

# Records

## General Public All the Rage

General Public are a group with a big past to live up to and a major dilemma to overcome. Not only do they have to build on the reputation established by the Beat, but they have to find their own identity. *All the Rage* fails on both counts.

Dave Wakeling and Ranking Roger are one of Britain's most distinctive vocal duos, so a radical change in sound is needed if General Public aren't simply to be thought of as a somewhat inferior Beat Mk 2. Most of the songs here just don't make the grade. They're aimless and General Public can't afford that at this early stage.

The whole of side one just drifts through without arousing interest. 'Hot You're Cool' is just a vocal refrain and old Saxa is recalled to dress it up a bit. 'Tenderness', the next single, sounds only half-formed and 'Anxious' is minor-key reggae with the accent on "minor". 'Never You Done That' has emotion-charged lyrics let down by another slight song, while 'Burning Bright' is almost heavy metal with the odd clever word couplet. The debut single 'General Public' didn't do much on its own but it sounds impressive in such bland company.

The two redeemers work because they sound like, well, the Beat. 'As A Matter of Fact' is a sprightly shuffle with some of the old elan and some sharp rapping, while Roger's toasting lifts up 'Are You Leading Me On?'.

Mick Jones guests on guitar but is no more than a namecheck. General Public still lack a sense of direction and will find it hard to survive unless they really pull finger next time.

**Duncan Campbell**

## Heaven 17 How Men Are

Time passes, people change, rock 'n' roll moves on, some bands move with it, some bands don't. Some bands equate progression with time and money spent in the studio, input equals output. People should respect that, they say.

Respect for Heaven 17 is running out, they have hit a wall, a barrier between writing out of need, conviction, the desire to hammer home a point of view and that of creating something from the convenience of comfort, equating money spent with heart and soul given, effort replacing spontaneity.

That's *How Men Are*, six months in the studio, no live gigs, no wonder the album is lifeless. And yet this band had the world at its feet; 'Fascist Groove Thang' was the perfect song for an imperfect time. *Penthouse and Pavement* collided business chic with white intelligentsia soul, snobbery with violence. In the face of growing personal affluence the band tried to retain a conscience that became *The Luxury Gap*, a brave second side, but the hatchets were out.

And *How Men Are* is as bad as any fears. From the metaphorical images of fire that barely smoulder on the nuclear warnings of 'Five Minutes to Midnight' to the

fires of love on 'Sunset Now', 'The Fuse' and the dreadful 'Flame-down', the album barely wavers from the dynamics of tedium. Only the flickering guitar intro of 'And That's No Lie' attempts to break the numbness.

Advice to Ware, Marsh and co: tour, go bankrupt, join the miners' strike, get out of the dead zone of *How Men Are*. If you don't, Heaven 17 will never save the world.

**George Kay**

## Branford Marsalis Scenes In the City

This promising debut by the sax player who has stood in his illustrious younger brother's shadow was actually recorded in April of last year. The liner notes start on the back, then read "continued inside". There is no inside. Another cheapo package and another spit in the face for jazz fans, who are getting tired, like all those whose tastes run slightly outside the mainstream, of being treated with contempt. Gripe Of the Month finished, for all the good it will do.

Branford Marsalis is an unquestionably gifted youth, already displaying a burgeoning composing talent, although his roots are still fairly plain on this album.

Thus 'No Backstage Pass' makes more than oblique references to Sonny Rollins, with its sparse but fluid approach, while 'Solstice' closely resembles John Coltrane's 'Spiritual'. He shows greater originality with a breathtaking soprano outing entitled 'Waiting For Tain'.

As an interpreter, Marsalis impresses more, in the tenderness of pianist Kenny Kirkland's 'Parable' and the intriguing title track, a Charles Mingus work. It's a monologue of broken dreams and tenement blues, smoky clubs and bustling streets, with Wendell Pierce's laconic narration linking snatches of tunes. Close your eyes and the picture springs out of the stereo.

Branford Marsalis is still emerging on this work and it would be interesting to hear what he's doing now, more than 18 months after the recording of *Scenes In the City*.

