

Records

Miles Davis You're Under Arrest CBS

Miles Davis has long enjoyed playing pretty pop songs. Thirty years ago these included hits from Broadway shows like *Oklahoma* and *Guys and Dolls*. This year they are borrowed from megastars Michael Jackson and Cyndi Lauper. The essential difference however is that now the songs are no longer used as departure points for great jazz improvising. 'Human Nature' and 'Time After Time' are played absolutely straight with muted horn. As such they are very pleasant and would not sound amiss on radio's National Programme. But let's not get snide. *You're Under Arrest* is a remarkably smart album and the aforementioned two songs are only one ingredient in a carefully sequenced set.

Side One opens with some cooking electronic funk from the rhythm section, over which we get a siren, screeching tyres and Miles barking police orders as he makes an arrest. He later gets in a few nice phrases on trumpet. Then, after the Michael Jackson number, follow two tracks of mid-tempo jazz-funk. While these are both catchy and superbly played, neither goes beyond a hundred similar pieces by other performers in the genre.

But flip the record over. There, bracketing the Cyndi Lauper remake, are two slices of steaming funk so hot they burn any previous doubts away. Never mind that Miles is not the principal soloist — 'Katia' welcomes back John McLaughlin; the title track features Bob Berg's tenor sax — this stuff is terrific.

Overall then, *You're Under Arrest* is consistent in its pop and funk orientation and as such is probably the most immediately accessible album Davis has made since his return to recording in 1981. It also contains music that ranges from the simple and pretty to the complex and awesome. And while it may not please all of Miles' long-term audience it nonetheless deserves considerable commercial success.

Peter Thomson



Miles Davis

The Doors Classics Elektra

"We want JIIIIM!" "Ladies and gentlemen, from Los Angeles, California ... THE DOORS!" High-pitched screams of 2000 teenage girls intermingled with intro to 'Roadhouse Blues'. Yeah ... awright, awright, let it roll Jim!

So what if he died 14 years ago. The spirit lives on through the weaving mysticism of 'Strange Days' and 'The Crystal Ship', through the rocking 'Five To One' and through Morrison's poem 'Texas Radio and the Big Beat', here in extended form as 'The Wasp' from *LA Woman*. The Doors' sound is still influencing quality music, 20 years after it was created — 'Waiting For the Sun' could easily be the Triffids (perhaps too influential in some cases then ...). And best of all, the Doors' sound is still acceptably great, so you

don't have to buy *Classics* just for a nostalgia trip. Morrison's screaming erotic lyricism leaves the miserable young poets of modern pop for dead. "Five to one, one in five / No one here gets out alive," says Jim. This is where the psychodrama is.

The big Doors hits are on *Greatest Hits*, these are mere rock "classics" and if you haven't got them, every one is worth having ... awright, awright, so he just rocks on and on to the tune of the cash register's compilation albums, but ... let it roll Jim, let it roll!

Paul McKessar

Bill Withers Watching You Watching Me CBS

Let's get real serious and begin to think about such things as love, sex and the human condition. Bill Withers' songs are always about



Jim Morrison, The Doors.

such things, from the bleakness of 'Ain't No Sunshine' and 'Use Me' to the glorious themes of love and reconciliation on his current album.

It's not often you find a perfect album (maybe James Brown *Live At the Apollo* and Elvis's *Sun Sessions*) but this one comes close. It's like drinking a nice cabernet sauvignon; warm, rich and mature.

The album opens with the celebratory 'Oh Yeah!', a song about reassurance of life's delights, moving with a nice funk feel that continues throughout the album. The term "introspective funk" is the most appropriate description for the music; the themes about about looking and searching and finding the self, the musical motifs are circular and repetitive, the form and function become one.

All this doesn't mean that Bill doesn't have any fun — songs like

'You Try To Find A Love' and 'We Could Be Sweet Lovers' are good examples of sexual soul. Whatever emotion you feel, you'll find it on this album. My favourite and most closely listened to album all year.

