

ALBUM REVIEWS

POPULAR

DAVID ESSEX

Gold & Ivory. CBS 86039. Producer: David Essex. David Essex's career which seemed to have paused slightly in its stride looks set to regather momentum with his Cool Out Tonight single winning strong turntable exposure and with plenty of smallscreen activity surrounding the artist including his own BBC tv series. He may not be the world's greatest rock vocalist, but the man has style and a homespun honesty about his voice which is at once immediately distinctive, sinuously suggestive or affectingly sincere. There's plenty of opportunity for both styles to emerge, with Good Morning, a plaintive homesick cry, and Whole Lotta Monkey being notably good examples, although there's no over-abundance of melodic ideas, something which smart production helps to disguise. Heavy shipout figures indicate a chart placing for this one.

CHICAGO X. CBS 86031

Producer: James William Guercio. Chicago's remarkable record for quality is maintained, album number 11 arrives with the band still satisfying on a broad front, with their instrumental capability continuing to impress, but with the intermingling of voices as on the splendid Baby What A Big Surprise (a single with strong potential) and Policeman offering equal satisfaction. It is an album full of textural variety and neat little arrangers' touches that delight unexpectedly, although the last three and apparently interrelated tracks, The Inner Struggles Of A Man, Prelude and Little One get bogged

down in some soft-centred sentimentality and a rather seriously arranged instrumental track. Given a hit single, the album is bound to go Top 50

LINDA RONSTADT

Simple Dreams, Asylum K53065. Producer: Peter Asher. Linda Ronstadt manages to combine girl-next-door Country appeal with rock-heroine raunchiness, excites on stage and as a result of this sells many albums. Her voice is not extraordinary, though her choice of material is always good. Oddly, though she is billed as a Country-rock artist, her best moments are during soft-rock ballads with the neat backing from her able five-piece, though numbers like It's So Easy can pall, compared to Sorrow Lives Here, for example. She goes right back to the basics with I Never Will Marry — pure folk. Perhaps she is trying to please too many people. However, she does please a great many people, those, perhaps, whose dreams and expectations are simple. A steady seller.

THE BOYS

The Boys. NEMS 6001. Interesting and tuneful debut from NEMS new wave act The Boys who have been gigging steadily for some months. As usual with punk sounds, the sentiments are along savage lines — the opening track Sick On You is about exactly what it says it is about — and songs dwell on urban stress and the dole queue, but there is real life and zip that is encouraging for the future. Apart from the band-written material, the Boys pull off a new wave version of Lennon and

McCartney's I Call Your Name quite successfully while Cop Cars, contributed by the main writers Casino Steel and Matt Dangerfield, is as snappy a piece of aggression to any to come out this year.

SAD CAFE

Fanx Ta Ra. RCA PL25101. Producer: John Punter. Sad Cafe is a breath of fresh air, a genuinely musical band that RCA is pinning its hopes on. From under the weight of punk and sub-Yes heavy rock, Sad Cafe may emerge as the new Average White Band, or the new Climax Blues Band, or perhaps a combination of the two, with a hint of Georgie Fame here and there. In other words, Sad Cafe won't be categorised as a rock band, though it can boogie with the best of them and come up with some inspired, if not innovative, guitar work. The single is a big ballad style cut called Love Will Survive which hints at but does not represent the band's scope. Written by vocalist Paul Young, it should receive some airplay and may serve to awaken interest in this band. Will do well in Sad Cafe's home area, Manchester and, since this is after all only the debut album, demonstrates the huge potential. Fanx, Sad Cafe — but certainly not Ta Ra.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Motown Gold Volume Two. Motown STML 12070. Latest in this 18-track series, which is basically a reworking of British Motown Chartbusters in amended form. The contents span 13 years, from the label's first UK hit in 1964, My Guy by Mary Wells, to one of its most recent, Easy by the Commodores. Other top names represented are the Jackson Five, the Supremes, the Miracles, Marvin Gaye, the Isley Brothers, the Temptations, Yvonne Fair and Thelma Houston. The success of the first volume proved that the repertoire has not been overlooked, so this package must also sell strongly — even though tv advertising, which boosted its predecessor, is not currently planned.

