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Records

THE WARNERS Hit And Run (Onslaught)

Here it is at last, the album by the four frustrated who grew old with angst intact. And the questions everyone is asking: was it worth the wait? Can the menace of 'Man In Black' live be captured on vinyl? Well, the answer to the second question is a resounding "no," but then most records lose something in not being able to jump off a stage and throttle themselves with a luminous mike lead.

At their best the Warners are everything the Cramps should be but, with their quaint 50s guitar riffs, aren't; pure, high energy rock'n'roll for the 80s, no art but lots of trashy fun. Their live explosiveness can't be recorded, but on 'Speed Trap' and 'Dance Dance Disco' (the song TVNZ made two videos for), the band's full-on simplicity is more effective than could have expected. The ska-influenced 'Fight' is interesting, but the Warners are not at the forefront of musical innovation, and the highlights of the album are when they let Jon Baker's guitar thrash and Allen Stephenson flaunts his patent invention: buzzsaw vocals.

Warners fans can buy *Hit And Run* as a souvenir of all those sweaty nights at the Rising Sun. If three-chord rant and roll isn't your cup of bile, however, you'll be quite safe not to look up from your muesli.

MATTHEW HYLAND

TALK TALK Spirit Of Eden (EMI)

While all over the world music schools are filled with people trying to recreate Classical music and jazz note for note to the originals, groups like Talk Talk are writing the classical music of today. *Spirit Of Eden* simply cannot be judged in the normal "album" sort of way. "Album" suggests a group of separate entities placed together because of a common theme but *Spirit Of Eden* is like one long movement and the six names listed on the back of the cover are merely definitions of space and time.

Make up a list of all the things the last hundred or so songs you heard on your radio lacked; those are the things which this record is full of. Try dynamics (real dynamics, not just hitting a guitar a bit louder in the chorus), space, improvisation, musicianship (not how many notes or how fast, but which notes and how they are played) and an overwhelming sense of reaction. By

VARIOUS ARTISTS Yo! Part 1. A Dance Collection (WEA)

At last a compilation of 12" dance music from the massive WEA conglomerate. Their three major labels — Warner Brothers, Elektra and Atlantic have strong black music repertoire and WEA also distributes USA's hottest black pop label, MCA and tougher indies Cold Chillin' and Rhyme Syndicate.

Compilations are ideal for New Zealand where an album by a minor black artist will not sell enough to warrant importing or where a hot single by an artist is the only track worthy of release. A few years back imported UK dance music samplers were worthwhile purchases but now UK majors keep their best tracks and indie British dance labels often compile the dregs of retrogressive genres such as hi-energy or house and add tracks of in-house Brit-boy acid effects, sampled collages or crummy rap as filler and don't even master the muddle professionally.

To delve into black music, often a singles-genre, NZ fans have become private investigators and gamblers. London's *Blues & Soul* is their *Best Bets* and Bankcard is their best friend in the toll-call madness of importing expensive 12" dance records.

Yo! is a massive money-saver for the funk fan — Mark Phillips and Peter Ulrich have done a killer compilation of 12" dance mixes — you won't find a better one anywhere in the world.

There's *great rap* (a rarity) from Ice-T (based on Curtis Mayfield's 'Pusher Man'), Everlast and Big Daddy Kane. Dance tracks include the hit 'Don't Be Cruel' by Bobby Brown, 'Hustle' by Brits Funky Worm and tracks by Al B. Shure and Cousin Rachel.

My favourites are the two excellent tracks from MCA acts that rekindle the Gap Band groove — Mac Band with 'Stuck (Between a Rock and a Hard Place)' and Guy with 'Groove Me'. Sublime stuff.

Ardijah's 'Watchin' U' is a very worthy kiwi addition to the track list, although the Ulrich / Phillips remix is a bit crude compared to the stylish original.

As I thrash this tape I'm looking forward to *Yo! Part 2*. I'd suggest a February release and three or four more of *Yo!* before Xmas 1989. *Yo!* could become the black *Solid Gold*.
MURRAY CAMMICK

that I mean this music affects the listener, and it is quite shocking how much music nowadays doesn't affect the listener — in fact there are radio stations that specialise in "non affection".

To those that liked Talk Talk's earlier albums, especially *The Colour Of Spring*, I hope you are prepared to go the whole way this time. If you can, the reward is worthwhile. I should also recommend that you buy the CD rather than the record, purely because when it's quiet, it's really quiet, and when it's loud it's really loud, and, as you probably know, CDs are better able to reproduce this.

GREG JOHNSON

ROBYN HITCHCOCK AND THE EGYPTIANS A Globe Of Frogs (A&M)

Despite having a manifesto printed on the back exhorting us to loosen our spines and bury our televisions, this is a very commercial album and one of last year's best, finally available in New Zealand a year after its completion.

Hitchcock expresses his belief that weird is normal by undermining his finely crafted pop music with some of the most endearing post-Syd Barrett nonsense-poetry ever written. For instance in 'Sleeping With Your Devil Mask' he tells us that "it's all commotion there's no choice / my mother's middle name is Joyce / and once when she was very young / she saw a cellist being hung."

The production is a big-budget effort by the band and the engineers, but instead of burying the sound in synth chords and extraneous percussive noises they've allowed the clean guitar sounds of Hitchcock and R.E.M.'s Peter Buck to dominate. The vaguely psychedelic sound and melody of 'Chinese Bones' and the title track transport you into someone else's subconscious with a minimum of ado, rather than shoving you over that precipice in the way someone like Pere Ubu might.

You could just buy the album for the ten great pop songs it contains and try to ignore all the whimsy and talk of disembodied souls but by the time you've played it once chances are you'll be won over completely. What's more it's packed with lines custom-made for quoting out of context in reviews. To paraphrase 'Tropical Flesh Mandela' it will leave you feeling so good-natured, you could drool.
MATTHEW HYLAND

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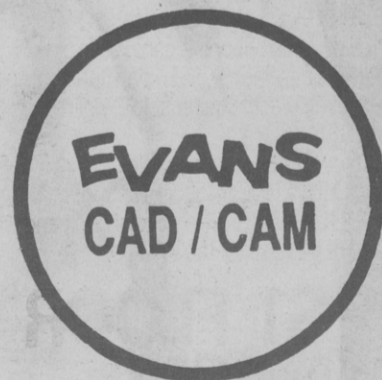
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