Kerry Buchanan

The Cult Dreamtime Beggars Banquet

This record's only redeeming feature is that you can have a real good laugh at its misguided intentions. Supposed "gothic punk" that just sounds like a poor attempt at heavy metal by the god-awful Cult. It's no dream. Grating nightmare, maybe ...

Some of the drumming is quite reasonable and intricate, but the rest of the instrumentation is a mush, over which Cult Chief Hiawatha Astbury sings shit about red indians. Of the 10 songs titles, six

refer directly to red indians and/or their habit/mythology — 'Horse Nation', 'Spiritwalker', 'Bad Medicine Waltz' and more. Apparently Running-Mascara Astbury feels at one with the Indians, even though he comes from the North of England not North America. But there are probably lots of good red indian stories on *Rainbow* or *Blue Peter*. The Cultpeople are supposed to look like red indians on the back of the sleeve. Methinks they look ridiculous and ready for scalping. And the sooner, the better.

Paul McKessar

Steve Arrington Dancin' In the Key of Life Atlantic

Steve Arrington first cropped up in the days when the dancefloors paraded rugby league jerseys, jeans with the cuffs turned up three inches and white socks worn with Treks. Only Steve and the white socks remain. And the people who keep constantly reminding you of those days.

Then he was in *Slave*, a group that got famous with lyrics like 'They call me Drac / Yeah how come babe? / Don't worry, I ain't gonna bite you, I just want you to hang on!'. The guys in the band would crank up their guitars to ear-splitting volumes and go slug, slug, slug on the bass.

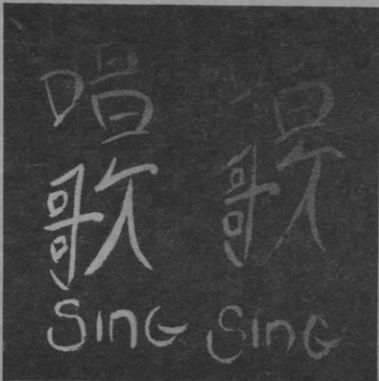
Now, eight years later, Steve is older and nicer. The album cover features Steve as a jumping monk, habit donned and 30,000 feet in the air, with only the clouds as company. He's happy because he has a hit in the US and UK clubs with 'Feel So Real'. It's a gem, and the album, his third solo, is consistently strong on beat, with a gospel bent and talents like George (Brothers) Johnson, Paulinho Da Costa and Freddie Hubbard on the case.

It's no one-hit wonder either. The title track is equally as good as 'Feel So Real', but the album isn't strong on lyrics and a track like 'She Just Don't Know', which sounds great, falls down in being a rather mixed up rant about a girl Steve loves who wants money more than she wants Steve. Tough luck. Steve probably has enough money to impress the girl plenty now, but unless he plans to stay up there in the clouds he might be wiser to invest in some new clothes or even a parachute.

Peter Grace

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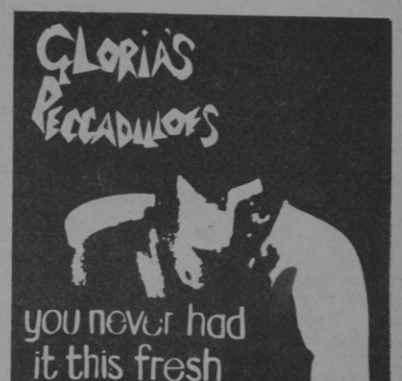
SING SING
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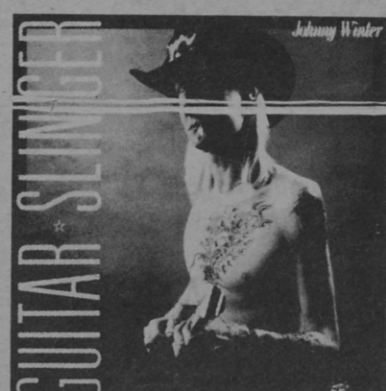
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WHY WE'LL BE IN
BEIJING, CHINA.

