

BRUM BEAT

THE MUSIC MAG OF THE MIDLANDS

JANUARY 1990

ONIONHEAD

MIKE DAVIES MEETS SOME FAIRWEATHER FRIENDS

WIN ▶
MCCARTNEY
VIDEO & MORE!



PIC: DAVID TRAVIS

● **DAVIES ON A DECADE OF DROPOUTS**

● **WOOD'S VINYL EIGHTIES**

● **CONNOISSEUR QUIZ – THE ANSWERS**

● **PLUS SILVER SURFIN' ● NEWS ● REVIEWS**

LENNY KRAVITZ

BACK TO THE FUTURE ▶

EVERY WHICH WAY BUT ROOTS

It kind of dawned on me standing here on the threshold of the nineties, that it was probably as good a time as any, to take one final look back at the decade just gone. How best to accomplish it was the catch. The music world certainly saw its share of 'Lists' during the eighties, following the eponymous Rolling Stone tome thrown together by Dave (Brooooo) Marsh and Kevin Stein. That route however, was soon discarded. Going back to basics was the answer. As a lifetime lover of the LP format, it seemed like a reasonably sensible idea to pick an album for each year and say a few words about it ...

1980 - Butch Hancock *'Diamond Hill'* (Rainlight RLT-777 import) Recorded in his hometown of Lubbock, Texas, Butch has finally at this end of the eighties begun to enjoy the amount of international recognition he so richly deserves. Hancock has a way of employing the English language which makes you sit up straight and pay attention. At turns lyrically happy then sad - amusing, reflective, but never less than honest, this guy is without doubt one of the great undiscovered treasures of the Lone Star state.

1981 - Dan Fogelberg *'The Innocent Age'* (Epic 88533) In a recording career now spanning some seventeen years, Fogelberg has produced quite a number of gems and a not inconsiderable quantity of turkeys! Thankfully, this double set

rests among the former category. As a lifelong sucker for horse songs, *'Run For The Roses'* remains a firm favourite, even nearly ten years on. Light of voice and sensitive of thought and word, possibly an album for the bedsit listener.

By
ARTHUR WOOD

1982 - Jennifer Warnes *'Best Of Jennifer Warnes'* (Arista 204 427) Jennifer saw chart action during the eighties with Joe Cocker and Bill Medley, via duets on the theme tunes from a couple of Hollywood 'blockbuster' movies. This album consisted of songs from her two Arista albums, topped up with further previously unreleased tracks. *'It Goes Like It Goes'* the theme from the excellent Sally Field movie *'Norma Rae'*, being a particular favourite.

1983 - Kate Wolf *'Give Yourself To Love'* (Kaleidoscope 3000 import) Sadly, Kate is no longer with us. The recordings she made between the years 1976-86 are a legacy of inestimable quality. This live double album, combines Kate's self composed folky visions of her native Northern California, with songs by John Stewart, Jack Tempchin and the late Sandy Denny. Kate is ably supported on bass by Ford James, while her long time friend Nina Gerber

proves that lick for lick, she is capable of standing alongside guitar greats like James Burton.

1984 - Tom Russell *'Heart On A Sleeve' (End Of The Trail Music E7415 import)* Recorded partly in San Francisco, New York and Oslo over a five year period, this folk/country classic is now available again via the German Bear Family record label. Co-produced with help from picker par excellence Andy Hardin, all twelve tracks on *'Heart'* were penned by Russell including *'Gallo de Cielo'* (the chicken fighting song), *'A Bowl Of Red'* (about that Mexican delicacy chili. Or is it?) and that tale of unrequited love, *'St. Olav's Gate'*.

1985 - Translator *'Translator'* (CBS 26460) Part of Howie Klein's 415 Records stable which included other mainly San Franciscan based beat groups such as Red Rockers and Wire Train. None of the acts ever achieved the commercial success they deserved and have all gone their separate ways now. Like Peter Case rose from the ashes of the Plimsouls, I live in hope that the band's main writers, Steve Barton and Robert Darlington will eventually cut solo albums. Hell, one of them is even a Gene Clark lookalike - how could he fail?

1986 - Ian Tyson *'Cowboyography'* (Eastern Slope ESL01 import) What can I say about this album. I was flattened by it the first time I heard it. It completed the

cowboy song trilogy of albums, which Tyson had begun earlier in the eighties with *'Ian Tyson'* and *'Old Corral and Sagebrush'*. Subsequently voted Canadian 'Country Album of the Year' it featured Tyson's first compositional collaborations with Tom Russell.

1987 - Cris Williamson *'Wolf Moon'* (Olivia Records LF 951 import) As far as performers in the field of women's music are concerned Williamson is a superstar. To be honest, as a singer/songwriter she puts many of the recent recruits of her gender in that genre (on the major labels) to shame. Never reticent about dedicating songs to her heroes, this album features poems to Kate Wolf (*'The Run Of The Wolf'*) and Natalie Wood (*'Goodnight, Marjorie Morningstar'*). *'Teen Queen'* the opening track, even pays fitting homage to Spector's *'Wall Of Sound'* period.

