

RECORDS

Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark Architecture And Morality Dindisc

Following on from last year's successful *Organisation*, OMITD have produced an album that improves on its predecessors. Unlike many of their contemporaries in the electronic rock game, they've resisted the temptation to indulge in concepts that go nowhere.

The album starts with a blast of distortion before the music roars into 'The New Stone Age', which rocks hard. 'She's Leaving' and 'Souvenir' (a hit in the UK) illustrate the strengths of OM. Pure pop with a melody line that sticks in your head. Side One concludes with the only weak link, a lengthy atmospheric piece, 'Sealand'. By comparison 'Architecture And Morality', on Side Two, provides a wintery interlude where economy is the key.

Side Two opens with 'Joan Of Arc', the second UK single, continues with 'Joan of Arc (Maid of Orleans)', a waltz of exquisite beauty. 'Georgia' bounces like a year 2000 square dance, and 'The Beginning And The End' concludes the album as a succinct summation of the two sides of OM.

Given exposure, six of these songs have the potential to become major hits. A fine album from a band that is growing with every recording.

David Perkins
Mink DeVille
Coup De Grace
WEA

His fourth album confirms Willy DeVille as the heir to the New York street-corner singing tradition. If 'Spanish Harlem' hadn't been sung by Ben E. King, it should have been sung by Willy DeVille.

In some ways, DeVille is one of our most old-fashioned singers. His style is right out of the Brill Building era — he keeps writing and singing 'Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow' over and over again. And succeeding. His songs are sentimental, but the threat of switchblade danger, the fire-



INXS
Orchestral Manoeuvres



escape desperation in that coaxing/menacing voice allows him to toy on the brink without toppling.

His own song 'Teardrops Must Fall' or Arthur Alexander's old 'You Better Move On' are as good as Willy gets. Very, very good. About time some radio stations picked up on Mink DeVille as late-night cruising music. Just the thing for summer evenings.

Ken Williams
John Foxx
The Garden
Virgin

Bowie and Ferry, those seventies' saints of style, have certainly sired a whole new legion of sons. The whole romantic futurist thang from Ultravox to Spandau Ballet can be traced back to the achievements of the two aforementioned gents.

Foxx, vocalist with the original Ultravox, basks in the same new romantic limelight. Last year, assisted mainly by machines, he recorded the interesting *Metamatic*. Now, with a band that includes his ex-Ultravox colleague and later Mag-

azine guitarist Robin Simon, Foxx has assembled a conventional songs album that is very close in approach and content to the last two Ultravox albums, *Vienna* and *Rage in Eden*.

So on *The Garden* he falls into their trap of working only on one level. Songs like 'Europe After the Rain', 'Dancing Like A Gun', 'Night Suit' and 'Fusion/Fission' are tight, attractive and imaginative pieces of synth-pop. The title track is lush and melodic, but like his material in general, it only hints at a mystique that it needs to become really memorable. When Ferry wrote and sang 'Song For Europe' he transported you to the 'antique cafes'.

Foxx and co. may have the charming melodies and the required grooming but they lack the depth of evocation to be more than superficial, very listenable stylists.

George Kay
Stray Cats
Gonna Ball
Arista

The Stray Cats prove you can build on a great debut album, and still have fun. These guys really sound like making records is a ball. They drive along like a steam train, tearing up the tracks with their pumping Southern rhythm. I daresay rockabilly diehards don't care for the Cats because they're young and because they don't do too many of the old songs. Instead, Brian Setzer writes his own material in the manner of his heroes — and, most importantly, makes it work. For example, 'Rev It Up and Go' is based on the Chuck Berry bag of licks, but it works as an original song, too.

Apart from the lickety-split rockabilly, the Cats are doing more bluesy things ('You Don't Believe Me' is in the Elmore James style and shows a shade more flexibility in this area than George Thorogood) with Setzer playing a fair bit of slide. In another direction, 'Lonely Summer Nights' is a drooling teen ballad somewhere between Pat Boone and the Beach Boys.

If the Stray Cats keep on at this rate ... who knows? Though their tattoos-and-chains appearance verges on parody, their music rocks with a drive that escapes most of the revivalists and the older men left behind.

Ken Williams
Ian Dury
Lord Upminster
Polydor

Ian Dury in the Bahamas? A little Jack The Lad in the world

of the tres chic? Robert Palmer, Talking Heads, the B 52s, Grace Jones, all fit in with that circle, but Ian Dury? Yes, and what's more, it works.

This looks like Dury's break for bigger things, having switched record companies and dumped large portions of the Cockney ikon which typified his last three albums. The only other whitey in here is former Blockhead Chas Jankel. Along for the ride are Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare and Tyrone Downie, who must be the busiest musicians of 1981.

As ever with Dury, nothing is quite what it seems. Take 'Funky Disco (Pops)', at first glance an innocuous dance number, till you read the words.

I want to take you courting, but bopping is the boss.

Hugging makes you angry, kissing makes you cross.

'Red Letter' is my favourite, a light calypso beat and one of the nicest tunes Ian and Chas have turned out since 'Sweet Gene Vincent'.

'Spasticus (Autisticus)', a song for the Year of the Disabled, is one only Dury, himself disabled, could do. He's aroused the ire of some, and it's been banned in plenty of places. How dim.

A slight shift of emphasis, but still the same lovable chap underneath.

