

The World of John Martyn

see why Darts might doo-wop up a storm in such an environment. However, short of inviting thirty people into my living room, and turning the lights off, I can't really think of any way to get much out of them on my turntable.

Unlike Sha Na Na, Darts seem to have an appreciation of doo-wop as living music, and not just a variety act. They write a fair proportion of the material on the record, and seem less wrapped in kitsch. At the same time, like Sha Na Na, they must be a party band. It just seems so silly to sit in an armchair reading the paper when they are rocking and rolling away.

Francis Stark

Dennis Wilson Pacific Ocean Blue Caribou

Dennis Wilson has always seemed the lightweight of the Beach Boys. True, he's the one who suggested surfing as a theme to brother Brian but his contribution appears slight.

Pacific Ocean Blue rights the wrong. This first and so far only solo project by a Beach Boy is quite outstanding. It's certainly steps ahead of any recent Beach Boys album.

Dennis Wilson has next to no voice, something between foghorn and fragility. He immerses himself in backings of orchestral density; the background vocalists are legion. But it works. The poignancy of Wilson's delivery slashes through the monumental arrangements and the near-banal of the lyrics. Teetering on the brink of bathos Dennis Wilson makes art.

Wilson co-wrote the 12 songs, with, among others, his wife and brother Carl and Mike Love, but the songs are all Dennis. His croaking, *real* voice makes it *his*.

Pacific Ocean Blue is a very personal document, its unexpectedness making it even more a pleasure. It's as if Ringo suddenly became John Lennon.

Ken Williams

Little Feat Waiting For Columbus Warner Bros.

Where I live, El Feats have provided the main musical accompaniment to rave-ups and get-downs for at least five years. Many's the time I'd affix some poor soul with my glazed eye and demand that he/she



John Martyn One World Island

John Martyn may play concerts with just his voice and an acoustic guitar but the man is no run-of-the-mill singer-songwriter. From his folk background, Martyn has moved progressively towards a loosely jazz-flavoured approach. His voice, a whisky-besotted Scots croak, is a sensuous instrument that he uses as an integral part of the sound, with the emphasis more on establishing a mood than on enunciating verbal content.

One World moves from the comparatively simple folk-song of its title track to the reggae influenced rhythms of "Big Muff". But its most impressive moments are Martyn's most overtly jazz influenced songs. "Sweet Certain Surprise" slips across over a sensuous bossa-nova with an appropriately boozed trombone solo, while

"Small Hours" rides on a synthesised heart beat effect to which Martyn contributes echoplex guitar parts that wash dreamily across gently percussion and tasteful synthesiser from Steve Winwood. It's a portrait of the early morning, stunning in its sensitivity and feel.

This is John Martyn's first album in over two years and he maintains a constant progression from his earlier work — he's a total original and owes no recognisable debts of anyone else.

One World is his most accomplished work to date. At times the electronic effects Martyn uses threaten to submerge his material, but such slips are rare and his humanity, taste and originality shine through.

If you thought the idea of the unique artist unfolding his work according to his own judgement was some kind of record company hype, check out John Martyn.

Alastair Dougal.

acknowledge the Feat as the world's premier group. Friends and I awaited each new album in the hope that *this* would be the masterpiece we all knew they were capable of — the one that would convert everybody. The N.Z. concert tour in '76 won many believers — it not only boogied our

sneakers away but displayed the band as having enormous energy, a fact not always evident in that foot-shufflin', finger-poppin', backbone-slippin', funky chicken we heard on the hi-fi at home. Perhaps, then, the masterpiece would be a live album?

Well this sure ain't it. Oh, it's a good live LP by normal criteria but this is the Feats fergrifsake! I'm trying to overcome my disappointment and figure out what's gone wrong.

Commercial factors aside, there seem to be three main reasons for making a live album. The first is to present new material, or, more commonly, numbers that are part of a stage act but would not otherwise be recorded. (Van Morrison did this.) Well, apart from a 57 second throwaway of "Don't Bogart That Joint", there are no new songs on the four sides offered here. So that rules that one out.

The second reason for a live album is to present rearrangements of old material. (Joni Mitchell did this and we hope Dylan will too, after his current tour.) The Feat rearrange a few numbers, but they rarely come across as improvements. "Sailin' Shoes" is slow and heavy, thus losing its original delicate charm. "Apolitical Blues" is simply overdone; its humour is spoiled. Only the extended "Dixie Chicken" is a real success: Payne has some witty piano noodling and there's a New Orleans horn sequence.

The third reason for recording material live is to do it better. And Little Feat don't. With the exception of Side 3, where Payne's keyboard prowess highlights tight, swaggering performances, the energy they displayed in Auckland seems to have dissipated. Numbers seem just run through, and at times that glorious lurching funk is almost flattened out. On "Willin'" Ken Gradney sounds plain bored.

The poor quality of both performance and sound fail to make this set an acceptable introductory sampler. Almost any of the previous albums would serve better.

Is the title significant? Who/what is Columbus: Lowell George's departed muse, the missing spirit of live performance, or simply a contract to be fulfilled? Maybe the rationale for issuing this sad L.P. is purely economic. After all, George sings "It's a mercenary territory." But that still doesn't explain what went wrong with the performances. Perhaps further lyrics from the same song suggest the answer. Little Feat might have been touring too hard, and we know there has been internal feuding.

*is it the days into nights
or the 'I'm sorry's' into fights?
whatever it was, I sure hope they fix it.*
Peter Thomson

FOREIGNER

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DENNIS ELLIOT. Drums: Ex-Hunter/Ronson, If, Roy Young etc.

