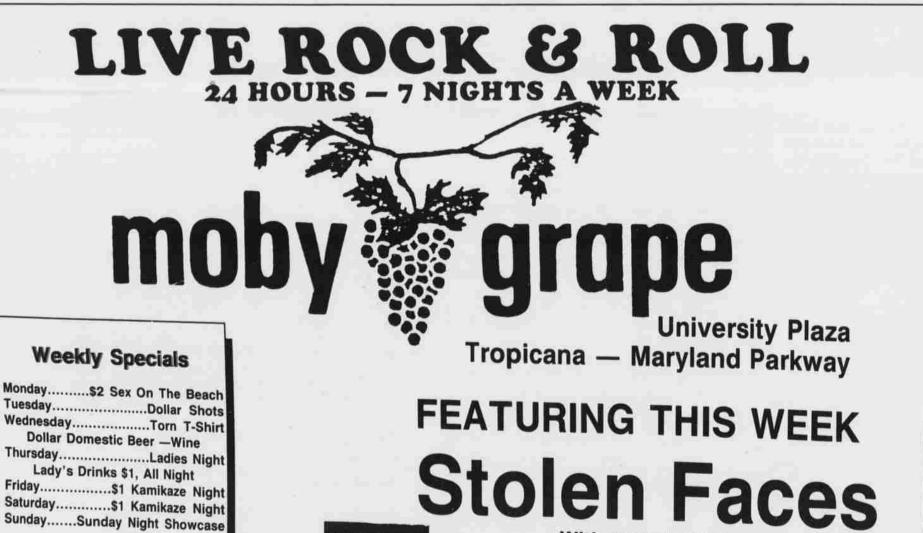
the rest of the group a chance to hone their skills. Further developed on Hysteria is the two-guitar sound of Steve Clark and Phil Collen, and Joe Elliott emerges a seasoned vocalist.

"I want to keep getting better as a singer," he says. "Over the last three or four years I basically found my voice. I can handle the low stuff and make it sound thick, like Joe Cocker. We were born two miles apart, so maybe that's got something to do with it. I've never had much call to sing with the band like that before, but I do a lot of it on this album."

DEF LEPPARD's first appearance on record was in 1979 with the selfproduced EP, Getcha Rocks Off. They signed to Mercury and released a critically acclaimed debut album in 1980. On

the new album also gave Through The Night, spearheaded England's new wave of hard rock bands. It went gold in America. Mutt Lange produced its million-selling followup, High 'n' Dry, which featured the breakthrough hit, Bringin' On The Heartbreak. Pyromania, with Lange again on board, was released in early 1983. Rock Rock, Photograph, Foolin', among others, kept it on the charts for nearly two years.

> Now, after three years...12 songs, 62 minutes. Elliott: "We could have put out a dummy double record and made a lot more money. or we could have left off four tracks and had a 45-minute album, but so what! We're not businessmen, we're just concentrating on being a band.



Must Be 21 with I.D.

With 92.3 KOMP's Mike Culotta EmCee for Weds. Torn T-Shirt & Sunday Night Showcase

PAGE 8