

# RECORDS

## The Fall Grotesque (After The Gramme) Rough Trade

*Grotesque* is the fourth album in the Fall scheme of things, and the first to find release in this country. That in itself is a little surprising as the band are not the world's most accessible and in no way could this album be expected to reach a wide audience.

Those who have heard the earlier albums will know fairly much what to expect. The Fall's dour, quirky and discordant brand of rock and roll is extremely individual, and has changed little over the last few years although the sound is perhaps denser than before and the vocals a little harsher.

It has been said that the Fall are the only band to have retained the true punk ethics of 1976 and in a way it's true. Although they don't sound anything like the hordes of supposed 'real punk' bands, they have totally retained the committed uncompromising attitude that epitomised that year while those other bands slowly slide into some sort of new-hippiedom, with dog collars and anarchy replacing peace and love.

While I in no way pretend to



understand the Fall, I find myself liking this record as much as the earlier albums especially 'C'n'C Mithering', a track dedicated to 'the grotesque peasants' complete with a cynical sideswipe at the whole American continent, as seen by the band on their US visit some time back.

*There was America  
We went there  
Big A&M Herb was there  
His office had fresh air  
But his roster was mediocre  
US dirge*

The Fall are not a band to dismiss at a listen, it can take time. As it says on the sleeve 'grab before all bands sign onto the EMI pension scheme!'

Simon Grigg

## Herbs What's Be Happen WEA

I've long been hoping that the Maori and Polynesian cultures would look to reggae to provide a contemporary means of expression. This record marks a major step forward for New Zealand music.

Ponsonby-based Herbs have been making quite an impact locally this year, and also played a fine set at Sweetwaters. While they've borrowed the reggae idiom, they've also drawn on influences from their own backgrounds. Witness the harmonies on 'Reggae's Doing Fine', an acoustic tribute to Bob Marley. The sound is pure Polynesia, showing that Herbs are far from copybook stylists.

The six-track album showcases a wealth of musical talent. The five members have an instinctive feel for the rhythmic complexities of reggae, as proved by the opening track, 'Azania (Soon Come)'.

The title track uses different languages and percussion as a unifying call to the cultures

## Herbs



## Psychedelic Furs

that make up this country. But the best shot is 'Dragons And Demons', a smooth and sophisticated song with an excellent chorus line, reminiscent of Third World at their best.

The album was recorded at Auckland's Mascot studios, and engineers Gerard Carr and Phil Yule also deserve a big pat on the back for bringing the sound up full and crisp.

An album of New Zealand modern ethnic music, and one of which the participants can be truly proud.

Duncan Campbell

## Psychedelic Furs Talk Talk Talk CBS

The Psychedelic Furs were formed in 1976, when the two-chord thrash was a bouncing baby boy, and little else got a look-in. They slogged it out for three years before the climate changed and their slightly acidic sledge became acceptable.

After 'Sister Europe', they've had a tough time living down the charges that they're ripping off Bowie. Richard Butler protests that he can't help the voice he was born with. Point taken, but he still sounds like the Duke in his quieter moments.

Talk shows the Furs gather-

ing their confidence. There's far more melody here than on their first album, in fact all the tracks feature dozens of little ideas that weave themselves into a surprising whole.

'Dumb Waiters' and 'I Wanna Sleep With You' are the closest tracks to the first album. Lou Reed and Iggy Pop meet head-on in a chaotic clash of melodies and screaming sax from Duncan Kilburn.

'Pretty In Pink' and 'No Tears' are much gentler, more indicative of the changes that have taken place, and both feature lovely layers of guitar from John Ashton and Roger Morris.

'Into You Like A Train' (pardon?), 'It Goes On' and 'So Run Down' are the album's big dance numbers, with sterling drum work from Vince Ely.

Butler's lyrics tend to read like some kind of private joke. He seems to be a self-effacing romantic and a bit of a voyeur at heart. Yet he can come out with a tender piece of anguish like 'All Of This And Nothing'.

The Psychedelic Furs are bizarre and intriguing. Their influences go back a long way, but don't everybody's?

## Passage For All And None Virgin

If the turds really do hit the fan in 1984, then people like Dick Witts and his collective mouthpiece, the Passage, are going to be seen to be horribly significant-prophetic in their scene-setting of what the hill looked like just before the apocalyptic ball began to roll down it. *For All And None*, the second Passage album (the first one *Pindrop* was as revered as it was hard to get, a record company dispute drying supplies up at a mere 5000) addresses itself essentially to the weapons used by and in society to suppress. The lyrics of 'A Good And Useful Life', are a quote from Manchester's reportedly hyper-reactionary police chief. "Within these walls" asks Witts "how do we mark it out — this good and useful life?"

For Witts on this album, the walls encompass everything from eating at chemist shops to the inhumanity of London, from sexual incompetence to Bastinado torture. A litany on

suicide even. But this isn't just another slice of Mancunian hand-me-the-hangman's-noose rock. Joy Division's depression is more personal, and besides being more optimistic, the Passage are musically miles away from their Manchester contemporaries. Musically in fact, this album would struggle to make impact, but as complementary colouring for an evocative and consistently strong lyric sheet, the music adds a dimension to the record which makes it well worth extended exploration.