Duncan Campbell
INXS
Underneath The Colours
Deluxe

Last year's debut album from Sydney's INXS was a bright pop-rock affair. Although there were some great songs, such as 'On A Bus' and 'Just Keep Walking', its major problem was its inconsistency.

On *Underneath The Colours* we see a development of the songwriting and studio technique that has enabled them to avoid such problems.

INXS are a large band, there are six of them. In the past, the sound has tended to be full-on and meaty. On *Underneath*, it's sparser. This is especially so on 'Stay Young', 'Horizons' and the title track, all written by vocalist Michael Hutchence and keyboard player Andrew Farriss.

Side Two is more conventional INXS. If anything, it rocks harder than the high points on the debut album. In places, the combination of Hutchence's vocals and Kirk Pengilly's sax produce a sound very reminiscent of Hello Sailor.

This is a positive step by a young band who may have the potential to make a great record. I look forward to seeing them live.

Mark Phillips
The Rock And Roll
Collection
EMI

A bright spot in the New Zealand record business for many years has been the compilation work done by EMI's Bruce Ward in Wellington. He

put together such records as two volumes of the Beach Boys' hits that remain the best value of any Beach Boys' collection released anywhere in the world.

The Rock And Roll Collection could be called the pinnacle of his efforts to date. On three albums there are 60 songs.

Ward's approach is not that of the musical scholar. While he is exceptionally well informed, the records he puts together are meant to be played, not used as vinyl references for a thesis on the emergence of rock in the second half of the 20th century.

His collection is, most of all, fun, with most of the tracks, because of the large volume of oldies on most Kiwi radio stations, pretty familiar. A sprinkling of songs like Smiley Lewis' original version of 'I Hear You Knockin'' saves the albums from being just too run-of-the-mill. The extensive notes place the tracks in historical context, giving buyers the option of not using the records as strictly party fodder.

Phil Gifford
Scars
Author! Author!
Charisma

This is another in the Great Expectations series.

Scars were the Scottish option of Bob Last's Fast label onslaught of three years back that included the Gang of Four, the Mekons, and the Human League.

The Scars were tipped for big things after the release of their single 'Adultery' but it wasn't until the start of this year that they released their first album, *Author Author*, to rave reviews.

Now it's here and a few bubbles have burst. The Scars, it appears, are not quite the anticipated thousand-yard-stare existentialists committed to exposing social and personal horrors that we were lead to believe. Instead they soften this realism with concessions to modern romanticism and musical conventionality.

'Leave Me In The Autumn', 'Aquarama' and 'Everywhere I Go' could have been written by the Banshees on a good day, and the memorable 'All About You' would've made the first Bunnymen album. 'Obsessions' is an OK-folk-influenced lament but the apres holocaust of 'Your Attention Please' is hammy and 'Je T'Aime C'Est La Mort' is pure corn and so best avoided.

Sum total: a very likeable current album from a band who've watched the fashion pages and listened to the fad bands. It will not add (much) to your knowledge of life but it will do you no harm.

George Kay
Mi-Sex
Shanghaied
CBS

Mi-Sex seem to have hit an indifferent patch, where the ideas aren't flowing quite as well as before. Every band hits that inevitable 'dry spot' in its evolution, the old sound becoming jaded, and the necessary change in approach being hard to find.

The most interesting aspect of

this album is Richard Hodgkinson's emergence as a composer. His two tracks, 'Missing Person' and 'Caught In The Act', are very strong on melody, and he may yet be a big key to the band's future. Kevin Stanton and Murray Burns tend to write more on riffs, and some of their songs here sound all too familiar.

Stanton and Burns employ an uncommonly light touch on 'Tears In Her Wine', but the LP's title track is closer to their mainstream. Stanton sings with a lovely sneer, in a very jaundiced tale of human relationships.

The rest sounds rather hackneyed. 'Falling In And Out' is hardly their best single, though it does stick with repeated listenings. 'Water' is a Stanton-Martin collaboration, a peculiar dirge with vague ecological leanings, and Stanton's 'Young Maniacs' is just a rather ugly, angular riff with little or no tune.

Shanghaied is an LP of contradictions from a band in a familiar quandry. I doubt whether Mi-Sex are completely satisfied with this, and that should spur them on to develop more promising ideas.

Duncan Campbell
Various Artists
South Pacific
Mushroom

No two ways about this here compilation — it's value for money.

The two Zep tracks alone, the spritely 'Tighten Up' and the trad sideways grin of 'Nosey Parker', are worth the three bucks.

This is a Mushroom promotional album, a garage sale appetiser of what they're offering past, present and future. Zep comes off best (of course) but there are plenty of contenders. The Models intrigue with the stop-start curio 'Two Cabs to the Toucan' and the sombre 'Cut Lunch'; the Sports lift two of their catchier songs from their disappointing last LP, *Sondra*; Renee Geyer airs her chart-sweeping summer jaunt 'Say I Love You' and Paul Kelly and the Dots parade the delightful 'Billy Baxter', a song known more for Zep's live coverage than for Kelly's own cute if anaemic rendition.

There's nuthin' bad; MEO 245, Sunnyboys, Wendy and the Rocketts and veteran Russell Morris and the Rubes don't quite rise to the occasion, but for the price of a single whaddya expect?

George Kay

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