

Records

The Motels Little Robbers Capitol

At last, the Motels have made it in their own country. But at what cost? This is going to sound churlish, just another critical backlash. But this album sounds like a pallid rehash of past triumphs, and nothing will change that.

Only three tracks out of 10 come even close to what this band has achieved in the past. 'Suddenly Last Summer' is another typical Motels ballad, beautifully understated, and a surefire radio hit (as it already is). Martha can handle this sort of song in her sleep.

The same goes for 'Where Do We Go From Here', a straightforward rocker which opens the album, and probably takes the place of 'Mission Of Mercy' on stage as a crowd warmer. 'Tables Turned' has that typical wistful approach that is a large part of Martha's appeal. In the second division is 'Trust Me' a boogie piece that reflects Martha's continuing insecurity about her personal life.

From there, it's a big slide downwards. Americans should not try to play reggae, they only end up making asses of themselves. The Motels try it twice, with 'Isle Of You' and 'Footsteps'. They fail. 'Into The Heartland' is a straight steal from Springsteen and 'Monday Shutdown' is another unnecessary reminder of how boring work is.

It's disappointing to hear something as routine as this from a

band which really changed the image of LA music. I haven't so far mentioned the title track because it's one of the most banal songs Martha has ever written. To draw attention to it in such a way was a very silly move. So is the colour scheme on the sleeve.
Duncan Campbell

Various Artists Godzone Metal Vol 1 NZ Metal Production Co.

An unforgivable mistake when I first listened to this album - I kept the volume down. First impressions? Not too good. But never say die - stuff the speakers and let the volume rip.

On Side One Rose Bayonet has two songs, 'Demon Rider' and 'Let It Die'. Both were recorded at their last Wellington gig. For those who saw them at Quinns Post on Jan 15, 16 these two tracks are a nostalgic must.

Following RB are three songs from Harlot - 'Schoolgirls', 'Another Day' and 'Dancing (Or My Mothers Grave)'. It gives an indication of what the band is like even though vocals are lost in a few places.

Side Two features Tyrants, 'Surprise', 'Bedroom Secrets' and 'Nowhere To Run'. Again some vocals are lost though the energy of their performance is captured. Astaroth brings up the rear with '1066', 'Demon Dance' and 'Astaroth'.

Technically not a brilliant live album but finally someone has put NZ HM down on vinyl.
Mark Javins

XTC Mummer Virgin

Let's start this one with an English lesson. According to the

Concise Oxford a mummer is a play actor in a folk play. A curious title but not all that surprising if you've followed the rise of Andy Partridge and XTC. To stretch the point their last two albums, *Black Sea* and *English Settlement*, have been like one act plays on English life with Partridge cast as the roving social commentator.

Mummer, sadly, continues the weary pastoralism of *English Settlement*. The band's development and renunciation of the fidgety impulses that characterised their first three albums has resulted in Partridge adopting a more sombre musical stance that leaves room for only flashes of melodic flair and animated arrangements. 'Beating of Hearts', 'Deliver Us From Great Fire', 'Human Alchemy' and 'Me and the Wind' all fit into this category and they provide the tired heart of the album.

Moulding, as usual, plays McCartney to Partridge's Lennon with a trio of sweeter tunes, 'Wonderland' being particularly attractive. But his songs are only diversions and therefore can't rescue an album doomed by a lack of vitality.

In a recent NME Consumers' Guide Partridge's final comment implied that his fifteen minutes were up. There's scant evidence on *Mummer* to contradict that assumption.
George Kay

Briefs

Killing Joke Fire Dances (E.G.)

Killing Joke are here to stay, it seems, as they erupt yet again in a riotous blaze of song and dance, a celebration of everything they stand for. Their approach on *Dances* is more energetic and hard-hitting than ever, making full use of rough mixing to accentuate the heavy, driving percussion and rhythmic chants set against a chaotic background of guitar and other noises. A truly enervating experience! Above all, *Fire Dances* attests to the band's overwhelming strength of conviction, which three previous albums have only served to reinforce. RR

The Blasters Non Fiction (Slash)

Now here is a buncha wolves whose night to howl has come. Beer and whiskey-soaked R&B from seven LA-based crazies whose biggest goal is to show their mentors what they're made of. Big, brash shots of rockabilly and a touch of Texas swing thrown in for good measure. Guitarist Dave Alvin is a Scotty Moore disciple, pianist Gene Taylor is a Killer man till the day he dies, and vocalist Phil Alvin probably has Carl Perkins' picture on his bedroom wall. Less posey than the Stray Cats, and a definite must at a party when some dork demands some 'rawkenrole'. DC

Various Women Of Rock (K-tel)

Seems like a good commercial idea. Grab a bunch of female fronted music, smack it on the one LP and promote on TV with appropriate video teasers. Although there's some damn good stuff here - along with the dross - some of these women rub shoulders rather unsatisfactorily: Bow Wow Wow's Annabella and Diana Ross for instance. The other gripe concerns K-tel's squeezing in

too many tracks under the guise of value for money. Nine tracks a side means that all those extending beyond three minutes - ie, the majority - receive the compiler's fast fade-out, (many even copping it mid-chorus). All told then, really only an album for people who buy *Reader's Digest* condensed books. PT

Randy Crawford Nightline (Warner Bros)

