

line. "She's got the power, rock and roll," which sounds to me like an attempt by a committee to tell a crowd what the committee thinks the crowd wants to hear. Committees are always compromising, angling toward acceptably low denominators, and few committees could hope to be thought of as stylish; so far the description fits the Doobies pretty snugly. What committees do mostly is bore people, and, regrettably, the analogy with this album continues to hold. If you play anything, try picking along with *Texas Lullaby*; if you make it to the end, you have the kind of boredom threshold that makes you ripe to be tapped by the town fathers for helping plan the next big project aimed at making your burg even duller than it is now. N.C.

EARTH, WIND AND FIRE: *That's the Way of the World*. Earth, Wind and Fire (vocals and instrumentals). *Shining Star*; *Reasons*; *See the Light*; *Happy Feelin'*; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 33280 \$6.98, © PCA 33280 \$7.98, © PCT 33280 \$7.98.

Performance: **Disco delight**
Recording: **Excellent**

Earth, Wind and Fire often stylistically resembles Sly and the Family Stone in the days when that group was worth our attention. They have enjoyed a number of soul-disco hits in the past, and there's at least one, *Shining Star*, in this album. The set is consistent with the group's previous Columbia output: the lyrics are forgettable, but the music and performance are moving. C.A.

JOHN HAMMOND: *Can't Beat the Kid*. John Hammond (vocals, guitar, harmonica); instru-

mental accompaniment. *Can't Beat the Kid*; *It's Mighty Crazy*; *Diddley Daddy*; *Southbound Blues*; *Terraplane Blues*; *Statesboro Blues*; and seven others. CAPRICORN CP 0153 \$6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Clean**

As a matter of fact, you *can't* beat him. It's taken Hammond a long time to be as convincing as he is, but his emulation of black country blues singers of the Twenties and Thirties and urban stylists of the following two decades is well-nigh perfect. He does not imitate them, he emulates them, which is much more difficult to do and calls for the talents of an actor. The only thing missing is whatever Hammond might have been if he had had, or kept, any of his original musical identity. I assume he is happy doing nothing but blues—he certainly has a right to be proud of his impersonations (which extend to his excellent slide guitar work and harmonica playing). But by immersing himself in period blues he has cut himself off, willingly it seems, from all other kinds of music. Ah, well, this is the age of the specialist, no? J.V.

HUMBLE PIE: *Street Rats*. Humble Pie (vocals, instrumentals). *Street Rat*; *Rock and Roll Music*; *Rain*; *We Can Work It Out*; *Drive My Car*; *Road Hog*; and five others. A & M SP 4514 \$6.98.

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

It is difficult to write about a remorselessly mediocre band that doesn't—and probably can't—know any better. But here goes. Hum-

ble Pie's original material in this new album is, as usual, screamy and stale. They have had the good sense to include three Beatles tunes and a Chuck Berry perennial, but they indulge their usual lack of taste by beating them to death or, in the case of *Drive My Car*, slowing the tempo to a ridiculous pace—it's a blues tune, boys, not the *Pathétique*. J.V.

IAN HUNTER. Ian Hunter (vocals, guitar, piano); Mick Ronson (guitar, bass, keyboards); Geoff Appleby (bass); Dennis Elliott (drums); other musicians. *Once Bitten Twice Shy*; *Who Do You Love*; *Lounge Lizard*; *Boy*; *Shades Off*; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 33480 \$6.98, © PCA 33480 \$7.98, © PCT 33480 \$7.98.

Performance: **Same old stuff**
Recording: **Good**

Ian Hunter left Mott the Hoople to do this album, which is not exactly a radical new artistic direction to take. Mick Ronson's production and lead guitar are technically all right but seem stuck in 1969, blissfully ignoring the world passing them by—or perhaps I give the world more credit than it deserves; I'm surely weary of punky wise sayings wrapped in the same old rock-and-roll riffs and delivered in the same old squeaky, nasal, Cockney voices. But if you can take some more of Chuck Berry's beat, you might like *3,000 Miles from Here*, and if you haven't heard every possible electric-guitar rock solo at least fifty times (which would make you about eleven or younger), you might enjoy one of those, found almost anywhere you put the needle down. Some people like to hear things fifty-one (Continued on page 96)

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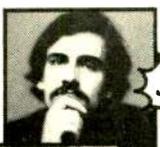
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