

Records

Sade Diamond Life Epic

Beautiful is not an adjective that lies comfortably in a 'serious' rock critic's lexicon. But it might appropriately be used to describe Sade's debut album.

Sade is a smooth operator of half-Nigerian parentage. Around the beginning of 1983 she formed a productive liaison with saxophonist/guitarist Stuart Matthewman. Three others completed the Sade unit. On the album various extras collaborate.

There's no denying *Diamond Life* is strong. It positively exudes confidence and Sade guides every move in seductive fashion. Her voice is expressive but not

classic. The chemistry works because the music creates a suitably mellow backdrop against which the vocals ebb and flow. This is sophisticated jazz with a quiet soul.

The champagne taste of 'Your Love Is King' and the evocative down-and-out tale of 'Sally' have most appeal yet the album is generally consistent.

Sade was made from neon lights. Shake the dust off the old zoot suit, grab some menthol cigs and Veuve Cliquot. The diamond life.

David Taylor

Public Image Ltd This Is What You Want, This Is What You Get Virgin

Nostalgic sentimentality could lead me to say this is like discovering Christ was a member of the Manson family, but there was ample warning of PIL's questionable direction last year with the dreary 'Not A Love Song' single.

Naturally John Lydon continues to play his little 'is he or isn't he?' games, but the thing

is nobody really cares any more. So this rock 'veteran' is left looking slightly pathetic, although definitely funky.

Death Disco FULL mix ... with bitters added, of course.

Shayne Carter

Tom Verlaine Cover Virgin

Tall, wraith-like guitarists with quavering voices and artistic bents don't quite fit into the identikit picture of the ideal 80s recording artist. But obviously that's to Verlaine's credit. Ever since he guided Television through the influential *Marquee Moon* he's been plugging away in his own particular world over the course of another four albums. Consequently, as a commercial prospect he's never been a great investment, but, as a guitarist/songwriter, his fourth solo album, *Cover* shows he's still got more ideas than the current crop of assembly line success stories.

He hasn't made any radical changes in his past style. His guitar technique — that knack of peeling off sensuous little melodic



Tom Verlaine

lines, and his song textures — the use of space to create uncluttered tension and beauty, still remain his leading trademarks. 'Dissolve/Reveal' is Verlaine at his best — melodic lift-off coupled with controlled atmosphere. 'O Foolish Heart' and 'Swim' brush with sentimentality but he gets away with it and 'Five Miles of You' and 'Travelling' provide a tougher, more abrasive contrast, a sound nicked by bands from Magazine to the Banshees.

Verlaine just keeps producing damned good albums and yet he is consistently ignored by the masses. It's about time he

received his due and *Cover* is as good a place to start as any.

George Kay

Weather Report Domino Theory CBS

Their thirteenth album, but let's not get superstitious. Weather Report have yet to make anything like a bad album; it's simply that some are better than others. Furthermore, as there's no other outfit quite like them, all comparisons and evaluations are inevitably self-reflexive.

That said, *Domino Theory* does not strike me as one of their best, especially following on from last year's wonderful *Procession*. The instrumental line-up's unchanged so the same rhythmic drive is present. The main difference, I think, is that whereas last time each track seemed exciting (or at least playful) in both conception and performance, here the main enjoyment is to be gained from hearing master instrumentalists having a blow.

'The Peasant' best impresses as a composition. Its sinuous melody, spare arrangement and carefully controlled dynamic are entrancing. Elsewhere, as on 'Domino Theory' and 'Blue Sound Note 3', the lines become distended with the result that, in the latter at least, the piece loses any unifying character. The title track begins at an exciting pace but is prolonged into mere jamming (albeit of stellar quality).

Shorter's only credits belong to a couple of space-age funk workouts that, while enjoyable, never

scale the heights he has hitherto achieved. Once again, however, it is Zawinul who dominates the album, whether monopolising the instrumental limelight, writing or co-writing five of the seven tracks, or producing. The sole vocal track (performed by Carl Anderson) neatly summarises Zawinul's ongoing quest with the group:

"Can it be done? Is there one melody that's never been played? How does it sound? Can it be found, that new sound that's never been in the air?"

Peter Thomson

Strikemaster, Tokyo, Knightshade Three Points Of Metal Jayrem

Earnest Kiwi metal band make their first bid for stardom via this live album, the soundtrack for the recent TV special. Strikemaster are regarded as the mainmen here, although for enthusiasm and technical proficiency there's little to choose between the three: all boast hot guitarists and solid rhythm sections.

Ian 'Cowpoke' Morris has been let loose at the controls and produced the best sound yet heard on a local metal album (not that there's a lot of them!). If there's a criticism it's in the predictability of the material: original but unoriginal, to coin a phrase. A landmark album for homegrown headbangers nonetheless, and worthy of attention if metal's your bag.

Chris Caddick

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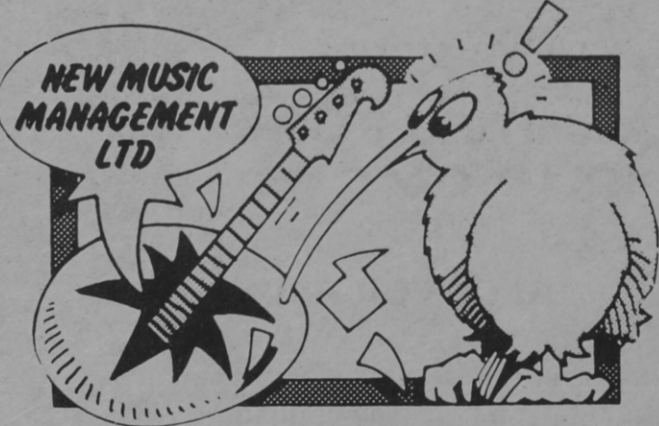
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