

Dance Floor

Poor old Rob and Fab. I read in a recent *USA Today* that the boys are undergoing psychoanalysis over the trauma of finding out that they didn't sing on the Milli Vanilli records, implying of course that they were unaware of this fact until they read about it in the press. They're even blaming the devil now: Personally I can't see what the fuss is about. Only the Americans could possibly care about the situation or, for that matter, be surprised. Still, if they were dumbfuck enough to give someone like Milli Vanilli a Grammy for Best Single, they really deserve all they get. Next they'll be trying to tell us that New Kids On The Block sing on their own records. I bet their record company are really upset, you know, the integrity of the artist and all that being compromised. Ten million albums. The music industry is about units moved, that's the bottom line. Which is why I find it so hard to understand why so many of the companies are trying so hard to shoot themselves in the foot over parallel importing, something which, if kept in control, can only be good for their business. Considering the price, there are two sorts of buyers of dance imports. First up there are DJs, who, in my experience, tend to buy most of them. The benefits of these people having the records must be obvious. The old line about not wanting it played because it's not yet released is crap, because the more upfront kids have read about it, maybe heard it and probably seen some of the video months before local release, and they want it now. The power of the record company to dictate and isolate has basically disappeared with 1990s communication.

The second group are the hard core enthusiasts who don't wanna wait around for three months whilst somebody decides whether or not to release it. The Third Bass album was a point in question. Then, as often as not you get a lousy pressing or sleeve (for example, the appalling Australian Def Jam labels and sleeves) unless of course they decide to only put it out on cassette.

What the record companies do seem to miss is that parallels often provide the ground work for many of their acts.

Inner City, Snap, Soul II Soul, Ten City, De La Soul and MC Hammer were all initially (in Auckland at least) broken in the clubs long before their record company released or promoted them.

OK, enough rant, on with the vinyl. Well, the old school strikes back twice this month. Both RUN DMC and LL COOL J have delivered killers that should knock the grins off the faces of the Compton posse. LL's is a double A side featuring the title track of his current album, the tough funky 'Mama Said Knock You Out' (103 bpm) on one side, and a great remix of 'Around The Way Girl' (106 bpm), the semi-ballad track now beefed up; while RUN DMC's 'What's It All About' (109 bpm) takes a break beat from the Stone Roses, with a chorus stolen from Cilla Black (!) and a hard rap that knocks all the *Ghostbusters* / *Tougher Than Leather* shit out of the way. JAM MASTER JAY (Run DMC's DJ) is the guy behind the hilarious Afros. They appear on his label and are produced by him and Davy D. 'Feel It' (106 bpm) is on the B side of the 'Kicking Afrolicious' single and is already a dancefloor monster in Auckland. George Clinton would probably kill to produce a Funkadelic record this good these days, check out the intro.

FAZEI FM's 'Listen To The Band' (107 bpm) is high class British rap with a sample from Ripple, that deserves to do well. I don't have any idea who 2 TUFF are, but I think they may be Italian. God knows, who cares? 'Elevate Your Mind' (98 bpm) is a pleasant enough hip-hop track, but the real gold on this disc is 'Slow Down' (106 bpm) on the other side, which combines 'Hold On' and 'Ghetto Heaven' in a tribute to Soul II Soul and others who've slowed the beat down.

A 70s soul revival seems to be happening in Britain. Not Rare Groove, a la 1987, but new grooves. ASHLEY AND JACKSON'S 'Solid Gold' (112 bpm) could've come off any mid-70s Isaac Hayes album, if it wasn't for the obvious technology. That's pretty good, but the real winner is THE SOUND OF SCHOOM'S 'I Hate Hate' (110 bpm), a cover version of an obscure seventies Northern soul track with a wonderful vocal from somebody called Eusebe.

LOOSE ENDS follow up 'Don't Be A Fool' with 'Loves Got Me' (106 bpm), a funky drummer based track, best in its David Morales remix, while the new MICA PARIS single is 'South of the River' (102 bpm), a gorgeous Blacksmith remixed track that features a couple of essential non LP tracks on the flip.

I love TEENA MARIE'S Jazzie B produced 'Since Day One' (96 bpm), a searing torch ballad that may be too slow to dance to. An instant classic, and one of this year's best. From a NZ perspective, one of this year's oddest is the English cover version of Crowded House's 'Don't Dream It's Over' by LESS STRESS (102 bpm). This started life as a bootleg, getting lots of UK club play. It kind of rolls along and I suppose it works.

The record I hate most this month, and I'm pleased to say, almost everyone else does as well, is the new MALCOLM MCLAREN 'Opera House'. Tacky and lifeless, come back Sid Vicious, all is forgiven.

DADDY CHESTER, who graced the Auckland club scene for a few months earlier this year, is the guest vocalist on the MOODY BOYS' excellent *Journey Into Dubland* EP, a tribute to the great Jamaican dubmasters, standout tracks being 'Dub Me Right' (119 bpm), a 'Break For Love' based track with samples from the Doors and Silver Convention, and 'Lion Dance' (116 bpm).

The volume of hardcore underground techno stuff with bleeps coming through is phenomenal, although a lot of it is of varying quality, the best of it being from the RAGGA TWINS with 'Spliffhead' (129 bpm) a reggae/house crossover, the FRANKIE KNUCKLES based 'Give Me' by Greed (124 bpm); UNIQUE THREE'S 'Rhythm Take Control' (124 bpm) with a vocal from somebody called Karin; two on the Kickin' label, THE SCIENTIST'S 'Exorcist' (131 bpm), a moody frantic harder than hardcore track, and KICK SQUAD'S 'Soundclash' (125 bpm), which once again mixes ragga and techno; and finally JUNO'S glorious bassy 'Soul Thunder' (123 bpm) with a vocal mix on the flip.

Finally, I'd like to be the first to say "Fuck Bart Simpson".

That's it, I'm outta here.

SIMON GRIGG

Simon Gets Saucy



Duran Duran in their heyday were high priests of the good life, spunky celebrants of looks, clothes and talent, designer lifestylers par excellence.

They had it all big time: a string of classic hit singles, sexy videos, top model girlfriends, even a fanclub unofficially headed by Queen Durannie, Princess Di. But all eras come to an end and by the close of the decade, post-crash, post-yuppie, Duran Duran, marshmallow jet-setters, were peddling a brand of glamour well past its sell-by date. Twenty million record sales later, Duran Duran were paparazzi fodder rather than chart toppers.

Return Of The Super Smoothies

Roger Taylor became a gentleman farmer in Gloucestershire, Andy Taylor left for LA, Warhol groupie Nick Rhodes married an American and published a book of polaroid photographs while Simon Le Bon — using *Vogue* as a dating agency — married super model Yasmin. Which doesn't make an interview with Mr Le Bon right here in this Regent Hotel suite one Sunday afternoon any less of an event. After all, the words Simon Le Bon and "pop star" are interchangeable, he is essence of *Smash Hits* cover, a real live world famous person at large in Auckland for the weekend.

I'm standing beside a console table in the world famous person's Regent Hotel suite. On it stands two tiny speakers attached to a portable compact disc player. Lined up in front are dozens of compact discs in little plastic wallets like credit cards: Happy Mondays, Iggy Pop, Prince, a boxed set of Lennon... such is the hand luggage of the wealthy pop star. On the floor I step over a pair of Nike high tops and a pair of black Levis, in fact pairs of high tops and Levis seem to be distributed



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