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Rock

Phil 'n' Blanks here in the flesh and also on tape

By Lynn Van Matra
Photo by Eric

NEW! LOCAL ROCK outfit PHIL 'n' the Blanks dropped two videos with all 20 sold approximately a year ago. They've tapped out a fairly impressive array of product, "Advertising Girl" which has its "world premiere" Friday night at the Broadway Chicago, 212 N. Broadway, is the band's sixth video effort. "It was easy, at least," says Blanks leader Phil Blanks. "The first time we did were just us playing our instruments and doing the songs in the conventional way. 'Advertising Girl' is our fourth what I call conceptual or conceptualized video."

The first videotape, which was filmed in a tracking studio on the Southside, also features Blanks' cousin Frankie De Blane more prominently than its predecessor, despite the fact he'll be taking over lead vocals Blanks' into the world of television and advertising. The song "Advertising Girl" appears on the band's second album, "Multiple Choice" (Pink Records), which Blanks' colleague has sold several thousand copies in the Chicago area, "and a few in Texas and Wisconsin."

The band's previous video ventures have been shown between sets at such clubs as Park West and the Broadway as well as in record stores and at national cable television. They've "helped us a lot in the local scene," says Blanks, who turns up in the Rock onstage Friday at the Broadway along with the rest of the Blanks' kinematics across the bill. "That's something that I can say without qualms."

"WHATEVER IT'S HELPED us, naturally, I don't know, if I had enough money to make 20 copies of the tapes and send them off in major blubs, maybe they'd perk us and buy more. I think we've distinguished ourselves more with the video than with the records, actually, but all that many bands have videos, and it's a way of demonstrating our personality."

The Blanks' first video began a year or so ago when Blanks' long distance producer/producer Joe



PHIL 'n' the Blanks. They have jumped into video with all 10 feet.

Federalist at a party.

"He approached me about doing some video, but I wasn't very responsive at first," Blanks says. "After he harassed me a bit, though, I realized he was a nice guy and really good to work with. Since then we've been collaborating on the scripts, and he handles the technical things. I can't speak highly enough of Joe; he makes a big difference."

Ironically, Blanks—like a lot of performers who make videotapes—can not stand to plank down his hard-earned cash for a full-length music video to play in his home recorder. "There's nothing I would want to watch over and over," he explains. "We would be one of the first to say that, too. You can listen to a record again

and again, but I can't imagine wanting to watch a video more than a few times. There's no room for your own imagination."

In their own danger of obsolescence, Blanks 'n' the Blanks video, which are making it with increasing regularity even in clubs and record stores around the city?

"Oh, I don't think so," Blanks asks. "Well, maybe if you went to On Broadway every night... but even then, you wouldn't be watching all the time. You're going to be trying to pick somebody up or trying to find somebody else or going to the bathroom or getting involved in a conversation. So I think that people can stand repeat showings."