

# RECORDS



## Thin Lizzy Live and Dangerous Vertigo

Early last year Thin Lizzy were seen locally as guest act on a Rod Stewart T.V. special. Playing live, they damn near blew the miming, mincing singer off his own programme and we were left gasping for more. Well now we've got a live album to quench our thirst, a four-sided tour de force which completely confirms the impact they made on T.V.

Lizzy are a classic four-piece working in the hard rock mainstream. An American critic once dismissed them as "another bunch of 60's power-chorders" which may be true but it's a little like calling Henry Rono "a middle distance runner." Not only are Lizzy, on comparing this album with the Stones' *Love You Live* and Led Zep's movie, probably a number one in their field, but they have brought renewed vigour to a format which was falling comatose under a blanket of heavy-metal drones. Many of the HM brigade have become lumbering dinosaurs under the onslaught of punk (oops) power-pop, but not Lizzy. They swagger and dance where other H-M plods, and command a dynamic sense so often lacking in the modern buzzsaw-guitar gangs.

This album boasts a powerhouse rhythm section and one of the greatest guitar teams in rock (although unfortunately Robertson has since departed). Lizzy can coddle you with mellow sweetness, roar and sting as if gone berserk and then suddenly stop on a dime, under complete control.

But their ultimate trump card is Philip Lynott. A very capable bassist and clear, expressive singer, the black Irishman is also an excellent songwriter. (That's as in *real* songs: you know, strong melodies, snapping riffs, intelligent words.) Lynott is a thoroughgoing romantic whose residual Catholicism often surfaces in his lyrics and, while he can write slow love ballads of aching sweetness, here we are more often treated to his macho swashbuckler stance. Fittingly the majority of tempos are fast. Of his role as writer and performer Lynott has commented: "Anybody can be anybody in rock 'n' roll. It allows people to exist within and live out their fantasies. I mean I certainly do." "Warrior" ... "Johnny the Fox meets Jimmy the Weed" ... "Jailbreak" ... "The Boys are Back in Town."

The material here is drawn from the last four albums, plus a couple of new songs and Bob Seger's "Rosalie" (performed with skullcrushing force.) Sides One to Three are superb but unfortunately Side Four lapses through weak compositions, crowd cajoling and overextended solos. However a storming version of "The Rocker" returns the concert to its earlier, exhilarating heights to close the album.

Now that Parker has graced our shores, Thin Lizzy, (along with Bruce Springsteen,) would be the band I'd most like to see perform here. Until then *Live and Dangerous* is the next best thing.

Peter Thomson



## Citizen Band Mandrill

About a year ago, I reviewed the first Hello Sailor album and said then that I thought it was the most convincing rock and roll record that I had heard from a New Zealand studio. At almost the same time, Citizen Band began work on their first album. As they might have guessed, it takes a long time for the wheels of the local recording industry to grind, and it is only now that that project is about to see the light of day.

Superficially, there are similarities between Sailor and C.B. — especially in the mechanics of the two-guitar lineup — but where *Hello Sailor* had clearly definable origins in foreign musical forms like reggae, HM or funk, *Citizen Band* forges a much more consciously local style — in the footsteps, dare we say, of Split Enz.

The role of Split Enz in Citizen Band has to be faced squarely. There can be no doubt of the continuity of style in Michael Chunn's bass-playing and the singular effect that his combination with drummer Brent Eccles has on the rhythmic structure of many of the songs. The introduction to "The Ladder Song" or the inserted passages in "Counting the Regiments" refer directly to such Enz pieces as "Stranger Than Fiction" and "Lovey Dovey" (although it should be stressed that these touches left Split Enz along with Michael).

Other parallels are less easy to pin down — the willingness to deal with recognisably local themes (whether American tourists at Whaka, or a "Glide Time" office party) — the absence of any geographical tinges in the singing — the less-than-straightforward arranging. Still, they are no more than parallels and parallels with a band which hasn't really existed for two or three years at that.

What they have that sets them apart is an affection for and an understanding of the beat-group rhythms which underlie so much pop music of the last fifteen years. Their eclecticism, and use of different rhythms serve as a startling reminder of the grip that American music has on the bulk of New Zealand musicians. Citizen Band use the melodic and rhythmic vocabulary of Ray Davies or the Beatles rather than Lou Reed or the Commodores. Somehow, perhaps simply because of that novelty, they are able to cut themselves loose from the stereotyping which afflicts the music scene here. Paradoxically, they thus become much more New Zealand performers than their peers. They don't ape the "real thing" — they just take what they want.

