

# RECORDS

## Magazine Play Virgin

Live albums can serve a number of purposes; they can (very rarely) be alternative mediums for the conveyance of unreleased material, or record company cash-ins on the demise of a band, but most commonly are the depictions of a band's stagecraft of current and studio released songs.

Play falls into this last category as it offers little that is new, only the opener 'Give Me Everything' can earn that claim, but it does display the tight rock'n'roll repertoire that the band was toting around the world, including two nights at Mainstreet, last year.

Accusations of melodrama that have been levelled at Magazine largely disappeared with the release of the excellent *Correct Use of Soap*, and the rawness and up-tempo vigour of *Play* should dispel any remaining doubts as to the band's ability to mix it with the best of them.

In the live situation, this time round at Melbourne's Festival Hall last September, songs like 'Parade' and 'Definitive Gaze' that ended towards pomposity on *Real Life*, have been transformed into gutsier, rougher propositions. 'Permafrost' neatly moves into the triumphant 'The Light Pours Out of Me', and the band really excel on the 'free-falling funk of 'Twenty Years Ago'.

'A Song From Under the Floorboards' benefits from a Formula keyboards' flourish towards the end of the song and 'Model Worker' and 'Because You're Frightened' are ideal live fare with the now departed guitarist Robin Simon pushing chords.

*Play* has a consistency and completeness often lacking in live albums and these qualities coupled with the band's on-stage punch more than compensate for the absence of new material.

And no, 'Shot By Both Sides' isn't on it.  
**George Kay**

## John Martyn Grace And Danger Island

This one has been well worth the wait. While not known as prolific — it's been three years since his last album — John Martyn has always made music of a quality and fierce integrity that's attracting a growing coterie of fans.

*Grace And Danger* deserves to win him legions more. This time his unique guitar styles and slurred gutural vocals are beautifully set in a small jazz-based unit of drums, electric bass and keyboards.

The material is all very strong and while showing many influences — rock, folk, jazz, blues, reggae — remains distinctively Martyn's own. Even the one non-original the Slickers' 'Johnny Too Bad', has been successfully reworked, showing Martyn's confidence with musical form. (He has previously recorded with

Burning Spear and dub producer Lee Perry.)

Great praise must also go to his instrumental cohorts for their exemplary taste and sympathy in creating this vital, flowing music. (Yes Virginia that is the man from Genesis on drums.)

With so many fine tracks to choose from it's very hard to pick standouts but, for one hearing try the achingly tender 'Sweet Little Mystery'.  
**Peter Thomson**

## The Associates The Affectionate Punch Stunn

When Fiction creator Chris Parry was in this country last year with the Cure he mentioned that the Purple Hearts had left the label but he wasn't too worried as he had an album from Dundee's the Associates in the pipeline. He had no worries.

Scotland, like the North of England, is undergoing some sort of rock'n'roll renaissance. The Skids, Simple Minds and Josef K have all emerged from the backwater and now you can add the Associates to that list.

The band combines a number of currently valued rock'n'roll elements. Vocalist Billy McKenzie is descended from the Bowie school of elocution, his vowels are wide and expressive. The band, Alan Rankine (guitar) Michael Dempsey (ex-Cure, bass) and John Murphy (drums) are already accomplished, the playing is clean, angular and uncluttered and the songs have a refined character and shape that is rare in a debut.

'Even Dogs In the Wild' is rejection with a superb guitar motif carrying the chorus. The title track is solid and punchy Bowie-esque in direct contrast to the sensitive solitude of 'Logan Time', the slow measured edge of 'Transport to Central' and the funk of 'A Matter of Gender', a personal favourite.

The Associates need no tentative sparring blows as *The Affectionate Punch* is already a K.O. Don't duck it.  
**George Kay**

## Ultravox Vienna Chrysalis

With the departure of John Foxx, after the *Systems of Romance* album, Ultravox were left in something of a quandary. They chose to employ the services of former Rich Kid Midge Ure and followed that with a successful tour of the USA. *Vienna* is the first album featuring Ure.

In the past, Ultravox have been acknowledged as a major influence on modern electronic music. Since those days, many innovative bands have emerged, from Joy Division to Orchestral Manoeuvres, all with their distinctive approaches. Instead of leading them, Ultravox now seem to be learning from them. *Vienna* is a mixture of the old sound and the new influences, a calculated recording for the modern home.

The formula isn't all bad, though. 'New Europeans', 'Passing Strangers' and 'Vienna' all



The Associates



## Lou Reed Rock'n'Roll Diary 1967-1980 Arista

Talking Heads' Chris Frantz tells the story of Lou being given the controls for an hour at a New York new wave radio station and spending that hour playing aimless jazz-jam tapes recorded by his own band. Ideally, the man to choose the tracks for a double album 1967-1980 Lou Reed compilation should be Lou himself, but the above story underlines the danger of such a move — we'd get *Metal Machine Music* in its entirety for a start, and God knows what else.

The people from Arista who put this set together haven't done a bad job. Just to remind us that marketing is the name of the game we get three tracks off *Growing Up In Public* (we could have had 'Venus In Furs', 'What Goes On' and either 'Vicious' or 'Satellite Of Love' instead) but otherwise this is a proper compilation in that everything Reed has ever done was available for inclusion. The title track from *The Bells* is the only other major Reed work missing.

What we do get is nine reminders of just how great the Velvet Underground were, plus a number of diamonds from the patchy-parody solo years, much of the latter seemingly chosen as much for lyrical content as anything else.

1967-1980 is a very good collection for Lou Reed dilettantes, only I suspect there aren't actually many of those around. It's either all or nothing with this guy after all, but even those who go for the all might like this just to hear their Lou Reed favourites in a different order. If you think that's daft, then you're not a Lou Reed fan.  
**Roy Colbert**

possess good hooks, despite their sometimes crass lyrics. But it is the standard of playing that saves the album from the short route to the bargain bin. The synthesiser playing is swirling and expert.

If Ultravox want to continue as a major force, they must learn to re-think. Expertise won't always excuse lack of ingenuity.  
**Mark Phillips**

## Dave McCartney & the Pink Flamingos Polydor

All smiles. Compliments on a classy album. It started off as a solo project early last year, and three tracks were recorded with Sailors Harry Lyon, Lisle Kinney, and Ricky Ball. Later, the Flamingos came together, and the original concept expanded, developing into the team effort we have here.

The songs are all McCartney's compositions. The lyrics show thoughtful observation, and simplicity. The vocals are smooth, but in 'Virginia', and 'Lonesome Old Star', McCartney injects more of an edge. Harry Lyon, and Ian Morris help out on these tracks. The punchy sax strains on 'Old Star' are delivered by Paul Nairn.

The album's flavour is light and sexy, and let's hope Paul Hewson (ex Dragon) stays with the band, as his keyboards are crucial, adding a sophisticated touch. Points too, for Walter Bianco's delicious saxophone on 'I'm Outside'.

It's reassuring to have a local album of a high calibre, one that is professional, consistent, and with fine musicians to its credit. Every song stands up in its own right, and there should be more goodies where these ones came from.  
**Annlouise Martin**

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