

albums

people are better at having far more fucked up relationships. One of the more real renditions on the consequences of all night drinking, 'Sitting In A Bar' is hilarious. In its worst moments *Sad But True* is as insidious as Dire Straits but it also hides the proverbial gem and hits long patches of being very good company indeed.

BARBIE

YES Talk (Victory)

Jon Anderson, Trevor Rabin, Chris Squire, Alan White and Tony Kaye — that's who is now officially in Yes. The 1991 Union tour featured the eight integral members from the group's incredible quarter of a century history. Since then Bill Bruford has returned to his jazz group Earthworks, Rick Wakeman went back to England and released several albums and Steve Howe was urged to continue his own musical career. So what we have is the same Yes men who created the excellent *90125* and *Big Generator* in the 80s. Unbelievably, they've surpassed these efforts with *Talk*. Trevor Rabin had a lot of influence, being guitarist, vocalist, keyboardist, songwriter, producer and engineer and he's done a marvellous job. The breathtaking, multi-layered sound spans seven tracks from the techno hard rock single 'The Calling' to the sixteen minute extravaganza 'Endless Dream'. This epic is in three parts— an impossibly difficult instrumental intro, the main work and final theme. Not since 'Awaken' in 1977 have Yes constructed such a grand soundscape. Rabin has meticulously sculpted the album using a revolutionary new invention called Digital Performer which can store and access sound bytes at will. Therefore he can take the best performance and place it into the mix wherever he likes. The combination of modern technology with the unique abilities and textured vocal harmonies of Yes is luxurious listening for fans of innovative artistic rock. 'Where Will You Be' has dexterous flamenco guitar from clever Trevor and delicate percussive work by Alan White. In contrast, 'Real Love' is a rhythmically heavy giant with powerful bass from Chris Squire and a great Rabin lead break which pans from left to right. All compositions are by Anderson/Rabin (except two co-written by Squire) and this is the first time the two have collaborated directly on words and music. Jon Anderson is in his element with these songs and his alto tenor is in top form. He and the other Yes founders Squire and organist Tony Kaye have experimented and progressed in new directions, evolving to yet another higher level.

GEOFF DUNN

JIMMY ROGERS *Ludella* (Antone's)

ROBERT NOLL *Blues Mission* (Precious Artists)

The Rogers album is from 1990, the Noll from 1992 - both are available here to coincide with local tours. Before we begin: Jimmy Rogers is not

Jimmie Rodgers, the yodelling cowboy, and Robert Noll is not Rocky Knoll - that's a grassy patch in Albert Park.

As the only surviving member of Muddy Waters first all-conquering Chess-era band, Jimmy Rogers can claim to be one of the most influential musicians alive. With Waters at Chess he moved the Queen past the Bishop to check mate the Russian champion Boris Pissedoffsky, thus prolonging the cold war by a couple decades. He also recorded a song called 'Rollin' Stone,' which another band named themselves after and the rest is history etc. *Ludella* is a combination studio and live revisiting of some of Rogers' successful '50s sides after leaving Waters' band and going solo. Under the guidance of Kim Wilson, and with a band including Pinetop Perkins and Hubert Sumlin, they roll through 'Rock This House,' which tells of a "tall legged woman, built for speed," and 'Sloppy Drunk,' what you turn into when you can't catch the tall legged woman, built for speed. 'Gold Tailed Bird' is a cool "low-down dirty blues" about a gold tailed bird, built for speed. *Ludella* is authentic mid-'50s South Side of Chi-town blues - none of it sounds remotely original, figure that's because this is the original.

Within the blues-rock guitar crank idiom, which mostly springs from the *Sour Cream & Chives*-era Eric Clapton, the general rule (from Charles Shaar Murray) is that guys with their heaviest foot in the blues rather than the rock are necessarily better. Robert Noll is such a person. One of the best "extended noodling" guitar solos I've witnessed from a live stage was Albert Collin's second guitarist in '92. That wasn't Robert Noll (I can't remember who it was), but ten years earlier it was the band position Noll held. So he could conceivably match it, and *Blues Mission* contains plenty of evidence for this. Stinging instrumentals like 'Cool Zone' and 'Deep Freeze' pay homage to the Iceman, the former benefiting from double-tracked rhythm and lead guitar parts, with an impossibly raunchy tone on the leads; whipping, cutting, built for speed.

ANDREW PALMER

RUSH *Counterparts* (Atlantic)

A more direct sounding collection of songs than their last few albums. *Counterparts* sees Rush doing away with most of the computer keyboard extras to concentrate on guitar, bass and drums (as they started out twenty years ago). The return of producer Peter Collins has contributed to the more refined sound but don't expect many surprises either. The instrumental 'Leave That Thing Alone' is a brilliant display of musicianship focusing on Geddy Lee and it's easy to hear why he's been a major influence on two generations of bassists. Love 'em or loathe 'em, Rush never slip below their own high standards and *Counterparts* is no exception.

GEOFF DUNN

ANGELIQUE KIDJO *Aye* (Polygram)

West African Angelique Kidjo's latest album *Aye* (meaning "at life's beginning") looks set to widen her audience. Following on from the modest success of *Logozo*, this album is more consistent and fits more comfortably into the dance music category. Half the material was recorded in the US at Paisley Park. I prefer the jazzier numbers with the real brass section from the London session but both are tight and funky. There's also a couple of ballads provid-



nine inch nails

ing a nice balance of pace and energy. If there is a downside to the album it's a playing down of the African rhythms which were prominent on the previous two albums. It probably won't appeal to the world music purist for that reason but then the African themes are still powerfully expressed in the lyrical content sung in Kidjo's native Fon language (and fortunately translated into both French and English in the CD booklet). The themes continue to express Kidjo's concerns with social justice but also explore traditional teachings from her own culture. And while the lyrics are well worth a look as you listen to the album you don't need to read them to understand the feelings she is expressing.

NICKY JONES

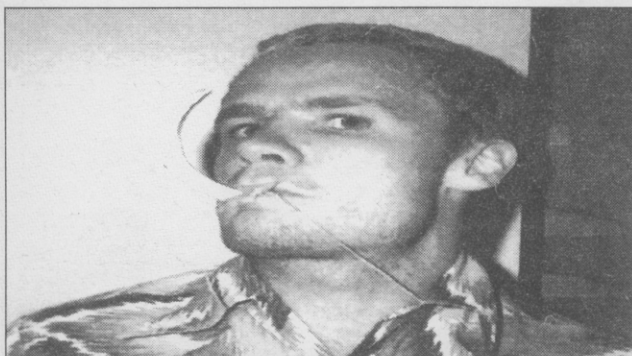
DEAD FLOWERS *Watch Her Play* CD Single (Wildside)

These lads only get better. 'Watch Her Play' is an epic full-on rocker yet brought ahead of the pack by way of clever subtle guitar melodies layered under the main riff. Of the bonus tracks, 'It Seems' is a bit messy and loses direction, but the Hadfield/Bell penned ballad 'I Don't Feel' is just beautiful. Bryan Bell threatens to let loose his desperate but melancholy vocals then opts to hold back, ever increasing the urgency of the song. Masterful.

new zealand

CROWDED HOUSE *Locked Out* CD Single (EMI)

'Locked Out' is the third single from the stunning *Together Alone* album and is the rockier, more frenetic side of a still unbeliev-



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