All this is not meant to imply that *Citizen Band* is a compendium of styles borrowed but not assimilated. The material ranges from the beat-pop of "Out In The World" to the grand balladry of "Julia" and the Light Metal riffing of "Tex Goes To The Tinema," but there are strong unifying elements in the lead vocals by Geoffrey Chunn (who wrote or co-wrote all but one of the songs) and the consistent guitar-based sound, which relies heavily on the melodic sense of Greg Clarke.

The songs themselves — even the punk pastiche, "Dig That Tex" — all possess extremely strong melodies and a hatful of telling lines which keep popping out at you. The only quibble that might be raised about the writing is the extreme brevity of the words in a couple of the songs. "Out In The World", the most obvious example, has only four lines. Aside from that, though, the longer, sly pieces like "Office Come Alive" and "Ladder Song" offer lyrics which repay lengthy deciphering.

Aside from the fact that this is the first time many of those words have been audible, repeated listening to the album confirms it as a good indication of Citizen Band on stage — the willingness to keep most of the songs short (although "Tex Goes To The Tinema" sins here) and a refusal to resort to more than a sprinkling of outside help, mean that the set is always firmly based in their live sound. The principal added attractions are Warren Sly, co-writer of a couple of the

songs, and keyboard player, and Rob Gillies who contributes sax and trumpet to two songs. Their role as performers is strictly subordinated to what emerges as a distinctive CB sound.

But, however much one makes a case for *Citizen Band* not being comparable with its local predecessors or competitors, it is inevitable that such comparisons are going to be made. As far as my reference to *Hello Sailor* is concerned, I think it's most accurate to say that the difference is one of emphasis. *Sailor* may have been the most convincing New Zealand rock and roll album I'd heard, *Citizen Band* is the most convincing New Zealand rock and roll album yet.

Francis Stark

## The Jam This Is The Modern World Polydor

The Jam's debut album *In the City*, despite its clear debt to early Who, was one of last year's highlights as it proved that Paul Weller was one of the new whiz-kids with an acute awareness of the "phoney" in society and the ability to smack these messages through with powerful driving melodies.

Although *Modern World* doesn't reach the same heights, it's still a neat attempt by Weller to streamline his songwriting into more well-defined themes. His songs all deal with contemporary situations or conditions and many of them are tinged with an almost working class cynicism, not unlike a lot of Ray Davies' recent songs. For example, in "In the Street, Today" he sings of "Murder on the terraces/fools in high places/Its all so sickening/and we're so satisfied."

"All Around the World" one of the three singles ripped from the album, is the Jam at their best-trimmed direct guitar chords from Weller, no superfluous guitar solos here mate. "London Girl", "Standards" and the angry "Here Comes the Weekend" display the same tight structure, but bassist Bruce Foxton's "London Traffic" and "Don't Tell Them You're Sane" are too ordinary. Foxton is improving as the Jam's current single "News of the World" (unavailable here) testifies but he hasn't Weller's perceptive abilities.

*Modern World* is a progressive step for Weller which largely pays off. Not bad for a geezer from Woking nudging the ripe old age of twenty-one.

George Kay

## The Flamin' Groovies Flamin' Groovies Now Philips

The Flamin' Groovies are stayers. Emerging in San Francisco in the mid-sixties, by '68 they were being booted off that city's stages for playing rock of the most basic and vital kind at a time when psychedelic meandering and spiritual posturing were the order of the day.

Since then they've hung on through various personnel changes, untold tours, numerous setbacks and a scattering of brilliant high points that seemed to give the Groovies enough charge to take on yet another year and another tour.

*Flamin' Groovies Now* is their first album on general release in N.Z. and, although not consistently A-grade, there's still plenty to enjoy. The producer, as on last year's great *Shake Some Action*, is Dave Edmunds. Cyril Jordan's souped-up guitar leads the Groovies through a number of mostly excellent originals, plus a classic or two from the Byrds and the Beatles, and a powerful version of the primal English rocker "Move It". The early Byrds sound is a touchstone for three or four of the tracks, but these are not empty rehashes or nostalgic indulgences, this music lives and breathes and rocks its arse off.

With "power pop" being the current phase it means that the Groovies are running shoulder to shoulder with a trend, but it's purely coincidental. They have always gone their own road, seldom compromising, and have paid the price with a prolonged obscurity. They may never be hugely popular but on *Flamin' Groovies Now*, as always, they ooze the spirit of rock 'n' roll.

