

Entertainment

"I can't concentrate And Motown wants my record yesterday"

Rockwell: "The Genie"

"I kept trying to write this song called 'Concentration,' but I couldn't concentrate enough to do it," laughs 22-year-old Rockwell about a tune on his third and latest album, *The Genie*. Lucky for

around with them" Rockwell remembers. "It was amazing to me how I could just come up with my own songs. Music just rubbed off on me. I got a lot of stuff from my father, even though

track, which crossed over to reach No. 2 on the pop charts. The song's edgy paranoia and new wave feel had its roots in Rockwell's own life.

"I had a pretty strange childhood," he relates. "There was always a lot of security around. It did seem like I was being watched all the time.

"To this day, that song took the least amount of time to write than anything I've ever done. It was like God was telling me what to sing. I guess I was just releasing the frustration I felt from growing up differently than most kids. Maybe some anger, too."

The still-shy Rockwell was intent at the start on establishing his own identity away from his famous father.

"I wanted control of my own life, to be independent of everybody and everything," he says softly. "I wanted people to appreciate my music. When I first came out, nobody really knew who I was, so they couldn't have bought the record because I was Berry Gordy's son. I had to find out for myself if I could do that without having that tag on me."

If there was ever a question of Rockwell being his own man, *The Genie* offers solid proof of that independence and growing maturity. He takes a strong point of view in "That's Nasty" on the current record ratings controversy.

"America is already oversexed enough as it is. You look at it on TV, you watch it on the cable, you see it on billboards. Do we have to listen to it on the radio, too? There are ways to say things without being so literal. That's what great songwriters are all about,"

he claims, while admitting the final verse is "another way of looking at it. That's the kids of America's rebuttal to what I'm saying. They'll do what they wanna do anyway. All I'm saying is, instead of having to get the government involved, we, as individuals, should have the sense to be aware of what we're writing and whom we're writing for."

"Carne, on the other hand, is a love song that

symbolizes the perfect girl out there who I have yet to find," says Rockwell.

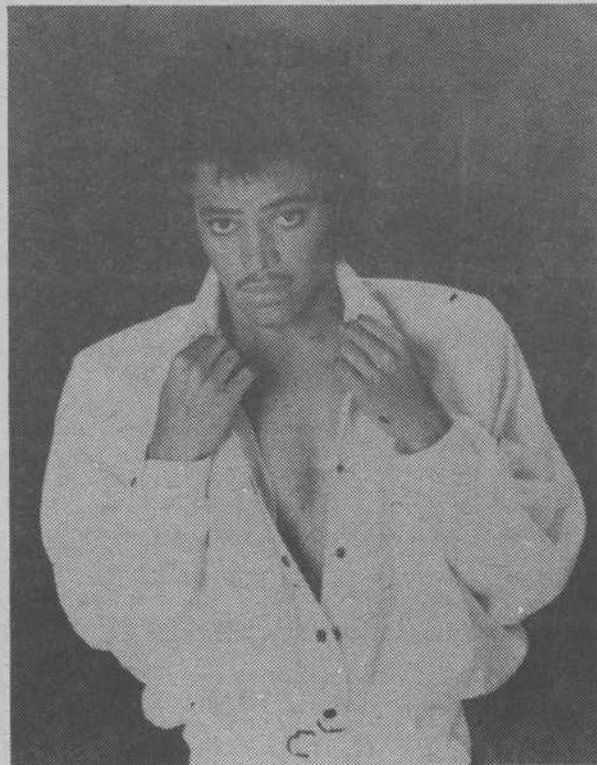
"Baby On The Corner" is about another serious topic--social disease. "If you're not careful, something bad is going to happen to you," he warns. "I'm not a religious fanatic, but I do believe in God and I try to live with good moral values and standards."

In the wacky, out-of-this-world "Man From Mars,"

Rockwell takes the role of an outer space visitor viewing the current world situation from his unique perspective, complete with a speeded-up, vocoderized rap.

Back to Earth, Rockwell is most at home in his studio, creating, away from the hustle and bustle of the day-to-day world.

"I really love music and creating music," he enthuses. "That's-my best friend."



ROCKWELL

us, the talented singer/song-writer/musician put off the outside distractions long enough to come up with eight brand-new numbers, ranging from the aching love song (and first single), "Carne" to the wide-screen novelty of "Man From Mars" and the synthfunk metal of "Nervous Condition."

"I've been influenced by everybody," he says. "The Beatles, Elvis Presley, James Brown...but then again, what musician hasn't been affected by those people? Put that in a potpourri with what's going on in the music world today and you get my sound. Every time I hear a great record, there's something I pick up from that."

Young Rockwell, son of Motown founder Berry Gordy, certainly heard plenty of great music growing up around superstars like Stevie Wonder, the Jackson Five, Diana Ross, Marvin Gaye, Lionel Richie and Smokey Robinson.

"There were always instruments around the house and I'd just play

he's got his way and I've got mine. I learned a lot from him about why a certain song would be a hit...or why it wasn't. I used to listen to him tell Stevie or Lionel or Michael or Diana what needed to be done to make a song into a hit. He used to say, 'You've got to have a melodic thing happening, a hook. So people can remember it. And you've got to be clever with the lyrics. He never really directed it towards me, but I would apply it to my own stuff anyway.'"

Rockwell certainly learned his lessons well. With his very first LP *Somebody's Watching Me*, he had a No. 1 R&B smash with the title

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