1988 - Grace Pool *'Grace Pool'* (Reprise 1-25754 import) I purchased *'Grace Pool'* by mail order thinking that she was yet another of those female singer/songwriters (I have this predilection you see). It subsequently transpired that "she" was a five piece "they", featuring two young ladies. Having exposed my naivety for all to read, the bottom line is that this is one hell of an album. Rolling Stone compared this New York based band to that high profile group of folk rockers, 10,000 Maniacs.

Engaging melodies, intelligent lyrics and what's more, you can even tell what the lead singer is saying. Know what I mean. Give me Elly Brown any day.

1989 - Mary Chapin Carpenter *'State Of The Heart'* (CBS FC 44228 import) Chapin's 1987 debut album *'Hometown Girl'*, probably was my album of that year. As far as sales of 'HG' were concerned, they only verged on the moderate level. Initially I had my reservations about *'State ...'*, but repeated plays since its mid summer release have proved that this girl has staying power as a performer and writer. Having seen Chapin and her band perform during a recent US visit, some enterprising promoter wants to get her over here soon. *'This Shirt'* is one of those addictive songs which gets better with repeated plays.

And finally a piece of total self indulgence, otherwise known as my *'Album of the Decade'* (if not all time) ...

1986 - Michael Smith *'Michael Smith'* (Flying Fish FF404 import) As recording silences go, Michael had been taking the low profile route since the mid seventies. Only eight tracks long and lasting some forty minutes, Smith proves that lyrical simplicity which runs the gamut of every human emotion can accurately "hit the spot". *'Spoon River'* and *'The Dutchman'*, which the late Steve Goodman (and many others) covered, rank as lifetime favourite songs.

Arthur Wood

● Will BSB make it for its projected Spring 1990 launch? Will they get the £700m that they'll need now that Alan Bond has pulled his mega fortune out of the franchise? There is now a BSB LAUNCH CLUB for which you're invited to pay a £10 no-strings-attached fee to BSB now and reserve BSB receiving equipment when it comes on the market. If you change your mind, it'll be returnable, they say. If BSB appeals, remember, it isn't the receiving equipment that's the problem, it's the little chip in the system that's causing the hassle and a Spring launch is still far from certain. I'm reliably informed! Many of you have asked just what can be received on a Satellite tuned to Astra. So, here goes SKY ONE: A mix of American and Aussie soaps, quiz

shows, occasional good documentaries and the odd drama or two. A lot like BBC 1 and ITV, in fact!

SKY NEWS: Excellent news bulletins every hour with decent sport coverage too. NBC stuff is a waste of time but THE REPORTERS is a half decent Panorama-like show.

SKY MOVIES: Scrambling on February 1st and saving its block busters till then. Currently operates from 2pm to 6am (from 8am-1pm, buy all you need on the phone in the SATELLITE SHOP). Most films are at least post 1983.

EUROSPORT: The top sport channel with a wide variety of choice and some minority stuff like the excellent Handball coverage. Lots of soccer, golf, tennis and boxing (classic bouts).

SCREENSPORT: The WH Smith alternative with pro American boxing and car

SPACE JUNK

THE PIE IN THE SKY
SATELLITE COLUMN
BY
KEVIN WILSON

racing as key ingredients. NFL AMERICAN FOOTBALL and baseball receive good coverage as does full match coverage of both Spanish League (good) and Argentinian League (boring) football.

LIFESTYLE: WH Smith's women's channel with mostly American 60's sit-

coms, more soaps, American chat shows and Diddy David Hamilton in coffee breaks.

MTV: BRUM BEAT readers should subscribe just for this. Everyone is catered for (if you watch for long enough!). A lot of rap, rock and good pop but also lots of SAW and their like.

THE CHILDRENS CHANNEL: Available on Astra only from 5am-10am weekdays and 5am-12 noon weekends on Lifestyle channel.

FOREIGN CHANNELS: RTL VERONIQUE: A Dutch general entertainment channel that now suffers in Britain because its films get scrambled. This is laughable really and shows just how nitpicky the game of Eurotelights can get.

FILMNET: A 24 hour film channel that was due to change its signal in mid December 1989 and thus

renders hundreds of pirate decoders useless in this country.

RTL, SAT-1 and PRO-7: Three German channels just available on Astra and all very similar in their format. Most films are dubbed in German and having recently watched an old Norman Wisdom film on PRO-7, it takes some getting used to!

Also we can expect the rest of Astra's capacity on its first satellite (four more channels) to be filled by German companies.

