

Records

ICE-T Power (Sire)

Remember in the 70s going to the triple features at Kingsland to catch the latest in Blaxploitation, where the pimp reigned as the major role model, solid gold coke spoons nestled in hairy chests, and at least one white guy lost his sexual organs per film.

The closest you're going to get to that sort of cultural heat is the new Ice-T. It's an outstanding achievement. Like those movies it puts black rage on a populist level. Unlike Public Enemy and KRS One it doesn't have an overt political sermon, but like Schoolly D's records it just oozes blackness as a farce against white middle class life. They're albums about black urban Americans living their lives in both real and fantasy terms.

First off, it's real funny, like the intro-outro bits with the two homeboys fighting over Ice-T's tape, one getting shot and the other chills out and listens to the music before ringing the paramedics. It's got lots of sex, as in 'Let's Get Buck Naked And Fuck', a love song it ain't. It's got the social message in the anti-drugs of 'I'm Your Pusher' which cuts up Curtis Mayfield's 'Pusher Man' to great effect. In this one Ice-T promotes music as the real dope — "But in this base you don't need a pipe / just



Ice-T

a tempo to keep you hype." It's one of the standout tracks. Plenty of anti-gang stuff to keep the homeboys thinking, and beats and rhymes to keep you rockin'. We're talking super dope, ultra def, hardcore noise, wall to wall. Courtesy of Evil "E" and Afrika Islam. Whereas Eric B keeps the beat cool, Evil "E" heats it up — burn baby burn!

The last track is the killer, about a pimp's last day surrounded by his cars, drugs, women and other playmates. He catches a bullet and it's the ultimate chill out. Taking its title from Eldridge Cleaver, it's music from a 70s black

cocktail party and talking like one of the Last Poets (great 70s rappers and social critics), this is Ice-T's finest moment.

Gets my vote for cover of the year with Ice-T and Evil wearing Miami leisure suits and Ice's girlfriend wearing nothing much at all. Lots of gold, with Ice in a medallion shaped like Africa with a hunk of gold in it. The back cover has a trio with two pump actions and an Uzi. So suckers beware, when Ice T wants to party hard, you party hard.

A record that's funny, violent, sexy and hard. Everything a hip-hop record should be. Stunning.
KERRY BUCHANAN

GUNS'N'ROSES Lies (Geffen)

Axl, Slash, Duff, Izzy and Steven have been touring so hard in the 18 months since the release of *Appetite For Destruction* that there's been no time to fit in the making of a whole new album. What they have managed to do in that time though is to rebelliously re-arrange the face and balls of 80s rock leaving a trail of sex, drugs, violence, controversy all the way down the line. Half of the Guns'n'Roses release for '88 is a selection of acoustic material recorded this year, while side one is in fact four songs which were originally issued as an EP, *Live **** Like A Suicide*.

Kicking things off is 'Reckless Life' containing all the bold, aggressive

sound of the band that we have all since come to love or hate so much. 'Nice Boys (Don't Play Rock'n'Roll)' and here's 100% proof as they crash and burn through 'Move To The City' and 'Mama Kin'. The Gunners may have borrowed from the Aerosmith / Hanoi Rocks songbooks but the sincerity of the music and lyrics relate directly to the bands' own feelings and lifestyle.

Side two shows a stark contrast to the more familiar grinding guitars and rhythm but should come as a pleasant surprise. 'Patience' doesn't sound a bit like Axel singing lead vocals and well, it isn't! Is it Izzy?

The next one 'I Used To Love Her (But I Had To Kill Her)' is a jolly little tale put to good ol' down home strumming — love it to death. 'You're (Fuckin') Crazy' is a cruisy half-tempo version played the way it was originally written and 'One In A Million' has beautiful playing.

'Lies' is Guns'n'Roses captured in their raw, honest form, which of course is the only way they play. That Big Top is gonna blow when this band hit the stage at Mt Smart on the 19th!
GEOFF DUNN

BAILTER SPACE Tanker (Flying Nun)

This album sees Baiter Space in leaner three-piece lineup form, making maximum use of the studio environment. The Baiter Space core of drummer Hamish Kilgour and guitarist

Alister Parker have been joined by Parker's ex-Gordons colleague John Halvorsen; so it's the Gordons meet the Clean head-on, right? Basically, yeah, they're fooling with a similar sort of territory, but the whole thing's a mite more serious than that.

Tanker's fragmented song approach means that it's more of an automated scrapyard to (last year's debut EP) *Nelsh's* human factory noise. Industry seems closer to the surface as songs skate all over the rhythm punch of Kilgour and Halvorsen aided by chants and mantra-like vocals. All very avant garage.

The overall mood, one straddling gorgeous pop in the form of 'One More Reason', furious dance numbers like the single 'Grader Spader' and the bleak instrumental vision of 'Titan', is hard to pinpoint. The band, by way of song-titles, lyrics and instrumentation seem anxious to place it within an artistic context most closely related to Parker's avowed interest in humanity's relationship to industry (*BiFiM* interview last month).

It is easier, however, to take *Tanker* from its mightily impressive core of rhythm and pop, and take it from there. Cerebral massage in the end maybe, but to start with, I wanna be floored by the impact of *Tanker* landing. I am grateful to report that it works.
PAUL McKESSAR

FUNNY BUSINESS (RCA)

Willy De Wit has been missing from

the recording scene for some years. His self-imposed silence was a bitter response to the bootleg release of *Phantom of The Range*, the 1978 Paisley Park bluegrass sessions with Robbie Robertson. *Range* was a seminal, piercing work, harking back to his acoustic triumphs with Funny Business in their original psychedelic skiffle format, but looking forward to the lighter funk of, say, Rick Astley. Funny Business splintered. Meanwhile Peter Murphy and Dean Butler were found within metres of John Lennon's grave, carrying a spade; their consequent prison terms brought an abrupt end to hopes of a Funny Business reunion.

De Wit hired a four-track, a sand pit and the NY Philharmonic and began to lay down the songs that would form the basis for *Funny Business*. The gaolied Murphy and Butler began to fuse hip-hop with early Waylon Jennings samples. Ian Harcourt made a commercial for paint.

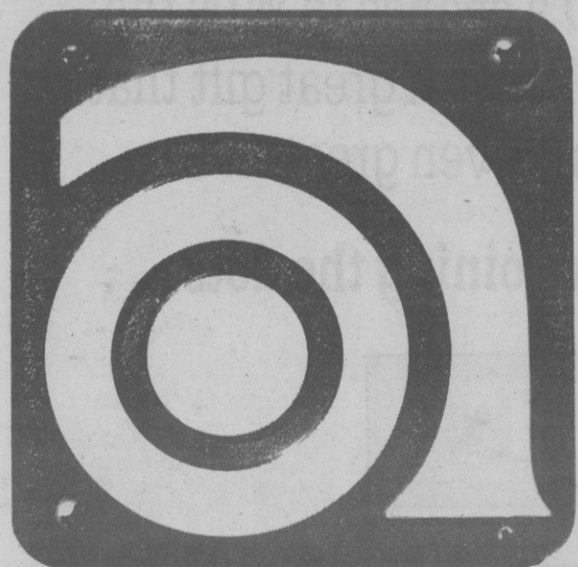
This album, their third to date, has some songs from the television show and some sketches too. The Campus Radio one goes for the polo-neck. The Russian Mormons is tres conceptual. The Unemployment one is too long. Some of it's laboured, some of it's very good. We can't tell you the punchlines but ... it's not bad at all. Put it up there with the Fred Dagg album. Now, about those 1987 acoustic Acid House sessions ...
CHAD TAYLOR

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CRATE

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