

poppicks

ONE OF THESE NIGHTS — Eagles — Asylum 7E-1039 — Producer: Bill Szymczyk

One of the most overlooked aspects of the Eagle's progress as musicians is the larger and larger parts of pure country-rock bite and overall strength that continues to seep into their music. "One Of These Nights" is that and much more as the band sheds anything that might be lightweight in favor of a straight ahead approach that has the group meeting all songs head on. Be it the rock behind "Too Many Hands" or the laid-back of "Hollywood Waltz" the overall feel is no quarter asked. These Eagles have talons and "One Of These Nights" proves it.

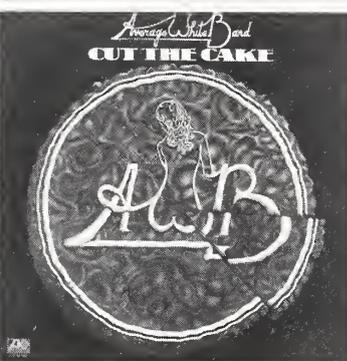


HORIZON — The Carpenters — A&M SP 4530 — Producer: Richard Carpenter

The natural vocals of Karen and the arranging genius of Richard have combined to make the Carpenters' sound a classic in the easy listening market. This successful musical formula continues on "Horizons" as the Carpenters turn their finely toned talents to proven outings on "Only Yesterday" and "Love Me For What I Am." Also highlighted is a thoroughly laidback cover of "Desperado." Other top cuts include "Eventide," "Happy" and "I Can Dream Can't I." The Carpenters once again prove themselves the listen of the century.

WHY CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS — War — United Artists UA EA 441-G — Producers: Jerry Goldstein, Lonnie Jordan and Howard Scott

The long awaited return to the record scene of War proves a conflict worth waiting for as "Why Can't We Be Friends" combines a sparsely dashed latin influence to the percussive laden rhythm track which has become the band's musical trademark. This potent mixture works well on all cuts but adds further dimension to the likes of "Heartbeat," "Why Can't We Be Friends" and "In Mazatlan." Of particular note this outing is the seeming added strength behind the vocal flow. War music will move your senses.



CUT THE CAKE — Average White Band — Atlantic SD 18140 — Producer: Arif Mardin

The music put out by the Average White Band is best described as the whitest of white playing the blackest of black. This context continues on "Cut The Cake" as the strictly "from the ghetto" vocals of Hamish Stuart and Alan Gorrie combine with the band's tight musical format to turn in rhythmic slices on "Cut The Cake," "When They Bring Down The Curtain" and "If I Ever Lose This Heaven." It's been said that only the black man can play black man's music. "Cut The Cake" shoots that theory all to hell.

STILLS — Stephen Stills — Columbia PC 33575 — Producers: Stephen Stills, Bill Halverson, Ron Albert and Howie Albert

Since his earliest days with the Buffalo Springfield, Stephen Stills has always had this country flavored blues thing about his music that brought out the best in him. "Stills" is no exception as he takes his best lyrical and instrumental chops to form a springboard from which he moves easily amid different musical shades. Good listens include "My Favorite Changes," "Shuffle Just As Bad" and a thickly laid "As I Come Of Age." Stephen Stills is an exception to any musical rule. Thank God.



GOIN' HOME — Ten Years After — Deram DES 18072 — Producer: Various

At one time or another Alvin Lee has been every aspiring axeman's erotic dream. Ah, to be able to break off the lightning runs Alvin did on "Hear Me Calling" and the classic slam-bang Woodstock riffing on "I'm Going Home." Well, for those who are into recapturing a most creative past, this retrospective of the early rumblings of Ten Years After is a must for anyone's guitar library. This is Lee at his finest with the nonstop intensity being a truly infectious musical experience. Alvin Lee's guitar work on "Goin' Home" is the classic finger callous.

WELL KEPT SECRET — James Last — Polydor PD 6040 — Producer: Wes Farrell

Every once in a while you get an album of music so powerful that it would seem almost treasonous to add vocals to it. James Last's "Well Kept Secret" is just such an album. Through the likes of "I Can't Move No Mountains" and "Jubilation" move some of the headiest musical licks ever laid to record. Last and company continue the even musical flow with "Slaughter On 10th Avenue," "Love For Sale" and a killer version of "Summertime." James Last's "Well Kept Secret." It certainly won't be his last.



ROGER McGUIINN AND BAND — Roger McGuinn — Columbia PC 33541 — Producer: John Boylan

Roger McGuinn, in his earliest musical outing as part of The Byrds, helped spearhead the rise to popularity of country flavored rock. A few years on and as a solo we find McGuinn still working most comfortably within the genre on "Roger McGuinn and Band." McGuinn's backing unit plays an important part on the success of this album as their blues flaked approach to country and rock proves the perfect counterpoint to McGuinn's vocals. "Roger McGuinn and Band" is a joint musical effort that works.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS — Impressions — Curtom CU 5003 — Producer: Ed Townsend

There's some mighty subtle shadings behind the music in "First Impressions" that brings it up a notch from your average soul listen. The easy-going mellowness in the Impression's vocals gathers further support and dimension from a tight orchestrated musical backing with the overall feel being smooth as silk. Add to this a selection of songs that tell a valid story (such as "Sooner or Later" and "Why Must A Love Song Be A Sad Song") and you've got, in essence, a soul record and a half.



FUN AND ROMANCE — Wolfman Jack — Columbia KC 33501 — Producers: The Robb Brothers

You know, there's something about Wolfman Jack's gravelly vocals that auger well with rock and roll songs. Don't ask me what it is but it sure fits the pattern well, especially on "Fun And Romance." The music on this album runs from straight ahead rock to good old funky get down with the Wolfman's forceful lyrical rendition powering the likes of "Idol With The Golden Head" and "Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye" through their paces. My how that Wolfman can sure get it on!

MISTY — Ray Stevens — Barnaby BR 6012 — Producer: Ray Stevens

Ray Stevens gets into some oldies this time out and does a rather commendable job on all counts. Steven's vocal inflections are perfect tools in his renditions of the classic "Misty" and "Cow Cow Boogie" while "Mockingbird Hill" and "Oh Lonesome Me" come across equally well. Steven's self production of this album is clean as vocals and the tight musical backing both have equal, yet effective, moments.



LET'S TAKE IT TO THE STAGE — Funkadelic — 20th Century/Westbound — Producer: George Clinton

Upon initial listen Funkadelic comes off as nothing more than the latest from the "get funky y'all" school of bump and grind. But beware dear record buyer for there is more, much more on "Let's Take It To The Stage." The basic instrumental tools of the funk trade get a physical workout on all cuts as they're bent, distorted and fuzzed into a whole new, yet listenable, music. More esoteric cuts include "No Head. No Backstage Pass," "Get Off Your Ass And Jam" and "I Owe You Something Good." Funkadelic is good to your ear.