● Next month I hope to bring definite news on the launch or otherwise of BSB's satellite. I'll leave you with a quote from the Sky News Press Office when I asked for their views on the BSB launch. "No comment", the spokeswoman began, "but we're not afraid of competition you know".

SILVER SURFIN'



Almost seven years after their expensive and maligned debut compact discs have all but buried their vinyl forbears and, with players now available at prices lower than those of decent turntables as well as being de rigueur in all reasonable far eastern midi systems, the race is on to pile recycled back catalogue high on the shelves. However all that is silver and digital doesn't shine. Because of that *BRUM BEAT* introduces *SILVER SURFIN'*, a bi-monthly look at the best and not so good current releases on CD.

REDISCOVER (Old Gold) is a six strong set of double CDs (retailing at £9.99, bargain hunters), that traces pop from 1952, the year of the first Hit Parade, to 1980. Artist wise they run the gamut from Teresa Brewer to, one hundred and forty odd tracks later, The Jam.

Each disc has an intriguing insert that details the historical happenings and cultural highlights of the relevant period thereby giving the package an authoritative edge.

Now at the outset it has to be accepted that any attempt to encapsulate the history of pop in one gross of snapshots is open to snipes. No Beatles or Stones is too obvious a jibe, though arguably their role is obvious and their presence in such a set unnecessary. Far more interesting are the one-off classics, Thunderclap Newman, Julie Driscoll, Wild Cherry and so forth.

In essence a cornucopia of singles fans who, having gone CD, need to 'bulk buy' oldies.

This Old Gold series is to be unreservedly recommended both for its musical nostalgia quotient and the fact that it sounds so good, the fifties tracks uncannily so, due to the company's dogged insistence on using only good master tapes of the original hit recording. Be warned this is definitely not the case with many companies currently operating in the oldies arena.

Well worth investing £60's worth of Christmas tokens in.

THE ATTACK OF THE KILLER B'S (BBC Records) is another various artists oldies set. However it is made of B SIDES by as diverse a crowd as Little Richard, Presley, The Bonzos, Monkees and Donovan. In these days of alternative mixes, dubs and throwaways it's sobering to find many classics included here.

Would you find the quality of The Beach Boys' 'Wouldn't It Be Nice', The Everly's 'Ebony Eyes' or The

Four Season's 'Silence Is Golden' hidden away in '89? Whilst recommended as music the sound of this set is not as good as the Beeb's mark of quality normally assures.

THE SLIDER MARC BOLAN/T. REX (Marc On Wax) arrives on CD courtesy of the fan-run label that is in the process of issuing all of Bolan's work in the format.

The Slider came after T. Rex's major break with 'Electric Warrior' and repeats the formula. A combination of the boppin' elf's cosmic/daft (it doesn't matter) lyrics and boogie influenced music pinned down with fat bass and drums and iced with trademark compressed (real) strings. The album contains 'Metal Guru' and 'Telegram Sam' alongside such savouries as 'Chariot Choochie', 'Baby Boomerang' and "Buick McMane".

Thoroughly barmy, thoroughly pop, it's appropriate that Bolan's muse should shine on silver, the colour he often dressed in.

THE BEST OF THE VELVET UNDERGROUND (Verve), subtitled 'Words and Music of Lou Reed', really is the greatest hits. Fifteen classics, 'Waiting For The Man', 'Heroin', 'Sweet Jane', 'White Light/White Heat' etc etc.

Initially the clarity of the music jars due to fond memories of distorted mono college 'happenings' but it ultimately rewards with a revelation of the band's instinctive genius. Listen for instance to John Cale's melodic bass lighten both the scything guitars and Mo Tucker's primitive drumming. An essential collection.

Finally, **JOHNNY WINTER FIVE AFTER FOUR AM (Thunderbolt)** is a first time on CD collection of ten of his very early recordings. With a running time of less than twenty five minutes and surface noise from the original records clearly audible, it is of interest only to Johnny Winter CD completists. Awful.

Steve Morris



FISH

Vigil In A Wilderness Of Mirrors (EMI)

He may not have used the tongue venom about Marillion in interviews, but there's enough caustic bitterness and vitriol here to let you know the parting was severely acrimonious. There's a veritable torrent of images concerning duplicity, betrayal, the gulf between reality and appearance, isolation, alienation and even a vague touch of martyrdom. But Fish is such a good writer that he can take personal experience and translate it into a much wider canvas. Thus 'Big Wedge' may be about his old band's monetary obsessions, but it's also about selling out on a bigger scale, from personal belief to a universal religion. Much the same sort of micro/macro-cosm frame of reference can also be found in 'The Company', 'Vigil' and 'View From The Hill'. For diversion there's a tale of wife battering in 'Family Business' and two hefty doses of romanticism, the frankly clumsy 'Cliche' (earlier rejected by Marillion) and the beautiful 'Gentlemen's Excuse Me' which, with its sweeping orchestration (all recorded live) has all the makings of a massive hit.