SPLIT ENZ

Dizyhythmia. Chrysalis CHR 1145. Production: Geoff Emerick/Split Enz. This original and highly talented New Zealand band has worked up quite a name for itself in the UK through a year or so of solid touring. At first the band's eccentric style of music, dress and theatrical stage mannerisms won them a cult following and the applause of the head-rock circuit, such as colleges and universities. Then, oddly, after a line-up change, the Split Enz fraternity began to turn punk, caught up, no doubt, by the band's oddments of clothing which coincidentally reflected all that was appealing to the safety pin brigade. This album falls between the two areas. It is much more commercial than Mental Notes, the superior but inaccessible 1976 album, and features several titles made popular during concert tours. Instead of the staccato rhythms and often puzzling anti-climaxes, there are ballads, straight rock and gently sax breaks, coupled with some bizarre lyrics. The frills have gone, it's more comfortable if less original, and it should be of interest to a much wider audience than the previous UK-cut album. Chrysalis should push this one hard. There is also a 12-inch single to catch the eye.

SHERBET

Photoplay. Epic EPC82251. Producers: Sherbet-Richard Lush. It is over a year since Howzat and the group's first album but a little has been heard of this Australian outfit in the meantime. Now they are back with a bang and a cracking new LP which offers a classy collection of songs firmly in a mainstream pop mould, but offering a substance and

authority which puts them into a bracket well in advance of the waning weenybop idiom. Particularly impressive is You've Got The Gun, with its foundation in a strong bass riff, contrasted by airy harmonies and a falsetto lead, with strings adding the final glossy touch. A notably good song which sounds like a hit UK single. The group is particularly fortunate in having a splendid lead singer in Daryl Braithwaite at his best on the sensitive Still In Love With You. Given a hit single, Sherbet could put some fizz into autumnal sales.

GRATEFUL DEAD

Terrapin Station. Arista. SPARTY 1016. The band which has everything except the chart success it deserves — individual members with large and much respected talents, good material, experience, masterly production, and great acclaim on live tours. This new LP does their reputation no discredit, even if there is a hint of toned-down Fleetwood Mac about some tracks. Donna Godchaux's voice particularly good. Side two, Terrapin Station, has more life and better shape than side one, but best cuts include Dancin' In The Street and Sunrise from the first side.

CARAVAN

Better by Far. Arista. SPARTY 1008. Producer: Tony Visconti. The title must be regarded as the band's opinion, not a statement of fact. This ninth Caravan LP (first for Arista) impresses initially only with its blandness: earlier efforts, particularly Blind Dog At St. Dunstons, have been much more interesting. Pye Hastings' vocals still distinctive, and band cannot be faulted as to technique but this LP strays into m-o-r and far from the thinking man's rock which Caravan has previously proved it can do so well. Best Cuts: Man In A Car, Nightmare. Big Arista promotion, £1 a ticket tour and 50p vouchers off LPs will boost sales, and could give it chartbound velocity.

ERIC CARMEN

Boats Against the Current. Arista. SPARTY 1015. Producer: artist. Second Arista LP from ex-lead vocalist of the Raspberries — whose clever and musically competent dogging of the Beatles' footsteps, and later those of the Beach boys, brought them success in the US but little notice over here. Carmen's melodious if rather breathy tones, and his songwriting abilities, earned him a hit with All By Myself, and slightly saccharine flavour of the LP is given bite by arrangements and production. Good rather than great stuff, Best cuts: Manhattan Man, Take It Or Leave It (an enjoyable Rolling Stones ripoff) and She Did It.

MUNICH MACHINE

OASLP 502. Producers: Giogio Moroder-Pete Bellotte. The producers are the same two men who have tailored the Donna Summer hit collection. The music is precision disco sounds, with the one-title A-side Get On The Funk Train an exercise in stamina for dancers. Side two is more of the same relentless and repetitive, but offering slightly more variety thanks to six titles, all of which make a passing nod in the direction of chanted female group vocals, but even this one segues from one song to another without a pause. The album is ideal for the disco dj to put on while he nips out for a meal.

