

# RECORDS

## Robert Gordon with Link Wray

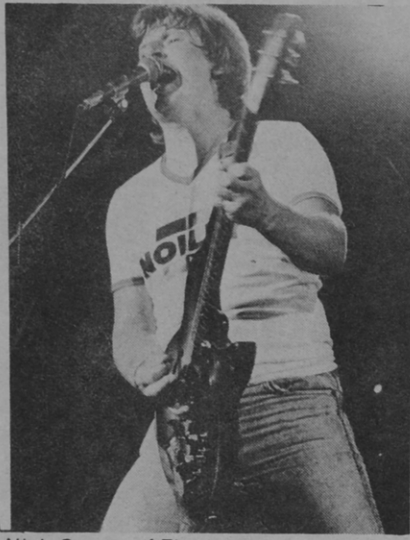
*Private Stock Records*

Rockabilly Lives! Robert Gordon's debut album is subtitled "An Instant Record". Appropriate. It rocks with raw power from the opening bars of "Red Hot" and doesn't let up.

Gordon is a former singer for a punk band who claims his heart lies in Tennessee, or more precisely in the Land of Sun Records and the rockabilly sounds of Elvis and Carl Perkins and Eddie Cochran and that mythical figure Link Wray, who features on guitar and writes a few tunes.

All the material is firmly in the white rock 'n' roll tradition of the mid fifties. Gordon's delivery does his inspirations proud. "I'm not trying to recreate something," he says, "this is how I feel."

The lasting impression is of vitality with no sacrifice of musicality. Good rocking.  
**Ken Williams**



Nick Garvey of The Motors.

## The Motors

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*Virgin*

The Motors may look like a punk band, but the resemblance ends there. They got nothing to say of any social significance, and they don't believe in the three minute limit. What they are is a rock 'n' roll band. Wanna go deaf fast? Go to a Motors gig.

Punks they have listened to include the number one teen greasy of all time, Chuck Berry, and those mod boys, the Who. There really is nothin' new, believe me.

They do have a flair for melody, with a few catchy hooks thrown in for the kids, the best example being "Dancing the Night Away". Gets into your brain after a while. Doesn't really matter where they got it from. It's Rock 'n' roll. Two guitars, bass and drums, and they all sing. In the conventional sense of the word. Good songs too. Make you dance.

So if you're into energy in a big way, and you like catchy toons, light on the punk stuff, take a bite of Motors with your amphetamines. Body food.

**John Malloy**

## Rod Stewart

*Foot Loose & Fancy Free*

*Warner Brothers*

Goodbye to Hollywood and all that. Blurred and besotted-looking, Rod Stewart stares off the cover of his new album. His white suit is crumpled.

Having shed Britt, Stewart hasn't quite shaken off his LA ennui. But he's made a good stab at it, with what seems to be a deliberate reversion to former times. The booklet inserted in the sleeve stresses the boozey, brawling image (there's Rod, chug-a-lugging, supporting soccer).

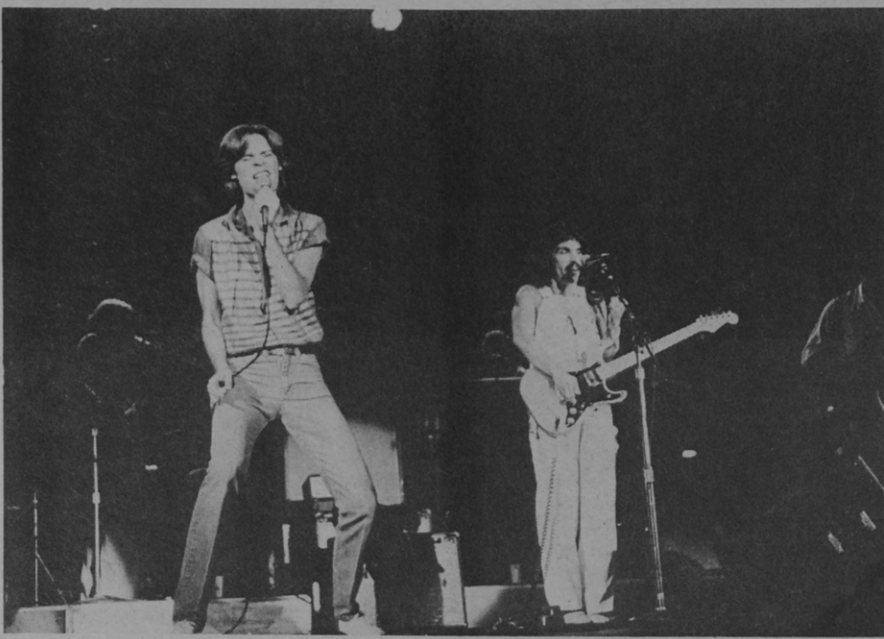
A key to the vigour of the album may be the choice of musicians, not the session men of the previous two outings, but the band Stewart brought with him to Western Springs earlier this year. The empathy between Stewart and his band gives the music a far firmer base.