Musically, old fans won't be disappointed, although the brassy 'Big Wedge' will be a cause for concern among those who feared an attack of the Phil Collins. What is more encouraging is to hear Fish pointing towards further developments with the inclusion of Gaelic flavours. From the wilderness to the promised land. I trust.

Mike Davies

OZARK MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS

Modern History (Conifer/Request)

Unlike their higher profile kinsmen, Poco, the OMDs just kept on playing. So this is no reformation special, simply the latest in a line of albums that goes back as far as their A&M debut in the early seventies.

The passing of time may have smoothed the edges but the glorious harmonies and ringing guitars remain intact. It has to be said though, that their up tempo attack is less convincing than the more laid back material.

Whilst most of the album's songs are self-generated, the covers show that the Devils have taste.

Tucked in there are tunes from Steve Earle and erstwhile Amazing Rhythm Aces, Russell Smith and James Hooker - the latter now with Nanci Griffith's band. Producer is neglected singer/writer Wendy Waldman, herself a seventies alumni of Linda Ronstadt, Maria Muldaur et al. The band, not surprisingly, include one of her songs too!

Whilst not about to turn the world on its heels, this album stands proudly next to the new Poco and gives seventies country rock fans reason to spend.

Steve Morris

VARIOUS

A Taste Of ...

THOM ROTELLA

Home Again (DMP)

DMP is a specialist US label (now available in the UK via Conifer) that is as proud of its technical mastery as it is of its artists' undeniable musical prowess.

Their products are tailored specifically for CD, though high quality cassettes are issued, being one hundred percent digital in all processes.

Now, the fact that soundwise they can blow your socks off (and they can!) is all very good but if the music is merely there to show off that fact, forget it.

Fortunately it has merit. The sampler is a good start. DMP are proud to call it jazz though lovers of Steely Dan style rock will instantly recognise the overall style of the label. Sort of accessible Weather Report meets Spryogya though the 'Salamander Pie' track by Jay Leonhart, acoustic bass and vocals only is almost jazz/bluegrass! It certainly made me curious about the rest of the album.

Thom Rotella's 'Home Again' is a star-studded, sonic delight that will endear itself to Earl Klugh fans who rue the day their man went AWOL on Radio Two.

Steve Morris

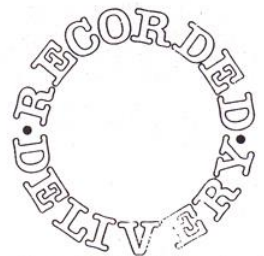
HUGH MASEKELA

Uptownship (RCA Novus)

Whilst, I guess, Masekela is in fact a jazz musician, it's been relatively easy for us non-jazzers to ignore the fact. After all he had a US number one pop hit with 'Grazin' In The Grass', played on Love's 'Forever Changes' prior to re-impinging on our consciousness with his 'African' LPs on Jive and his touring with Paul Simon. Fortunately 'Uptownship' lets us gloss over his 'jazzing' a little longer.

Though recorded in New York City many of the players are African rooted, including bassman extraordinaire, Bakithi Khumalo, the man who made Simon's 'Graceland' so springheeled.

'Uptownship' as a title says it all, the S.A. township jive has fused with soul, indeed covers of Harold Melvin and Smokey Robinson tunes are included, infact, Masekela's playing on the latter's 'Ooo, Baby, Baby' is spine tin-



gling, achieving a tone and soul that largely eludes me in Miles Davis' playing of that genre.

It has to be said though that his reworking of Marley's 'No Woman, No Cry' fails. That apart, a very classy non jazz (!) album.

Steve Morris

THE ROCHES

Speak (MCA Records)

From one point of view, you don't get many new albums these days which contain fourteen tracks. What's more, this one requires fifty five minutes of your undivided attention. The potential length of the CD format, has after all, had some positive effects for the poor old record buyer.

As far as the songs on 'Speak' are concerned, the harmonies are never less than heavenly, the backing tracks fittingly appropriate - it's just that lyrically all three girls seem at times, to be describing some other planet in their self and co-penned material.

Standout tracks here, are the put down of 'Big Nuthin' (guess what that one is about boys and girls), 'In The World' and 'Nocturne'. As a farewell to the decade, 'The anti-sex backlash of the 80's which deals with some of those stickier moments of life, must surely take the prize for vocal weirdness.

Trouble is, I reckon I'm going to grow to love this album, whatever I try to do to the contrary.

Arthur Wood

LEE CLAYTON

Another Night (Provogue)

Clayton's last album, his fourth, 'The Dream Goes On' (Capitol) was released in 1981. Since then the man from Oakridge, Tennessee has experienced periods of great personal despair. Thankfully he is beginning once more, to establish a niche for himself in the music business.

