

Elite Arts Group Names Steve Miller 1st Rock Member

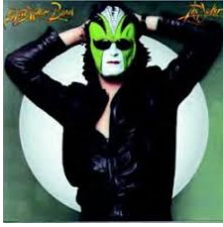
by Con Chapman

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the high-toned organization of scholars, artists, politicians and business leaders, broke with convention yesterday as it inducted Steve Miller, a rock musician credited with the creation of several words, as a member of the group.



AAA&S: "What did he just say?"

"All I can say is--Somebody give me a cheeseburger!" Miller shouted after he accepted the congratulations of the Academy's President, Patricia Meyer Spacks. The line is from Miller's hit "Livin' in the USA", and the members of the Academy, which was founded during the American Revolution, broke out in knowing if subdued laughter.



"Mr. Miller has enlivened our language with the invention of the word 'pompitous'," Spacks told the distinguished audience, "which, through the phrase 'pompitous of love' in his mega-hit 'The Joker', has spoken to the romantic soul in each of us, at least when we are high on cough syrup."



Miller was modest and self-effacing in his acceptance speech, noting that he had been "a joker, a smoker, and a midnight toker--woo woo-oo-oo--but never a member of such a distinguished group."

In Sedalia, Missouri, a cult-like group of devotees gathers every October 5th, Miller's birthday, to recite his collected lyrics in a ceremony modeled after "Bloomsday," an annual celebration on June 16th on which lovers of James Joyce recite the entire text of the novel Ulysses. "Hoot-hoo," intoned Lyle Yoderk, Jr., to kick off the festivities last year, a performance that was captured on a recycled 8-track tape. "This is a story about Billie Joe and Bobby Sue, two young lovers with nothin' better to do, than sit around the house, get high and watch the tube."



The audience for Miller's brand of incomprehensible blue-eyed soul has been remarkably durable over the years, especially among men with a taste for urban blues who are unwilling to abandon psychedelic drugs. "Very few Rhodes Scholars still have their Steve Miller albums by the time they get to Oxford," noted Dr. Merlin Stevenson, a professor of English at Yale. "There is no way you can understand a line like 'Let me whisper sweet words of pistomality' unless you're totally wasted."



Patricia Meyer Spacks: "Totally bodacious, dude!"

One of Miller's neologisms, "epismetology", has given rise to a new academic discipline, noted the Academy's Spacks in her speech honoring the man known to some as "Maurice." "Before Mr. Miller, the worlds of the philosopher and the beautician were thought to be mutually exclusive," she noted. "With the merger of epistemology and cosmetology, a woman who goes to a beauty parlor can get a

rinse job and at the same time an insight into the limits of our understanding of the human condition." Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that examines how we know what we claim to know, and how we do that voodoo that we do so well.



"Walk--like an eagle . . ."

Miller's award was to have been delivered two weeks earlier, but his letter of nomination was sent by the U.S. Postal Service, which licenses his song "Fly Like an Eagle." "Time kept on slippin', slippin', slippin', and we lost the deposit we put down at the Marriott," Spacks noted. "That was one slow eagle."

*Available in Kindle format on amazon.com as part of the collection
"The Genteel Crowd: It's So Much More Fun Being Vulgar."*