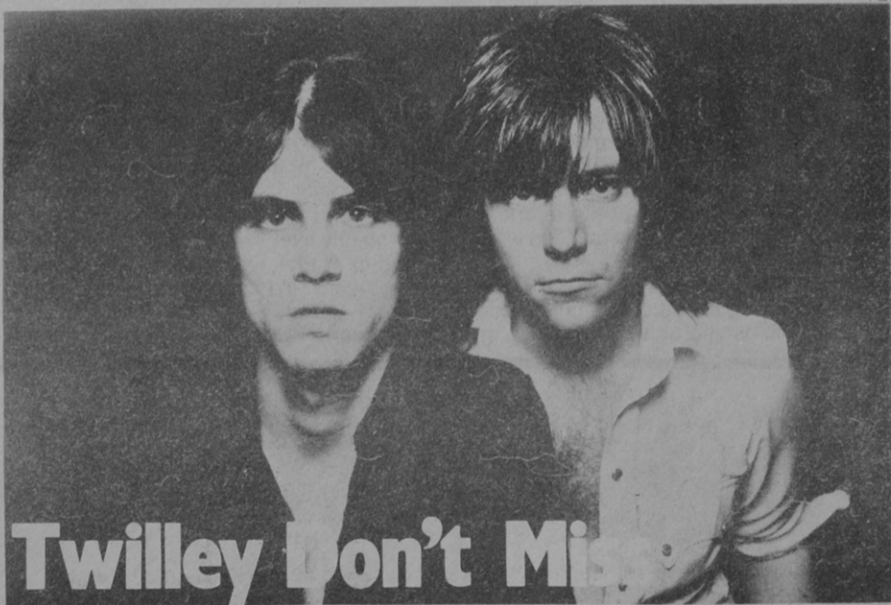
Terence Hogan.

## Diana Ross and the Supremes 20 Golden Greats Motown

If nothing else this album serves to prove what a highly-developed music production-line can do. So what if Diana Ross had a narrow emotional range and songwriters Holland-Dozier-Holland altered the tunes enough only to distinguish each single from its predecessor. A combination of just these factors produced a series of incandescent singles that, today, sound as fresh and vibrant as ever they did.

More than anything else Holland - Dozier - Holland perfected a sound — Diana's breathy vocals over a beat that became tougher as the years passed and culminated in 1966 in H-D-H's finest work — The Supreme's "You Keep Me Hangin' On" and the Four Tops "Reach Out, I'll Be There".

Thereafter they continued to mine the for-



## The Dwight Twilley Band Sincerely Twilley Don't Mind Shelter

Nobody asked me to name my favourite disco single this issue, but that's just as well. I don't have a favourite because, even in 1978, I still prefer pop to disco.

Over the past month I tried Cheap Trick's *In Colour* but only came away bemused, suspecting a too liberal mix of rock with pop. *Misfits* re-established my fondness for the Kinks; healthy survivors are rare in rock but they boost morale and even Clive Davis may be smiling. Later I turned to Dwight Twilley, a spirited newcomer with an unabashed love for pop.

The Dwight Twilley Band relies on the pairing of Twilley with Phil Seymour. Twilley writes the songs; both of them sing. Working together under the pseudonym of Oister (the band's original name), they produced most of their first album, *Sincerely*. Twilley played guitar and keyboards, Seymour played bass and drums. Robin Cable produced one track — "England" — at Trident Studios in London; most of the other songs were recorded at Leon Russell's Tulsa studios.

"I'm on Fire" went to number 16 in the U.S.

singles charts while Denny Cordell and Leon Russell were suing each other at Shelter. *Sincerely* was held in litigation for a year and eventually released in the States in mid-1976. *Twilley Don't Mind* followed a year later.

It's taken longer than it should have for these albums to be made available here but, as they say, the wait was worth it. Twilley combines English and American influences (notably the Beatles, the Everly Brothers and Elvis Presley) in songs that embrace pop culture. As he told *Rolling Stone* in November last year, "Pop is my favourite word".

Twilley knows the formula to the two minutes-plus hit. He writes pop for car radio, songs like "Looking For the Magic", "Baby Let's Cruise", "Just Like the Sun" and "Trying to Find My Baby". The albums mix a.m. and p.m. driving songs; pop songs about true love and drive-ins, freeways and takeaways, girls and TV:

Thursday night, got my baby at home  
Turn the lights down low and the TV on...

*Sincerely* is marginally the better album, but I also like the first side of *Twilley Don't Mind* a lot too. And "pop" is one of my favourite words.

Jeremy Templar