Never one to musically or lyrically take prisoners, the opening track 'I Ride Alone' is an appropriate opener (and a theme song) as far as Lee is concerned. 'Industry' is an indictment of man's race to improve life on Earth by destroying its resources - written in 1981, this is a song years ahead of its time. Lee's honest and optimistic anthem 'The Dream Goes On' closes the album.

Not a monumental return to the recording scene, but a welcome one nonetheless. I hope that Lee's next studio album will include 'We Are The Romans' - yet another warning directed at the folly of mankind. Lee told me about the song when I met him in

Texas three years ago. At the time it sounded like an odd title for a song. Having seen him perform the tune at his recent Bredon gig, it is a song crying out to be put on vinyl. Willie, Waylon, Kris and Big John have cut Lee's 'Silver Stallion' for their forthcoming album 'Highwayman II'. It will be the first single taken from the album. By February/March 1990, Lee will have a hit song on the US Country chart. Truly, the dream goes on. (Don't be put off by the 'Country' tag the album reminds me of Dylan playing the Hendrix arrangements of his own songs. Try it, it's damn good. Ed)

Arthur Wood

DOLLY PARTON

Greatest Hits
(RCA)

With Dolly Parton electing to use Ricky Skaggs as producer for her latest, rather good, CBS album 'White Limozeen', in order to get back to her country roots it seems contrary that RCA, a company she was signed to for two decades or so, should lean heavily on the showbiz side of her output when compiling this new 'Best Of'.

Certainly 'Jolene', 'I Will Always Love You' and 'The Bargain Store' are here but there's no 'Coat Of Many Colours', 'When I Sing For Him' or 'Tennessee Mountain Home'. All, incidentally, regarded as greatest hits in previous packages.

It's not totally bad news though. For whilst it's very MOR she has an exuberance that transcends the gloss. Like Linda Ronstadt, the lady somehow remains OK in the direst of situations. An optimism born of the two ladies teaming up with Emmylou Harris for 'Trio' I guess, and the dangling promise of Vol III!

The best recommendation is to buy the twenty track (four more than vinyl) CD and to programme in two entirely separate ten track LPs! The showbiz and the real Dolly.

Steve Morris

THE LIGHTNING SEEDS

Cloudcuckooland
(Ghetto)

This is a nice album and like most nice albums, if anyone has hopes of it selling vast quantities they're obviously residents of the title. However, Mr Broudie is not a daydreamer. Which is why he's not attempted to forge some sort of a magnum opus, but has instead crafted a collection of intelligent love songs and observations neatly summed up by the titles of its two singles, 'Pure' and 'Joy'. Nothing here actually gets the heart racing, but it does pass a gentle hand across any troubled brow without ever once appearing wimpy. Definitely worth repeat plays and likely to become a closer friend in the process. But tell me Ian, doesn't the string arrangement of 'The Nearly Man' sound ever so slightly like 'Days Of Pearly Spencer'?

Mike Davies

SUN RHYTHM SECTION

Old Time Rock And Roll
(Magnum Force)

These are the guys who played midwife to rock 'n' roll. They hung out at the studios adding the instruments to the seminal explosions of Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis and Carl Perkins.

Now, somewhat long in the teeth, they find themselves a travelling museum exhibit. Indeed the latter half of this CD was recorded at a Smithsonian institute gig, 'demonstrating' their skills.

However, it's not a musty relic, more a restrained country/rockabilly stroll through the classics they created almost four decades back. Archivists will lap up the twenty eight tracks on offer, newcomers will wonder what the fuss is, or was, about.

It's hard to believe they once played those naughty rhythms that shocked the world!

Steve Morris

FELT

Me And The
Monkey In The Moon
(Cherry Red)

If this is indeed the last ever Felt album, Lawrence couldn't have chosen a finer swansong. Like Stephen Duffy, he's discovered country music, although his use of it is far less rooted within English traditions than the Lilac Time's. Pedal steel provides some nerve-tangling moments with the cascading ringing electric guitars and more acoustic passages giving a shimmering edge to the rolling melodies. Side One is strongest for immediate impact, with the grand swell of 'Free', the superior Lloyd Cole choogle of 'Mobile Shack', 'Can't Make Love' and the lyrically intriguing 'Budgie Jacket' which appears to address the problems pretty boys have with sexual identity perceptions. Side two plays down the country and shows up more of the Reed influences, notably on the single 'Get Out Of My Mirror' and 'New Day Dawning' with its lengthy guitar outro of 'Hey Jude' proportions.

Way to go.

