

# Granddaddy of Punk Returns

Lou Reed  
Street Hassle  
Arista

Love him or hate him (and there are few in-betweens), Lou Reed is the Granddaddy of Punk.

Lou Reed was bawling out songs of depression in a moronic monotone when Johnny Rotten was still bed-wetting.

In "Heroin" he wrote what is still the most devastating hard drug anthem ever, in "Berlin" he showed what it's like to be on the brink of suicide and in *Rock 'N Roll Animal* he produced a live work of overwhelming intensity.

How he survived at all remains a mystery, since his personality endears him to very few people, and his work has disappointed as often as it has pleased.

Now, after the less-than-inspired *Coney Island Baby* and the lacklustre *Rock N' Roll Heart*, Lou has finally made the studio album that his devotees (count me in) always knew he was capable of.

The overriding feeling in listening to *Street Hassle* is one of commitment. Lou sounds like he's really worked hard on this one. His singing carries real conviction, as does his guitar playing, and his production, aided by Richard Robinson, has genuine clout to it.

What's more, Lou seems to be baring a little of himself to public scrutiny for the first time. On the opening track, "Gimme Some Good Times", he takes the piss out of "Sweet Jane", playing the smartass, asking what the guy is actually doing standing on the corner, suitcase in his hand.

The title track is a fascinating trilogy of New York scenes; the casual pickup, how to get rid of an O.D.'d body and make it look like a road accident, a love affair breaking up. Bruce Springsteen makes an appearance, and the insidious little string riff that runs right through all three songs just never lets you go. One of Lou's finest hours.

At long last, "I Wanna Be Black" is recorded, and here's betting it took some courage all round. Lou has a rather perverse view of race-relations, and the easily-offended should steer well clear. Amazing that Lou ever found any ladies



prepared to sing the backup lines too. Love it.

Also resurrected is the Velvet Underground standard "Real Good Time Together", and I just know the other, new numbers are going to etch themselves inside the skull before long, they rock so hard and so well.

If you thought Lou Reed had no balls left, listen to *Street Hassle*, then think again.

Duncan Campbell

## Atlanta Rhythm Section Champagne Jam Polydor

*Champagne Jam* is dedicated to the survivors of the ill-fated Lynyrd Skynyrd plane crash. Skynyrd and Atlanta Rhythm Section are part of a loose fraternity of Southern musicians, often given to mutual bad mouthing (Robert Nix, drummer for ARS and a former member of Roy Orbison's Candyman, used to refer derisively to the hard-drinking, fist-throwing Ronnie Van Zant as "a pussy"), but a family nonetheless.

The southern rocker's credentials are hard work, good playing, and a reputation for boastful booziness.

As personalities, ARS seem divided between excessive roughnecks and more introverted souls, but on record they're superbly together. Ronnie Hammond has more shadings to his vocals than most of his contemporaries and he's backed up by a skin tight quintet. Exemplary stylings are provided by the guitarists, Barry Bailey and J.R. Cobb who use their instruments to provide texture rather than technical flash.

The music is a mixture of Southern funk, thankfully free of cliché, and ethereal ballads, the extended "Imaginary Lover" a meld of the band's two sides. Definitely recommended.

Ken Williams



Generation X

Chrysalis

## Punk's 2nd Generation

Generation X  
Chrysalis

Along with geezers like the Buzzcocks, Adverts, Johnny Moped and Wire, Generation X form what you could call the second line of punks, that is, bands that have surfaced behind the big media names — Sex P., Clash, Jam and Stranglers (the pensioners??). As it happens these second liners are currently producing the muscle, whereas for my money only the Clash of the old guard have avoided going to fat.

Generation X have got the muscle despite having had a lean time last year with two soft-core produced singles ("Your Generation" and "Wild Youth") by Sweet producer Phil Wainman. You can excuse Wainman really because X's vocalist Billy Idol

has the pouting lips and bleached blond hair of a teeny pop hero — not a decimated intellectual punk visage of a Keith Richard. Anyway, exit Wainman and hello Martin Rushent, Stranglers and Buzzcock's producer who has used his ability to the maximum on this Generation X debut by giving Mark Laff and Tony James (drums and bass respectively) depth without losing the treble impact of Bob Andrews' strident guitar work.

From the songwriting angle the band revolves entirely around Idol and James (he used to be in the London SS with Clash's Mick Jones) and they have come up with some perceptive songs and more than a few strong melodies. Some of their material is concerned with the rock biz itself; the dangers of selling out in "Promises Promises" ("And punks are taking over Top of the Pops"); and their tribute to the '60's TV glossy pop series "Ready Steady Go" ("I'm not in love with Juke Box Jury"). Who can blame them?? "Kiss Me Deadly" owes something to Springsteen with its jangling guitar intro and streetkid vocals. "One Hundred Punks" and "Youth, Youth Youth" are songs about being punks. Proud to be punks.

Their songs are delivered with the same positive aggression and emotional commitment that was present in the music of the Yardbirds, Pretty Things, Kinks and the Stones at the height of the '60's. No exaggeration.

If I'm betraying my age then you're betraying yours by not buying this.

George Kay

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- Byrds untitled
- Captain Beefheart Clear Spot (3)
- Doors Doors (2)
- Doors Absolutely Live
- Doors Waiting for the Sun
- Doors Soft Parade (2)
- Dragon Universal Radio
- Drake, Nick Pink Moon
- Grateful Dead Aoxomoxoa
- Grateful Dead Anthem of the Sun
- Incredible String Band Incredible String Band (EKS 7322)
- Incredible String Band The Big Huge
- Incredible String Band The 5000 Spirits or the Layers of the Onion
- Incredible String Band Wee Tam
- Incredible String Band Changing Horses
- It's a Beautiful Day Choice Quality Stuff/Anytime
- Kinks Something else by the Kinks
- Kinks Kinks (Double compilation)
- Mahal, Taj Souder
- Mamas & Papas California Dreamin'
- Mandel, Harvey Shangrenade
- Mandel, Harvey Baby Batter
- Mark Almond Mark Almond
- Mayall, John Crusade
- Mayall, John The Blues Alone
- Mayall, John John Mayall plays John Mayall
- Mitchell, Joni Clouds
- Mitchell, Joni Joni Mitchell
- Mom's Apple Pie Mom's Apple Pie
- Move Message from the Country
- Oscar Peterson Trio West Side Story
- Quicksilver Quicksilver
- Raspberries Fresh
- Rawls, Lou Feelin' Good
- Rawls, Lou The Way it was, The Way it is
- Rotary Connection Trip 1
- Savoy Brown Blue Matter
- Savoy Brown Street Corner Talkin (2)
- Savoy Brown Raw Sienna
- Savoy Brown Shake Down
- Strawberry Alarm Clock Incense and Peppermints
- Andy Warhol's Velvet Underground Featuring Nico (dbl)
- Vinegar Joe Rock 'n' Roll Gypsies
- Zappa, Frank 200 Motels
- International Submarine Band Safe at Home
- The Maytals From the Roots
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