



# POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

**PAUL ANKA:** *Anka*. Paul Anka (vocals); orchestra. *Bring the Wine; (You're) Having My Baby; Papa; Something About You; Love Is a Lonely Song*; and five others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA314-G \$6.98, Ⓢ EA314-G \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Commercial**

After a long dry spell, Paul Anka has returned to the charts with a smash. *(You're) Having My Baby*, which defeats critical evaluation with the same brazenly sure grasp of the popular mood as his equally dismal *Diana* of years ago. Everybody knows Anka can do better (he proved it easily with *My Way*), but he still composes and sings as if he were working on his first million and his fondest wish was an appearance on Dick Clark's show. *(You're) Having My Baby* is (really) *The Worst*. He grunts out the unforgettable lyrics, "Yuh're havin' muh baybee/Whad a lovely way of sayin' how much yuh love me . . . Oh the seed inside you baybee/Do you feel it growin'?" in an Elvis-like roar while what sounds like Mantovani's orchestra swoons around him. Yet I'll admit, dammit, that after hearing it only once I caught myself vacantly humming it, exactly as I did years ago with *Diana*. All of which probably proves that Anka has some powerful natural gift of communication no matter how much one objects to the message. The rest is his usual slick, glossy job. P.R.

**AVERAGE WHITE BAND.** Average White Band (vocals and instrumentals). *You Got It*;

*Work to Do; Got the Love; Pick Up the Pieces; Person to Person; Nothing You Can Do*; and four others. ATLANTIC SD 7308 \$6.98, Ⓢ TP 7308 \$7.98, Ⓢ CS 7308 \$7.98.

Performance: **Deadly**  
Recording: **Good**

I dreamed last night that I met the Angel of Death. He was about to tap me on the shoulder when I said, "Wait a minute. If my time has come, so be it. But before I go, would you mind setting something straight for me?"

The Angel of Death cleaned his nails with his scythe and nodded. "But make it brief," he hissed.

"Okay," I said. "Here's a record by a British group called the Average White Band. They try to play black music. I mean they imitate it note for note. With all the real black bands around, can you tell me why we need an outfit like that?"

The Angel of Death looked at his watch. "Not offhand. Come on, bub, let's move."

"Don't call me bub," I said. "This is my last request and you have to honor it."

The Angel of Death sighed, chilly air rushing from his thin lips. He propped his scythe in a corner. "Boy, the things I have to . . . All right, play me a cut. A short one."

I played two cuts. The Angel of Death pondered and asked, "What's their name again?"

"The Average White Band," I said.

The Angel grimaced. "They sure are."

"That's just my point," I said. "Can you explain them? What does it all mean?"

The Angel of Death went to the corner and picked up his scythe. He adjusted a fold of his robe that had dropped from his bony shoulder. He shook his head.

"I'm stumped," he said. "The world could do without them. No, don't put on your coat. I have to let you go. I couldn't grant your last request."

"You mean I'm absolutely free?" I cried.

"No, not absolutely. I'll come around for you every two years, just like jury duty. I suppose you'll have another Average White Band album for me to listen to by then?"

I grinned. "One never knows."

The Angel of Death smiled. "Don't get cute," he said. He tapped a fingernail on the scythe, and the blade rang like a tiny broken

bell. "Be thankful for your chance. And in the meantime, it wouldn't hurt to be a little nicer to Curtis Mayfield." J.V.

**CHARLES AZNAVOUR:** *A Tapestry of Dreams*. Charles Aznavour (vocals); orchestra. *She; Our Love, My Love; Baraka; We Can Never Know; After Loving You; From Today*; and four others. RCA CPL1-0710 \$6.98, Ⓢ CPS1-0710 \$7.95, Ⓢ CPK1-0710 \$7.95.

Performance: **Slick, clever, and very good**  
Recording: **Excellent**

Aznavour's looks, particularly during his impassioned moments, still remind me of Snoopy come to improbable human life, while his songs and performances remain slick boulevard comedies acted out in fine nostalgic style. He's singing in English here, and as he gulps his tremulous way through *She (la femme fatale)*, or becomes a man of the world in *We Can Never Know (love-can-be-brief, ma chérie)*, or does his Tino Rossi imitation in *Baraka (ze-dahnce-you-cahn't-rezist, ma p'ti chou)*, he is so good-natured about it all that you can't help but go along with the gag. Obviously a man of some humor—his story of writing for the melodramatic Piaf, who always asked him before he played his new songs for her, "Ah, Charles . . . you have discovered a new way for me to die?," has always delighted me—he is also a slick, confident performer. Ten years ago this album would have been a ball for me, but now I am, how-you-say, more of the sophisticate. P.R.

**SHIRLEY BASSEY:** *Nobody Does It Like Me*. Shirley Bassey (vocals); orchestra. *Davy; When You Smile; All That Love Went to Waste; Morning in Your Eyes*; and six others. UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA214-G \$6.98, Ⓢ EA214-G \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**  
Recording: **Good**

Shirley Bassey slams through the speakers like the original Personality Kid in search of someone to dazzle. She has all sorts of artful little vocal tricks, and her phrasing has a dilated, curved-nostril air to it that reminds me of the famous cartoon of two thoroughbred hor-

## Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓢ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

The first listing is the one reviewed; other formats, if available, follow it.