Mike Davies



WEDDINGS, PARTIES, ANYTHING

Roaring Days
(Cooking Vinyl)

Being voted best new talent by the Australian Rock Industry in 1988 set Weddings, Parties, Anything up.

but for what? Their brand of ultra

OPAL

Early Recordings
(Rough Trade)

1984 saw an ex-Dream Syndicate (Kendra Smith) and an ex-Rain Parade (David Roback) form Opal in an effort to explore the more surreal end of the free form folk spectrum thus endearing them to the new psychedelic movement of the late 80's which took the house out of acid and substituted the transcendental image. Opal have thus had the comparisons flung at them, notably early Floyd, Morrison/Doors and even the emerging Mothers but they bear fruit with a collection of originals that peaks with the frantic 'Empty Bottles', the multi-coloured and sensual 'Lullabye' and a happy-daze, sepi-inducing wail of a song, 'All Souls' that (joss)sticks in the memory vividly. The 60's were the days of heady hedonism whilst the 90's will be the days for hit and miss mysticism. Opal hit far more than they miss, I can assure you!

Kevin Wilson

JIMMIE RODGERS

You And My Old Guitar
(Conifer/Request)

A.K.A. The Singing Brakeman, Rodgers is generally acknowledged to be the founding father of country (and western?) music. This album collects twenty of his best known performances into one handy set.

Recorded between 1927 and the day he died in 1933, (his last session ended a mere couple of hours before lifelong TB took it's final toll), it's easy to agree with the above theory whilst simultaneously hearing separately the strands of folk, bluegrass and blues that became country. The sleeve's recording details are excellent though surprisingly the presentation is not chronological. Remastered, it appears, from excellent condition, out of copyright 78s the sound is astonishing. On CD the presence of these fifty-plus-year-old recordings is spooky.

A specialist taste maybe, but a revelatory and absorbing one.

Steve Morris

THE WILD FLOWERS

Tales Like These
(Slash)

Despite the resounding silence following the Chapter 22 split, the Flowers haven't been idle. Recorded in America with Replacements producer Matt Wallace, this is a glorious testament to the power of their steel hard talent. Unless you knew different, you'd be hard pressed to recognise this as anything other than brush dust born, cactus juiced authentic American. The REM and Thin White Rope casual comparisons are inevitable (and I suspect a dash of Jim Carroll on 'This Feeling's Gone'), but in terms of solid impact and substance, they're also totally justified with some fiery guitars and pounding beat positively pummeling their way out of the speakers. Of the ten tracks, five are survivors from the Chapter 22 demos period; 'Hopes Crash Down', the outstanding 'Tales Like These' and venomous 'No Holy Spirits', the

acoustic slow burner 'Love Like Fire' and the album's crash to glory knockout, 'Green Hotel'. The five 'new' numbers maintain that high standard with a vengeance, notably so on the excellent 'Fever Tree' (which curiously reminds me of Midnight Oil) and 'Put The Blame On Me'. It's been a long, frustrating wait, but 'Tales Like These' is definitely 10 stories high.

Mike Davies

DOUG KERSHAW

Hot Diggidy Doug
(Sundown)

Formula fiddle-led, cajun country notable for guest vocals by Hank Williams Jr and Fats Domino, the latter on a sadly lifeless cover of Rockin' Sidney's 'My Toof Toof'. The playing by all concerned is well beyond adequate but the overall feeling is tired.

Kershaw is capable of better, I'm sure, simply building an album around his classic, if stale, 'Louisiana Man' every couple of years simply tarnishes his reputation.

Steve Morris

SECOND DELIVERY

CANNED HEAT

Future Blues
(BGO)

In the 1970's, the Canned Heat brand of blues boogie became a signpost for the masses travelling the road from mainstream pop into hardcore blues. With a charismatic vocalist in Bob Hite and a legendary guitarist in Harvey Mandel, the Canned Heat on this album reached a peak of audience and critical acclaim. 'Let's Work Together' was a huge global hit and 'Future Blues' was as close to anthemic as this Heat got. Even the classic 'That's All Right Mama' gets a new lick of gloss courtesy of the Hite/Mandel axis. Over here, we had the fawning copyists - Canned Heat were the real thing.

Kevin Wilson

THE JAMES GANG

Yer Album
(BGO)

This album is a reissue of a 20 year old original and it's as fresh now as it ever was. Jim Fox and Tom Kriss made up a rhythm section that positively oozed rockfunk on innovative cuts such as 'Stone Rap' and the aptly named 'Funk #48' but the show, as always, is stolen by Joe Walsh in his pre-Eagles days. His guitar work is economical and astronomical as 'Bluebird' truly does soar above the mundane and into folklore and that Walsh voice just takes off and up, thanks to the earthy drive of 'Fred' and the plaintive cry of 'Lost Woman'. Yes, as three pieces come and go, the James Gang came and went. But they deserve to be re-

membered and this LP is a grand memorial.