Keith Richard says rock must be appreciated from the neck down. He would hate this record.

Roy Colbert

## John Cale Honi Soit A & M

This is one record which hardly seems to need reviewing. John Cale records sound like John Cale records, and this is no exception. It is probably not possible for him to sound any other way.

Some people swear his records are better than anyone else's, and I don't argue. They hum little snatches of tune, quote lyrics, talk about arrangements, put on their collection of albums for you, and all that sort of thing. They complain that they can't get back catalogue, and that his last live album wasn't even imported here, let alone released.

Why don't you buy *Honi Soit* yourself, so when they tell you that it's every bit as good as *Fear and Slow Dazzle*, that Cale's new band is working out fine, that his singing is getting better than ever, and that not even a new record deal with a major label can mellow him, you can say, "I know. I know?" That way we'd all be better off.

## Francis Stark Wellington Zone Bunk

The background to this one was all in last month's *R.I.U.* Technically the record is better than the recording details might suggest, but the balance, where the vocals sit beside you on the floor while the rest of the band stay in the speakers, is intimidating at the very least, and unfortunate at worst (the Mockers). Repeated listening

does not improve this aspect at all.

There is also a rather perplexing impression that bands and audience are hardly pulling together on the whole thing — the Digits, in fact, sound like they can't wait to get out of the hall. Beat Rhythm Fashion get the record on its feet after the Digits' indulgence on Side One. 'No Great Oaks', Robert Smith guitar sound and all, sounding just fine. For a first gig, the three tracks from BRF represent commendable stuff.

The Steroids sound the most confident of the four bands, going to work earnestly on the White Light single 'Mr Average' before delivering what will probably be the album's favourite cut 'Credit Card'.

The Mockers close with three songs. Not a good night for them, with tuning trouble vocally and instrumentally. A pity, coz they're better than that.

*Wellington Zone* could have fulfilled its purpose adequately as a privately-circulated tape. Under the album-buying punter's microscope, it wilts.

## Roy Colbert The Angels Into the Heat CBS

A package just for Enzed. The Angels present *Into the Heat*.

All tracks are on the *Dark-room* album, except for the title song which was released as a single, and although Brent Eccles is included on the black and white sleeve picture, it is actually former Angel Buzz Bidstrup who drums.

The production is clean, the tunes are among the band's best, and the lyrics are meant to be heard. Doc Neeson doesn't yell, he sings and whispers.

'Face the Day' starts quiet and whips into desperation with bursts of lone guitar. 'Devils' Gate' is short and sharp to begin with, picking up to full power rock.

It's a careful combination. 'No Secrets', and 'Face the Day' offset the harder and faster 'Into the Heat', and 'Devils' Gate'.

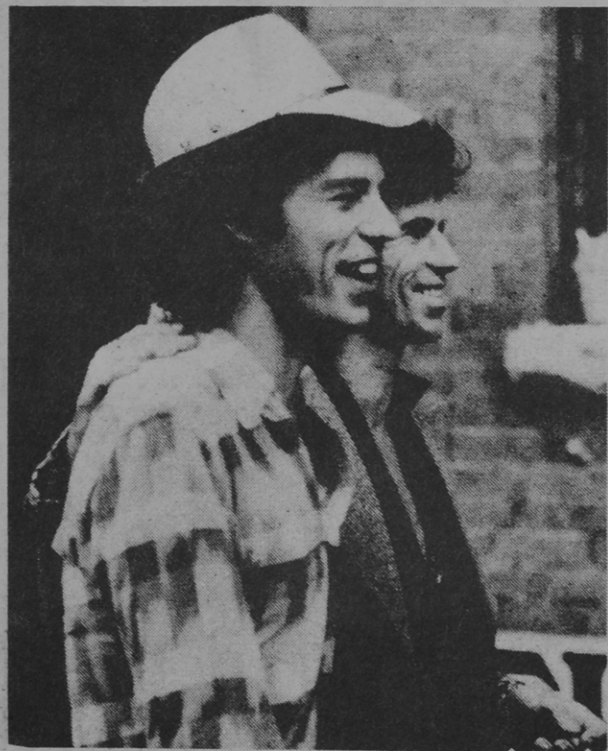
A brilliant sample for new fans, and a collection expander for fanatics.  
AnnLouise Martin

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## NEWSMAKERS



Jagger, Richards: Lost boys of rock

He is the Peter Pan of rock 'n' roll. Pushing 40, **Mick Jagger** doesn't grow up, and now he, **Keith Richards** and the other lost boys are gearing up to release the 25th Rolling Stones album next month. Last week the eternal youths drew a crowd of several hundred in Manhattan's East Village, where they filmed a video promo for a new song of theirs called "Neighbors." "We had hoped to get the album out in June to beat the competition," said Mick, citing the tidal wave of record releases that comes every fall, "but we've never been that intelligent and it's too late to start now."

# AUGUST 31

# A VERY INTELLIGENT RELEASE DATE

