



# Records

## The Style Council Cafe Bleu

*Polydor*  
So now Weller's trying to take us from the streets to the cafes, the scenes of intellectual cool in pre-revolutionary France (read the reverse sleeve's Marat) and now the ideal imagery for a democratic Style Council determined on maturity and sophistication.

The Jam increasingly saw progression in terms of soulful subtleties. 'Beat Surrender', the last blow, was really a Style Council song and that was no put down considering the classiness of 'Speak Like A Child', 'Long Hot Summer' and even the new cabaret of 'My Ever Changing Moods'.

But as an indication as to the drift of *Cafe Bleu*, the Style Council singles are misleading. Weller and Talbot have focused on feel rather than song content

with the result that the album exudes a mood of soulful submission rather than subversion.

Side One is stylistic flow, a balance of three songs and four instrumentals that use a cocktail charm but you're left holding the ice-cubes wondering what the hell happened to the real stuff. The lemonade arrives in the form of 'The Whole Point Of No Return', 'Blue Cafe' and a slowed-down 'My Ever Changing Moods'.

The second side is designed to be up-time and that's meant to be borne out by the routine political rap-trap of 'A Gospel', the groove and holler of 'Strength of Your Nature' and yet another song sung blue 'You're The Best Thing'. Only a reworked 'Headstart For Happiness' and Talbot's great Booker T. keyboard flurry, 'Council Meetin'' emerge credible.

A Weller apologist could argue that he's adopted Easy Listening as a cover for his dissidence. But that won't wear. His fanciful Capuccino Kid is an alter-ego that shows itself to be glad of the freedom from the responsibilities of the Jam. And so *Cafe Bleu* is an indulgence in style, a reaction against expectations and past restrictions and it succeeds in destroying his links with the past. But as an album of independent worth, *Cafe Bleu* has to rank as

one of the misguided and disappointing of the year.  
George Kay

## The Mockers Swear It's True

*Reaction*  
If the songwriting team of Gary Curtis and Andrew Fagan had grown up overseas they would probably be quite well off by now. And the Mockers, the band for which Fagan is the singer, would be performing and recording their songs for a much wider audience.

However, with exceptions, the wheel of fortune turns rather slowly here and all the Mockers have to their credit is the finest collection of singles yet released by a local band. Despite their longevity and impressive array of songs they seemed destined to remain in the little league. But after listening to this album it's fair to say everything's about to change. In years to come this record could become known as "the Mockers story."

The first thing that ever impressed me about the Mockers was a moody piece entitled 'Good Old Days', their first single. Well, that's been wisely recalled, sounding like it was written last week. In fact, all of the five singles (six if you count 'After the Rain')

sound remarkably fresh here. From the giddy heights scaled by 'Woke Up Today' through to a rather wonderful version of 'Alvison Park', they all have a timeless quality about them.

The other songs are a lot more than just padding around the singles. 'Something's Changed', 'Another Day' and 'George Henry Swan' would do justice to any radio station with an imaginative programme director. (Yeah, fat chance and everything like that...)

For a while some of the lyrics seemed a little ordinary but then I remembered that some of the most memorable pop songs have had simple lyrics — 'She Loves You', etc. Andrew Fagan is also intelligent enough to know what he is doing — it's just a shame it didn't happen sooner for him.

This is an album to be proud of. Congratulations Mockers, your reward awaits you.  
Alister Cain

## Naked Spots Dance Falling

*Jayrem*  
I can recall the first time I saw Naked Spots Dance. It was at the Gladstone in Christchurch. Everyone in the small audience was trying desperately hard to like this band but it wasn't easy. Far too

much puddling about with ideas — more intent than delivery. They were better the next time I saw them.

Switch to 3am radio; 'Governed By You' sounding mesmerising at that hour in the dark. It's source, the second EP, *New*, was NSD really getting it right. Beautiful.

*New* went off in a number of directions — *Falling* has gathered the leads together. It is cohesion. All the songs are linked by feel — witness 'About But Not Our', smoother and quieter than the way it appeared on the *Certain Ways* EP.

Kate Walker's bass is the propulsion behind these songs — pleasing throughout, it is simply delightful on the title track. Stephen Norris plays no more guitar than the music demands — at times (Jack and Box) borrowed movie soundtracks have assumed the guitar's role in the song. Neat. Frances Walsh's voice sounds best layered on itself or combined with Walker's. The only real failure is the embarrassing rap attempt in 'Through the Nights'.

But all is not completely well. If the production is inspired on 'Cabaret', overall it has tended to create a feeling of distance — and occasionally, outright flatness. Cohesion occasionally veers close to homogeneity. This is a confident, talented closing statement, a record I'll play again. But it isn't startling and maybe it could have been.  
Russell Brown

## Cyndi Lauper She's So Unusual

*Portrait*  
Despite radio's efforts to thrash it to death, 'Girls Just Want To Have Fun' will survive. Triumph in fact. It's stuttering organ, under-water percussion solo and, of course, Cyndi's chirruping all provide the bouncing melody with the resilience of a classic. And while 'Girls' is certainly the best cut on the album, an audacious remake of Prince's 'When You Were Mine' comes a close second. (In attempting the original's climax of breathless vocal falsetto, Cyndi hits a squeal that teeters on the deranged.) Further delights include 'She Bop', a joyous ode to onanism, and the sprightly, ska-beat of 'Witness' whereon Cyndi sings the title like 'I don't wanna be a wet

nurse'. Time After Time, surprisingly enough, is a successful slice of current American mainstream.

Opinions on some of the remaining tracks (ie, most of Side Two) depend very much on one's personal taste for tack. The title number is just too self-conscious, but on several others the band seems really serious in its klutzy arrangements and sleek production. Listen at your own risk.

Overall then, it's unclear how sure Cyndi and co really are about what they're after. But even if the pop perfection of 'Girls...' was partially the result of luck, that won't stop the conga lines forming when the working day is done.  
Peter Thomson

## Howard Jones Human's Lib

*WEA*  
Lately, I have fervently wished I could take every synthesiser ever made and throw them into a very deep part of the ocean. At least this might encourage a great many musicians to rethink their approach and come up with something vaguely original.

Take Howard Jones. A reasonably talented and personable type from Buckinghamshire, who switched from piano to synth and now seems quite overwhelmed by the technology. His problem is that he tries to imitate a multitude of influences in the synth-pop field, and finishes up with a pale hybrid.

Thus 'Conditioning' sounds like Thomas Dolby, 'What Is Love' like the Thompson Twins, 'Pearl in the Hole' like Duran Duran, 'Hide And Seek' like mid-period Genesis, and three other tracks like Ultravox.

Jones has one of those anonymous voices — the sort used by Alan Parsons. His lyrics are largely trite observations on lack of individual identity (sung from the heart) or what a nice world it would be with more peace and tolerance. So what else is new?

Jones gives his best performance, and makes a pertinent observation on his own dilemma, with 'Hunt The Self', an assertive disco number with some rather proficient drumming. The lyrics speak of the need for change and innovation, something I can only heartily endorse.  
Duncan Campbell

# Nick Heyward



## North of a Miracle

When it started to Begin. Blue Hat for a Blue Day.  
Two make it True. On a Sunday. Club Boy at Sea.  
Whistle Down the Wind. Take that Situation.  
The Kick of Love. Atlantic Monday.  
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