

RECORDS

**Willie Dayson Blues Band
Live At The Globe**

The Willie Dayson Blues Band have been around now for just over a year, and during that time have had an almost permanent residence at inner city Auckland pub, the Globe. The band consists of Brian Glamuzina (harp, lead vocals), John Thompson (bass, vocals), Brian Mitchener (drums) and Willie Dayson (guitars, vocals).

The album was recorded over a weekend last July on a two-track Revox, the necessary mixing done while recording. An astounding feature of this album is the quality of the musicianship, especially as there have been no overdubs, a common practice when recording live.

The album is equally divided between covers and originals. Regular followers will be glad to see a smattering of old favourites, along with some relatively new material.

Side One opens with 'Shady Lady', a strong, beaty number which the band have played since their early days. The following track is a slow and touching melancholic version of the Jimmy Johnson number 'Ashes In My Ashtray', featuring some very tasteful guitar from Dayson. The next song brings the rhythm section to the fore, backing Dayson's slide playing and Glamuzina's harp. The last track is an excellent version of the Little Walter classic 'Last Night'.

Side Two features three up-tempo tracks and two traditional slow blues numbers. The two slow tracks probably rank as the best on the album, steamy numbers fired up by some inspired playing from Dayson.

Overall, a fine debut album, one which those who have survived the crowded Friday night sessions at the Globe would especially enjoy.
Pat Evers

**Midge Marsden Connection
Mandrill**

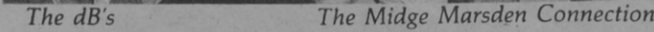
Good, honest homegrown rock 'n' blues from the very competent Taranaki-based Connection. Running the gamut from



Willie Dayson Blues Band



The dB's



The Midge Marsden Connection

the jumpy self-penned 'Slow Walk, Jive Talk', a punchy single that saw precious little chart action despite some radio coverage, the band takes us through a reggae-ish 'No Complex', to the Bob Wills number 'Texas Blues' and Allen Toussaint's 'Optimism Blues', plus a couple of Wayne Mason songs for good measure.

The music exudes a joie-de-vivre on this, their debut album, attacking each song with a gutsy relish. These guys play for fun and sound like they're having a ball doing it, especially so on the two live tracks, 'Texas Blues' and 'Caledonia' (no overdubs here!).

'Motorcycle Boogie' comes on like vintage Commander Cody, twangin' guitar, honky-tonk piano and all, while 'Shine The Light', with its gospel-tinged backing vocal and stark piano-dominated arrangement, is quite moving.

Marsden, a veteran of the Australasian blues movement (Country Flyers, Phil Manning Band), has got together a sympathetic bunch of cohorts for this genuine slice of Kiwi blues. A solid performance from a band I, for one, am looking forward to catching live.
Greg Cobb

**The dBs
Stands For Decibels
Liberation**

Chris Stamey is a legend of sorts in the American record collectors' fanzine world through a couple of fine EPs with the speakers, and a brief stint with Alex Chilton. He shares the writing duties in The dBs with Peter Holsapple, and the two of them

are clearly aiming for a similar thing. The dBs are quite distinct from regimented American anglo-copyists like the Raspberries, pulling their influences from all over to emerge with a pot pourri result recalling everyone from the Move to the Beau Brummels. But never just one band in the one song.

Add to that a few quirky ideas that pop up completely unannounced, and a think production (by Alan Betrock, editor of the excellent *New York Rocker* magazine) that actually works to the band's advantage through setting them apart from the usual homogenised, well-produced American pop-rock mainstream, and you have music that, perhaps not surprisingly, has been better received in England than in their native New York.

The dBs, likeable as they are, are not yet a major threat, but possessing the ideal of two (complementary) writers vying for album space and attention, they could surprise us before too long.
Roy Colbert

**The Kinks
Give The People What They Want
Arista**

Re-cap: unlike some of the other 60s prototypes still extant (yeah I'm talkin' about the Stones) the Kinks have no axe to grind. Sure, they've left their best years behind them, but unlike Jagger and Co. they don't have to sound like jaded bad-ass cowboys in order to maintain the gist of what they contributed to rock'n'roll.