**Duncan Campbell**

## Stevie Wonder The Woman In Red

Reactions to Stevie Wonder are becoming increasingly polarised. First 'Ebony and Ivory', his 1982 liaison with Schmaltz McCartney, and now 'I Just Called To Say I Love You' may top the chart for weeks on end but they nauseate equally large numbers of listeners. Of the

latter group it seems increasingly few remain willing to tolerate Wonder wallowing in his slop, even when the recompense is his fine upbeat and funk workouts. Okay, so 'Masterblaster' was four years back, but how many people discovered his magnificent 'What's That You're Doing' on McCartney's *Tug Of War* album? And even the *Musiquarium* package contained a new nugget in 'Do I Do'.

So what of the present? Again the extremes are present. Perhaps the best antidote to that goopy single is side two's opener 'Love Light In Flight', a catchy funkout that alone is enough to maintain this reviewer's faith. The other two upbeat numbers don't succeed to the same extent: 'Don't Drive Drunk' suffers from Wonder's usual cliched didacticism and the album's title track is musically gimmicky.

Three mid-tempo tracks are lifted by lovely vocals from Dionne Warwick (and don't we miss her cool elegance from TV's *Solid Gold* even more now that dick Dees is mincing all over it). 'It's You', one of her two duets with Wonder, is the album's other very strong track. Add on a typically film score-type instrumental and that's your total. Eight tracks, predominantly MOR, may not sound great value at today's prices, but for those believers enough evidence of Stevie Wonder's profligate genius is captured there in the grooves.

**Peter Thomson**

## Diana Ross Swept Away

Ms Ross returns with perhaps her best work since the Chic-produced 'Upside Down'. The title track here is a killer dance machine, kicked into gear by a great production from Arthur Baker and Daryl Hall. Other dance-orientated tracks are the calypso-tinted 'Touch By Touch' and a cover of Fontella Bass's 'Rescue Me', both great club tracks.

After a few listenings however, it's the ballad 'Missing You' that emerges as the standout track. Produced by Lionel Richie and dedicated to Marvin Gaye, it represents the numbing loss to black music that was Gaye's death this year.

Also worth listening to is Bernard Edwards' production on 'Telephone'; clean and sparse, acting as a good counterpoint to the production excesses of some tracks. Also included is that great schlock duet with Mr Iglesias, 'All Of You'. That should make you happy.

**Kerry Buchanan**



General Public

# GH-STBUSTERS OUT NOW!



## THE ALBUM

Featuring RAY PARKER

THOMPSON TWINS LAURA BRANIGAN  
THE BUS BOYS & MORE



## CASH FOR JAZZ

REAL GROOVY RECORDS

492 QUEEN ST PH 775-870

Open 'til 9pm Thurs, Fri, 'til 3 pm Sat

MARTIN  
MARQUIS

M1100 LIGHT GAUGE

MARTIN  
MARQUIS  
ACOUSTIC  
BRONZE

LIGHT GAUGE  
BRONZE WOUND  
ACOUSTIC GUITAR STRINGS  
ONE SET M1100 (6)

MADE IN U.S.A.

## A New Focus on an Old Favorite

Martin Marquis, an old favorite among acoustic guitarists, has focused on a richer looking package to blend with an already rich and brilliant sound.

Each new package design centers on the gold of Marquis Acoustic Bronze strings or the silver of Marquis Folk and Classic. Look for Martin Marquis at your favorite music store.

Martin Marquis Strings — Unmistakably committed to quality guitar strings.

N.Z. Distributor:  
LYNN McALLISTER MUSIC LTD  
PO Box 39-143, Auckland West  
Phone (09) 34-936

# FLYING N UN

recent(ish) releases — (still #45)  
• The Jumbies — Stuff of Dreams / the Chills — Pink Frost —  
Double Happys — Double 'B' Side ... all 7" and \$3.50  
• The Veclaires — 10 o'clock in the Afternoon (#49) / the Bats — By Night (#50)  
• The Rip — A Timeless Piece ... all 12" @ \$6.99 (except the Rip @ \$5.99)  
• The Gordons II — L.P. @ \$11.99

out now (or very soon)

TALL DWARFS!!  
Slugbucket / Hairybreathmonster  
12" E.P. @ \$6.99

THE EXPENDABLES!!  
the Flower / the Man with no Desire  
7" Single @ \$3.50

THE CHILLS!!  
Dole drums / the Hidden Bay  
7" single @ \$3.50

PHANTOM FORTH!!  
THE EE. PP. — 12" E.P. @ \$6.99