The songs are strong. The rockers "Hot Legs" and "Born Loose" are reminiscent of those lurchers that were the staple of the Faces. "(If Loving You is Wrong) I Don't Want To Be Right" demonstrates Stewart's ability at wringing every nuance from a strong ballad, and "You Keep Me Hangin' On" is a mini-symphony worthy of the memory of the Vanilla Fudge.

But it's not all rock 'n' roll heaven on Sunset Boulevard. This otherwise very strong album contains two songs of sentiment, "You're In My Heart" and "I Was Only Joking," lilting ditties, romantic, effusive, mawkish. Sadly, they are the songs that will sell the record.

**Ken Williams**

## Booty on a Black Street



## Beauty on a Back Street

*Daryl Hall & John Oates*

*RCA*

In many ways, Hall and Oates have taken on the mantle which slipped from the rickety shoulders of Todd Rundgren after *Something/Anything*. Blue-eyed soul is a rather meaningless term, but it expresses what both acts have in common — an application of black music's fire to the technology of pop-rock. But even a dose of Rundgren won't prepare you for just how complex Hall and Oates' music has become.

*Beauty on a Back Street* is firmly based on strong melodies and the best rhythm playing you're ever going to get from white boys, but aside from the positively infectious opener — "Don't Change" — there's nothing on here to woo the casual listener. *Beauty on a Back Street* needs constant replaying and pretty much undivided attention for quite a while before it pays off, but at least it offers quite a dividend.

It may be necessary to forgive the occasional excess where they stray too far into the mystical ("Winged Bull") and cutesy, neo-Sparksism ("Bad Habits" and "Infections"), but in the main, they display a remarkably deft touch for pure pop sensibility

at its most intelligent. In "Bigger than Both of Us", aside from a literate lyric:

*Think of me as another page in your life*

*A curious way for you to pass the time*

*Just another memory when you're middle-aged*

*There's someone for the girl with everything*

there is also an arrangement which demonstrates just how much dynamic force you can generate at little more than ballad pace, and uniformly impeccable playing (although things might have been even better if producer, synthesiser-player, back-up vocalist, major-domo and lead guitarist, Christopher Bond had left his fuzz box at home).

I don't really know how many people buy Hall and Oates records around this neighbourhood, but I suppose it's none too many. That really is a shame because, working from the same basic premises that underlie much top-40 music, Hall and Oates produce records which leave for dead all but a handful of rivals. It's music for the feet all right, but also for the ears, and what's left of what's between them.

**Francis Stark**

## Fusion a Go Go



## Go Too

*Stomu Yamashta*

*Arista*

In his 30 years Yamashta has accomplished much. By 14 he was tympanist with the Kyoto and Osaka Philharmonic orchestras. He has composed for movies, (working for such directors as Kurosawa, Ken Russell and Robert Altman,) the Royal Ballet, not to mention his own theatrical troupe. Nevertheless, despite his impeccable credentials, I approached *Go Too* with some trepidation. I have this terrible prejudice against anything redolent of classical rock, and, like Kipling, think that never the twain should meet. Arthur Fiedler's orchestrations of John Lennon were bad enough but they hardly warranted Keith Emerson's revenge upon Bach and Bartok. Attempts at a 'third stream' fusion also leave me cold. (I leave the room if even the innocuous Mike Oldfield is played.) O.K. tirade over, but you get my bias.

*Go Too* comes as a pleasant surprise. I'd

heard its predecessor only once, in less than ideal conditions, so didn't really know what to expect — namely that Yamashta is well enough grounded in both fields to go about the merger with some assurance. He obviously has considerable savvy and is shrewd enough not to attempt too much. Where others have buried fragile melodic lines under impossible orchestrations, or, worse still, kicked great music with clubbed feet, Yamashta's music is original and his arrangements, if attempting the grandiose, do so without falling into pretentiousness. The only real lapses are on the latter part of Side One where a couple of tunes are protracted beyond their capacity.