When Randy Crawford was in New Zealand last year she expressed to *RIU* her reservations concerning Tommy Lipuma's handling of her previous two albums. Admittedly her particular brand of soul has always included a fair dollop of schmaltz - even 77's Muscle Shoals sessions included strings - but producer Lipuma seemed to be steering her perilously close to MOR. Well Lipuma's now trying Crawford out on the big dance-floor beat. 'Nightline' and 'Living On The Outside' employ synths, popping bass, chopping guitar - the standard approach in fact - to considerable success. Side Two also has a bunch of worthwhile songs by Cecil and Linda Womack (and one by Crawford herself) which occasionally enable her great voice to intimate its power and passion. It still think Crawford would be far better served by a producer like Arif Mardin, but the title track does make a fine single. Jeffrey Osborne

Stay With Me Tonight (A&M)

Jeffrey Osborne's second album may be several cuts below top grade but it's an improvement on his first. While only two tracks on his earlier effort made it anything other than a throwaway, there's four or five here to justify your time. When Osborne's hard-nosed and funky ('Don't You Get So Mad', 'Stay With Me Tonight') he's convincing - it's when he's telling you about "the rainbow's end" and "the greatest love affair of all" over an over familiar and schlocky melody that I, for one, switch off. Trouble is, last time round it was the schlock that gave Osborne the hits. Oh well. AD

Zapp I (Warner Bros)

Zapp III (Warner Bros)

Those of you out there who are afficianados of black dance music would have already heard *Zapp II*, with that killer track 'Dance Floor'. Both these albums are in the same vein, with at least one really neat dance track on each. On *Zapp I*

we have 'More Bounce to the Ounce' and on *Zapp III* the wonderful 'Heartbreaker'. These aren't the sort of tracks that suit the gentle art of record reviewing, they're designed for slapping on the tape deck and bopping to. There sure are some fine rhythms on these two discs but it's a great pity that the majority of the tracks are insipid jazz-funk workouts that sound like George Benson on a bad day. But there's still those great slabs of Bootsy-inspired funk. KB

Letters

Post to 'RIU', Box 5689, Auckland 1.

Mocker Shocker?

The other night I turned on my rental to settle down to some serious viewing with *RWP* and was stricken with the thought that I'd accidentally tuned into the *Muppet Show*. Here was this great pink thing strutting around with smack-a-roo lips crooning something about 'Alvison Park'. I ask you, is there no dignity?

Who does Andrew Fagan think he is? I couldn't decide if he looked more like Gonzo or Big Bird. What has happened to the old Andrew Fagan we knew and loved so well? His bag, baggy shirts and gently ruffled hair used to be amazing but now he's sporting a hairdo worthy only of the name '50,000 watts'. YECK.

Never mind Andrew, if you're really serious about your new image why don't you record that old song off *Sesame Street*? It's sure to be a hit: "One of these things is not like the other, one of these things just doesn't belong..." Betty Boop New Plymouth

Or the Next Big Thing?

I think it's about time you had another NZ front cover. I recently saw the Mockers and Andrew Fagan is a must for the spot. A bright pink fur suit with matching hair and makeup - imagine that on the cover! That guy is the most flamboyant NZ character in years! Who says NZ doesn't produce natural superstars? We just don't recognise them until the rest of the world does! P. Stacey Christchurch

Vox Pop

Quote re the Music Awards' Song of the Year vote: "... the intention being that the respective selections will reflect regional tastes ..."

Bullshit! Public vote my foot! Where the hell are my favourites - the Grammar Boys with 'Don't Know You', not to mention very popular tunes from the Narcs, Legionnaires, Car Crash Set, Marginal Era and Netherworld Dancing Toys?

Hell, none of the following nominees did well to my knowledge: Willie Hona, Sarah Davidson or even deadbeat boring Patsy Riggil!

Next year why don't they let us, the public - yeah, those who decide who wins, choose the nominees? 'Arriet Huntly

Radio Inactive

A complaint about Wellington radio. Picture the scene: 9.48 Monday night. Tune in for some music. Every Breath You Take on Windy. Sheet. Switch to 2ZB. Sheet! Every Breath You Take. Have to switch to 2ZM. Sheet!! Aargh!! The Police have us surrounded! Why does "choice" mean no choice? Why does "Top Ten" mean brainwashing? I protest. Terence J. Clark Wellington

Walking Back

My memories of the mighty Battle at the YMCA was an pathetic (or was it pathetic) crowd, five mediocre stage ragers and one choice (sic), totally superb winning performance. Well Mr Brown - where exactly were you when Auckland Walk shone on stage? For forty minutes the YMCA woke up into a dancing mass responding to a tight, classy 'gig'. You wasn't thinking, no you wasn't thinking, Mr Brown when you dared to question the judges' choice, for any other victor would have been futile and a farce for the Kiwi rockers who bothered to give their support. Devoted Auckland Walker Mission Bay

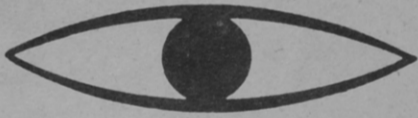
Help!

I'm a 15-year-old and am totally into Duran Duran and I'm sick of people asking if this is a bad taste party or something. Wot I need is someone to write and reassure me. Sand 62 Piquet Hill, Te Awamutu

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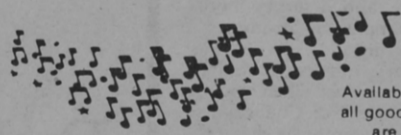
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