Davies writes real-life cameos of the people next door and his style

has been adopted and up-dated by the likes of UK Squeeze and the Jam. But on the appropriately titled *Give The People What They Want*, there are signs of sell-out.

The album is a by-product of the Americanisation of the Kinks and Davies' judgement of what a contemporary (Kinks') album should sound like. *One For The Road* was a double tour-de-force of the band souping up old chestnuts and giving the crowd what they wanted and, in many ways, this is also the aim of *Give*.

Yet it is a clumsy, guitar-heavy mixture of U.S. radio rockism and the more customary English textures. The delightful wistfulness of 'Art Lover', the domesticity of 'Yo-Yo', the crowd-pleasing raunch of 'Around the Dial' and the workmanship of 'Add It Up' and 'Better Things' all work a treat.

On the other hand, there are songs that are way below par. 'Killer's Eyes' is Davies' attempt at 'Psycho Killer', feeble; 'Predictable' is just that and 'Destroyer', slick but empty, uses the 'All of the Day' riff as its foundation. Unnecessary.

The deal offers about a fifty percent return, not as sound as *Low Budget* but still fifty percent ahead of the Stones' *Tattoo You* fiasco. Brokers advice: Kinks' fans should invest, others investigate.
George Kay

**Sharon O'Neill
Maybe
CBS**

Side One, track one on *Radio With Pictures*: Sharon O'Neill stalks the evening streets in jacket, leotards and high heels enticing strollers and televisioners alike. She unsuccessfully propositions a pinball player. (What's wrong with him?) Meanwhile a song about schoolgirls cutting classes to look for action hooks in with clipped guitars and brief stabs of synth. Seductive, tough, it cuts Pat Benatar cold.

Trouble is, nothing else on the album is quite as appealing. The new O'Neill style also poses problems.

Her 1978 debut album introduced a talent for writing very strong songs in a variety of moods and tempo. But with her gradual grooming from sensitive balladeer to foxy rocker, O'Neill's writing seems increasingly restricted to a straight-ahead, small group beat. And while her material may be more performable on stage, on record it is losing distinctiveness. Even the ballads seem to be suffering. The new album's title track (and O'Neill's favourite) may be haunting but not enough so for a successful single.

Then there's her voice. Pure, yet of limited strength, it suits her earlier songs but sometimes lacks the gritty fibre needed for the powerhouse numbers here.

Despite such reservations, O'Neill's talent is still evident

and, crass ocker videos aside, the first four tracks here would have made a very smart EP.

But the question still remains - how well that talent is being served by her current persona.
Peter Thomson

**Joe Cocker
Greatest Hits
EMI
Live In New York
Liberation**

Cocker's affable human-wreck personality projection and obvious vocal stature make him a hard man to dislike despite the lack of fire in most of his seventies' product.

He had a mild regeneration three years back with his Asylum album, *Luxury You Can Afford*, and rumour has it that he's recently completed sessions with Shakespeare and Dunbar. We'll see, but meantime we have two albums that hark back to the years that created the legend.

Greatest Hits, which is virtually a restructuring of his first two classic albums and so concentrates on 1969-71, is a compulsory introduction to the Cocker career. Twenty tracks in all from the classic blues of 'St. James's Infirmary' to his definitive readings of 'With A Little Help' and 'The Letter'. Remember him at his best. Undeniable value.

Live In New York, recorded at an undated festival (sleeve info nil) is yer custom-made Cocker live performance. Again the oldies are trotted out ('Put Out the Light' and 'Hitchcock Railway') alongside later efforts ('So Blue' and 'Jealous Kind'), if not with the old gusto, at least with the old flair.

Unfashionable but ageless.
George Kay

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