Kevin Wilson

VARIOUS

Raised On Rock

'60's UK', '60's US', '70's UK', '70's US'
(Knight)

Classic stuff alright, four super-charged albums each one crammed with timeless rock anthems from the two featured decades. And what sort of unforgettable songs are we talking about? The 60's UK compilation highlights 'America' from The Nice, Cream's 'I Feel Free', the chuggin' 'Natural Born Bugie' by Humble Pie and the pyromaniac's delight, 'Fire' from The Crazy World Of Arthur Brown. It's 70's cousin showcases Clapton's 'Layla', the Sab's head bangin' boogie 'Paranoid', 10cc's 'Rubber Bullets' and the 'Workers Unite' chant, 'Part of the Union' by The Straws amongst others.

From America, we get 60's brilliance courtesy of The Lemon Pipers bubblegum classic 'Green Tambourine', the Monkees' cartoon capers of 'Last Train To Clarksville', the decade's hymn 'Mr Tambourine Man', plus, in a whole collection of classic cuts, the soulfreaky 'Dance To The Music' from Sly and the Family Stone. The US 70's set begins in bluesy fashion thanks to 'Let's Work Together' from Canned Heat then blitzes the senses with US anglophile Suzi Quatro's 'Devil Gate Drive' before tranquil ambience descends thanks to Classics IV's 'Spooky' and the cool jerk of 'Rich Girl' from Daryl Hall and John Oates.

Something for everybody, yes, but something unique because the compilers have actually done a good job!

Kevin Wilson

DREAMGRINDER

IRISH CENTRE

Birmingham

There's a storm brewing. Black, pregnant clouds are gathering. There's a rumble in the distance. Soon there'll be a downpour and we shall feel cleansed.

The music biz stinks to high heaven and there are only a handful of bands who are chanting invocations to bring about the Big Bathtime.

Dreamgrinder are one of them. Not so much a swirling (for there danger lies), more a snarling psychedelic tantrum, but with the ink still wet from the 1989 (going on '90) rubber stamp.

'Radiation' introduces the band, and here we are tangled up in their hair, drawn in, forced to participate. Drum machine becomes our heartbeat, the life-force steered by four rockers who want you to PLAY with them. Colon-snatch Phil's driving bass - he WANTS you to Jonathon INSISTS you take over his rhythm buzz. And Dave offers you Stoogedelic guitar on a plate. They are a 'New Horizon'. You're involved.

And at the centre of this squall is Hurricane Al - the Big Voice. Whipping and growling, gripping and prowling. Your eyes never leave him.

Have I made myself clear? Do you sense something happening here? Rock/sock-/cock/mock. No nonsense. The final decision is yours. Take a shower or buy an umbrella. 'Outta Sight'!

Max-X

NANCI GRIFFITH

TOWN HALL

Birmingham

The first words uttered by a performer from the Town Hall stage came from support act Steve Phillips - "Is Bob Moore in the house?" he wasn't so Steve proceeded to deliver a seven song set of Aire Valley Delta flavoured blues, including some self penned items from his latest Unamerican Activities album, 'Steel Rail Blues'.

Taking the stage in a dress of mourning black Nanci opened with the anthemic "Is there anybody out there" with the Blue Moon Orchestra laying down a thunderous backbeat. Trouble was the die had already been cast. The sound system couldn't cope with the cavernous void that is our Town Hall. Furthermore, Nanci possesses a voice of two extremes (high and low), with little cover in the middle register. In fact, having observed Nanci's between song patter on a number of occasions you'd swear that she'd taken lessons from that person at No. 10. There's a "dulcet caring" tone and the aggressive "how dare they doubt me" shout. From the latter aspect it would appear that people of a Scottish disposition who scribe for music magazines are a species at risk. Reviewing Nanci's show at the Glasgow Pavilion in SNOUDS, Grahame Bent committed a number of cardinal sins, and she wanted all present to know it. Some of his facts were wrong and he compounded the error by suggesting that the BMO purveyed a MARLBORO COUNTRY beat. Hell, she'd turned down mega bucks by refusing to tour on that American country circuit, because of its associations. Grahame, beware of those partially lit lanes.

While performing 'Drive-In Movies and Dashboard Lights', I'll swear that she winked at our esteemed Editor. Those lessons at the Saatchi & Saatchi School of

LIVE
REVIEWS

Charm were certainly proving beneficial. What's more, those little bunny hops at the end of the rockier numbers would have put Lizzie Webb to shame. When asked from the audience about her unpublished novel(s), Nanci replied with the enquiry "Are you a publisher?". It's a hard life, it's a very hard life.

If I was to pick standout tunes from the main set then Eric Taylor's 'Deadwood, South Dakokta' and 'Storms', plus Nanci's perennial 'Theres A Light Beyond The Woods' (which still gives me the shivers) were front runners. Performing solo (except for harmony vocals from the boys in the band) Nanci saved the climax till the final encore and 'Love At The Five And Dime'. Seems like simplicity works wonders sometimes. Try some, buy some and save a little - do a solo acoustic tour next time around. Those three minutes proved that you can still cut it alone.