FLEETWOOD MAC and CHRISTINE PERFECT

Albatross. CBS Embassy 31569. Producer: Mike Vernon. Current sales activity surrounding Fleetwood Mac — their Rumours album has spent 19 weeks as a Stateside Number One — will certainly generate interest in this collection of their early material. Side one captures the band as they originally

were, a British bluesrocking unit, all 12-bar sequences, harmonicas and wailing vocals — a far cry from their mainstream pop stance of today, and sounding not a little dated, with the exception of the atmospheric Albatross an instrumental which has never lost its appeal. Side two, a feature for the coolly competent, but rather limited, vocals of Christine Perfect, has an effective latenight feel about it and includes one near-classic, the moving I'd Rather Go Blind.

HAMILTON BOHANNON

Phase II. Mercury 9100 040. Producer: Hamilton Bohannon. With four British hits (in 1975) to his credit but nothing since, drummer Bohannon is clearly hoping for a return to favour via his new label affiliation, Mercury. The disco mix here is familiar, though sweeter than usual on But What Is A Dream and Andrea, and positively cocktail lounge-style on Daddy's Little Son. Dancers will prefer Bohannon Disco Symphony and Just Doing My Thing, both in the mould of Hamilton's earlier successes.

HODGES, JAMES & SMITH

What's On Your Mind. London SHU 8507. Producer: Mickey Stevenson. Girl groups are Hot (and that's the name of one) in the US at present, paced by the success of the Emotions. Hodges, James & Smith have been around for a few years, but turn in peak performances on this package of upbeat outings, especially One More Love Song and Don't Take Away Your Love, and sensitive ballads, such as Situation and Love Baby. Act is due in to promote their current single, Since I Fell For You (included here), so the album may have prospects.

CAROL DOUGLAS

Full Bloom. Midsong FL 1222. Producer: Ed O'Loughlin. Disco stylist Douglas has meant little or nothing in Britain, and this LP will not alter matters. It contains predictable workouts of several pop tunes, including Dancing Queen, We Do It and I Want To Stay With You, and a few dispensible originals. A redundant release.

ROBERTA KELLY

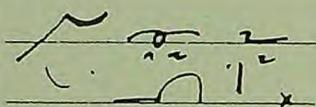
Zodiac Lady. Oasis OASLP 503. Producers: Giorgio Moroder-Pete Bellotte. The Munich Machine grinds on, with unyielding rhythmic precision. This one consists of a bunch of ordinary songs, all loosely connected with the birth signs, sung by Roberta Kelly who lacks nothing in enthusiasm, but seems to be rather short on real singing ability. Acceptable fodder for dancers, but hardly for sustained listening.

MISCELLANEOUS

MYLES EDWARDS ORCHESTRA

Artistry. Spiral SPJ 9001. Producer: Alan A. Freeman. Edwards is a keyboard player who has been around jazz clubs for many years. He is also an arranger and has been m.d. for various performers. The idea behind this set is to update Stan Kenton's compositions, and music featured by that orchestra during its heyday. As the big band sound on its own has failed to live up to Denmark Street's expectations, it makes sense to give the style a more commercial sound. It's impossible for the combination to avoid the jazz feel, especially in title like Tampico, and Edwards comes into his own in grand piano/orchestral numbers such as Interlude, even the old standby Peanut Vendor. As a demonstration of Edwards' varied skills this LP could not be bettered. The problem is that this style of m.o.r.-big band-club jazz does not appeal to younger buyers, and they are the ones that put titles into the charts. A quality release, then, but one which dealers should stock with an eye to their specialist markets.

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This apology and correction appeared
in the Evening News on 19th Sept 1977

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1977

EVENING NEWS 19

WAITING

Bus Stop Records

On August 29 we said that Eastop Records were going bust. We now know, however, that though the offices of Bus Stop Records Ltd are closing down, there is no question of insolvency.

The sale of Intune Ltd and of Intune Productions Ltd (the former owner of the Bus Stop label) was completed towards the end of July.

We are informed that the

closing-down of the Bus Stop offices is partly a result of the sale, since there is now a greatly diminished need for staff and offices, and partly a result of the company's decision to trade in future principally through licensees.

Our apologies for any misunderstanding and for any embarrassment caused to the company and to its owners, Mitch Murray and Peter Callander.