The material is strong and varied, encompassing pop ballads sung by Jess Roden and Linda Lewis, punchy rockers propelled by the superb drumming of Mike Shrieve and the graceful fire of Al DiMeola's guitar, plus a couple of spacey instrumentals a la mid-period Pink Floyd. These latter are dominated by the synthesizer of Klaus Schulze who contributes excellent work throughout the album. And, of course, there's the ubiquitous Yamashta. His percussion effects add subtle colouring while his production is lush enough to wallow in. (Parts of the album could induce a quadraphonic wet dream.)

All concept albums must, of course, have a Grand Theme and while *Go Too* is no exception its subject seems to be a straightforward happy love affair. No doubt the album originally had a double cover giving the lyrics — often hard to hear due to the production — or at least a thematic note. This would help explain the various sound effects: (footsteps, whale-calls etc.) A listing of instrumental credits would have been given as well but the local record company has only supplied a single cover, so depriving us of the information.

I cavil however; the most important thing is the music and, on the whole, it is impressive. My prejudice has taken a beating. Yamashta has demonstrated that attempts at such fusion music can succeed. Roll over Keith Emerson and tell Rick Wakeman the news.

**Peter Thomson**

## The Steve Gibbons Band

*Rollin' On*

*Polydor*

The Steve Gibbons Band is a Birmingham based outfit currently suffering from an affliction that ails many British bands — they're not new wave. Furthermore, being from outside London they're doomed to be continually ignored in the music press.

No matter, they are a tasty little rock 'n' roll unit — a two guitars line-up fronted by vocalist Steve Gibbons who has a good line in leather gear and sultry, macho good looks. But despite the strength of the performing ability evident here, they have one basic problem. They tend to lack identity or, perhaps more correctly, personality. Their original material, which veers from straight country to rock 'n' roll, is melodically strong and their choice of others songs (Chuck Berry's "Tulane" and Jerry Reed's "Tupelo Mississippi Flash") inspired. It's just that nagging lack of a distinctive character which sabotages this record and keeps it in its place as a pleasant collection of tunes.

A truly strong album could well break these boys through from the interesting/promising category and turn them into a top flight act. This isn't it, but their next could well be.

**Alastair Dougal**

## Heroes.

*David Bowie.*

*RCA*

In many ways *Heroes* is a surprisingly small step onward from its predecessor *Low* but it suffers nothing in comparison to that album nor anything else that's being done right now.

Most obviously it differs very little in the way it's programmed, there's still the division of the album into a wordy side and a side that's largely instrumental. The music itself is also similar, much of it still comes on like a shattering windscreen but the arrangements are more complex, the instrumentation more varied. *Heroes* is abrasive and distancing in parts while in others it's completely seductive, and the continuing presence of Eno as a musician and a major influence throughout ensures the music's surrealist intensity.

Early doubts included a suspicion of gratuitous weirdness masquerading as the avant garde, but there's hardly been a Bowie album that hasn't caused a slight twinge of "am I being had?". In my experience it's testament to the power of his music that such twinges are almost part of the initial attraction and then they soon disappear.

Bowie has made several great albums and even the odd one that's difficult to like has never been less than interesting, none can be ignored. His music is now at its most original and challenging on *Heroes*.

The explorations are made underground, in the dark and on the run, and the findings are brilliant ciphers held close to the chest with one hand as the other incites us to dance.

"Beauty And The Beast:" Bowie wails down the air-conditioning shaft accompanied by disgruntled synthesizer rumbles and a catchy love chorus giving all they've got that's catching.

*MY-MY*

*someone fetch a priest*

*you can't say no to*

*the Beauty and the Beast.*

"Joe The Lion:" Further down the shaft as Bowie's last-ditch singing spurs all participants onto maximum effort until the last Jagged throe. Probably not about Chris Burden who had himself nailed to a Volkswagen.

"Heroes:" Rock-heart hypnosis with the touch of the Velvets, lacework by Eno. If dolphins had discos, I'd go and watch. Love this one.

"Sons Of The Silent Age:" British psychedelic reborn... astonishing pop with the return of that Bowie voice in a deceptive arrangement that grows more fluid every time.

"Blackout:" Like "The Secret Life of Arabia" which we find on the other side, this harks back to the quasi soul-funk (blush) of *Young Americans*, but "Blackout" stops at the Station along the way.

And if you liked the instrumentals on *Low* you'll like those on *Heroes*, they differ only in small ways, but there's no brief and easy description of these tracks although parts of "Sense of Doubt" make my typewriter rattle if that's of any significance. Last night I climbed into my bath with a paperback while *Heroes* filtered through the wall... just as Bowie's saxophone emitted the final bleats of "Neukoln" I found myself reading the words, "and the saxophone sounds like some prehistoric bird. Man, these are musicians." Good records have their own ways of helping you come to grips with them, it seems.

**Terence Hogan**