Arthur Wood

HAPPY MONDAYS

HUMMINGBIRD

Birmingham

I couldn't see what all the fuss was about. Another band ready to save the world from the evils of rock and pop, this time using dance as their lethal weapon. Aren't the charts already overflowing with dance bands? But this is different, it's 'white indie dance' and they come from (yawn) Manchester. Go ahead, Sean, make my day ...

The pre-gig, acid-house atmosphere had sneaked into everyone's feet. Their toes were smiling. Scallywag guitar melded with Funkadelic dynamics and shattering bass-thumps on 'Do It Better' and 'Fat Lady Wrestlers', producing a rapid turnaround on my part. I loved the illegitimate reggae on 'Hallelujah', the guitar-soaked 'Mad Cyril' and the smashed-up classic 'Lazylitis', and my feet were in complete agreement. One look at Bez and you couldn't help being carried away. Watching him is a bit like watching the Tin Man from the Wizard Of Oz attempting to dance, realising he can't, but going ahead anyway. Cow, Horse, Weasel and Bagpuss casually squeezed into this rubbery, wonderful, shambolic mess and somehow make sense of it all.

If you can't enjoy this, then you must have lead in your feet and ice in your heart. A condemned man's last request would undoubtedly be to groove to 'WFL' (Wrote For Luck) and he'd die happy. You had to be there to feel it, and it felt good to be there. Rave on.

Andy Tipper

THUNDER

JB'S

Birmingham

What was going on? This can't be rock music - they're not wearing lipstick, hats, bandannas or tattoos. How strange. With their long hair, jeans and T-shirts, they seem content to let their high quality rock



● THUNDER

music speak for itself. How terribly British of them. After tonight's performance, it is little wonder that record giant, EMI, eagerly snapped up Andy (Duran) Taylor's classy proteges.

White beams of light and a mock Radio 4 announcement brought the claustrophobic venue to life. It is hard to believe that this band arose from the wreckage of Terraplane because Danny Bowes' vocals and Luke Morley's lead guitar now have so much more expression, so much more purpose, they have a raison d'être, which makes them near certainties for stadium success.

Danny's emotional, almost soulful, range was highlighted on 'Until My Dying Day', while the sad drug tale 'Girl's Going Out

Of Her Head' allowed Thunder to let rip with everything. Fleeting memories of 'Stairway' with altered chords appeared on 'Love Walked In', while Def Leppard harmonies and a Luke-special solo turned this one into an epic. Thunder even had a dig at lager louts on 'Englishman On Holiday' (although Dudley had a few of their own in as well tonight), producing neo R'n'B with a dash of Minder's 'I Could Be So Good For You' chucked in. It's a long time since vitriolic venom and melody were combined with such precision. Groups like Def Leppard and Bonham have shown that the Brits can still do things properly when they try. Thunder don't even have to try.

Andy Tipper

THE 1990 CONNOISSEUR COLLECTION
BRAIN OF BRUM BEAT QUIZ

The Answers

★ Whether you actually entered the contest or simply challenged your own pop knowledge you will no doubt be grateful for the following check list. Due to the mountain of entries received, staff at Brum Beat Towers are still beaver away to find the winner. We'll bring you the lucky name next month. In the meantime see how well you did...

1. Oh You Pretty Thing; 2. George Harrison; 3. Marmalade 4. The Rockin Berries; 5. Revolver; 6. 1981; 7. Roxy Music; 8. Val Doonican; 9. Colin Blunstone; 10. Stories; 11. It Was Easier To Hurt Her/Come On Home/Goodbye Bluebird or Pamela Pamela; 12. Hair; 13. Barbados; 14. Velvet Underground; 15. Sam The Sham and The Pharaohs (Wooly Bully); 16. The Band; 17. Fontana/Major-Minor; 18. Gerry Rafferty (Baker Street); 19. A Starship Trooper; 20. Gary Numan; 21. Odyssey; 22. Feargal Sharkey; 23. Maggie May; 24. Mike D'Abo; 25. Sly and The Family Stone; 26. Sonny Bono; 27. Dave and Ansil Collins; 28. The Kinks; 29. Beethoven; 30. Patti Boyd/Harrison/Clapton; 31. Apollo C. Vermouth; 32. Johnny Allen; 33. Kris Kristofferson; 34. Andy Fairweather-Low/Fairweather; 35. A Glass Of Champagne; 36. Julian Cope; 37. Blackberry Way; 38. The Kinks (Lola); 39. Cilla Black; 40. Waterloo; 41. San Francisco; 42. The Crypt-Kickers; 43. Deram; 44. Bryan Ferry; 45. The Isley Brothers; 46. Like Dreamers Do; 47. Clint Warwick/Denny Laine; 48. Alexis Korner; 49. Make Me Smile (Come Up And See Me); 50. Rod Stewart.