



Sub Pop's Beat Happening.



Carter the Unstoppable Sex Machine



Susanna Hoffs



Keith Washington



Joni Mitchell

**SUSANNA HOFFS**  
**When You're A Boy**  
(Columbia)

Female post-punk guitar band scores chart success, moves mainstream, disbands and photogenic lead singer seeks solo status. Move over Belinda Carlisle, here comes Susanna Hoffs. Ah yes, but does she have the songs to support the image? Well, um... sort of.

There's definitely nothing here as stellar as the numbers Prince and Kimberley Rew once contributed to the band, no individual track to transport me to pure pop heaven. On the other hand the majority of tracks are certainly serviceable in a cutesy smooth kind of way. With a tad tougher production I can imagine such sprightly performances as 'This Time' and 'Only Love' well placed on the second Bangles album. Hoffs also tries to rekindle the Bangles' 'Eternal Flame' on two tracks, however, both are damp squibs.

Bookending the album are probably its two most obvious successes. 'My Side of the Bed' may be all air-brushed tease and pout but it's also insidiously memorable. And finally, David Bowie's 'Boys Keep Swinging' — hence the album title — cannily exploits the song's sexual uncertainty. Not startling, but shrewd enough to keep me interested for next time.

PETER THOMSON

**CARTER THE UNSTOPPABLE SEX MACHINE**  
**30 Something**  
(Rough Trade)

Carter are South London's alternative to the Pet Shop Boys, a wired-up, high octane dual equivalent of Billy Bragg's social rawness and realism. Carter are guitarists James Bob and Fruitbat and various machines and samples — a conglomerate that annoyed the right people in 101 Damnations.

30 Something is their first offering on the big time of Rough Trade and it's unputdownable. Their tour of the green and pleasant England opens with a headlong Beach Boys pastiche 'Surfing USA', throttles even wider into the alcohol abuse epiphany of 'Anytime Anyplace Anywhere' and 'A Prince In A Pauper's Grave', rubbishes mindless consumerism in the irresistible 'Shoppers Paradise' and reaches some sort of crescendo with the losers' anthem, 'Falling On A Bruise' which concludes with Michael Caine reciting his Alfie fatalism: "It seems to me if they ain't got you one way they get you another".

Carter offer no answers but like Bragg and the Gang of Four they're naive enough to tell it like it is with the sort of verve that's usually reserved for sex machines.

GEORGE KAY

**MANTRONIX**  
**The Incredible Sound Machine**  
(Capitol)

The new look Mantronix are back and they've definitely improved from last year's effort. Curtis Mantronix has always had a very deft touch on those mixer knobs and he seems to be settling into a style he's comfortable with on *The Incredible Sound Machine*. The beats are sharp and funky and Bryce Luvah along with Jade Trini do the vocals with enough power to make the whole deal worthwhile. Mantronix are at their best when they aim for a modern soul sound on tracks like 'Step To Me' or 'Put A Little Love On Hold', throwing a little passion in with the drumbeats. Mantronix still draws on his Electro heritage too, there's still plenty of moments like 'Make It Funky' where he gets a little loose. 'The Incredible

Sound Machine' is certainly not anything special, but it's listenable enough mainstream dance music. I'd still like to see the boy forget about being suave and just get down, dirty and back to basic again.

KIRK GEE

**KEITH WASHINGTON**  
**Make Time For Love**  
(Quest/Warner Bros) tape/CD

Mr Washington is a serious love stude, here's a sample, "All night, all night baby, we can wine and dine, make sweet love and take our time, all night, all night baby". Yep, there's no messing about with big Keith.

There is a danger of the big love hangover, like after ten tracks of romantic intensity you start to look for a little violence, maybe watch *Blind Date* or something.

But then again fans of the genre will get real excited over this, because this professional vocal coach turns on a classy set. Very much in the Anita Baker mode, gentle grooves of a acoustic nature, based around piano and saxophone. Produced and arranged mostly by Barry J. Eastmond, best known for his work with Freddie Jackson.

A moody set for those with romance in their genes.

KERRY BUCHANAN

**EPMD**  
**Business As Usual**  
(Def Jam)

Kicking in to the third album, Erik and Parrish create what at first seems to be a brick wall of noise. Impenetrable and dense, you just slam into it. The first four tracks define the new hardcore style, it's still that EPMD groove, but with an added edge. A lot of this album sounds like a Mack truck out of control, some of the tracks have names like 'Manslaughter', 'I'm Mad', 'Hit Squad Heist' and 'Rampage' which suggest what they sound like.

But the more you listen to it, the less you feel like you've been hit by a baseball bat, the groove and the rhyme becomes clearer.

First, there's the continuing saga of 'Mr Bozack', the ultimate homage to a rappers' dick, a theme that will never go away, as long as there exists R&B.

You have to remember that these are not exactly new age men, they have a tradition to work on. Like the reappearance of 'Jane', this time told through a tale of sexual mis-adventure and confused gender. It's a funky joke designed to make liberals shudder. So too is the first single 'Golddigger', a mass of scratch over a solid rap about a predatory female looking out for the dollars Erik and Parrish have made.

I like it when things get funky, like in a James Brown groove on 'For My People', the use of Eddie Kendrick's 'Keep On Truckin' on 'Underground' and the O'Jays on 'Give The People'.

They save the best for last with 'Funky Piano', one of these sample heavy things with the DJ going from beat to beat, there's Sugarhill galore and a nifty loop that rings like a bell in your head.

KERRY BUCHANAN

**COWBOY JUNKIES**  
**Whites Off Earth Now**  
(BMG)

Made back in 1988, *Whites Off Earth Now* was the Cowboy Junkies' debut offering recorded virtually live with no apparent overdubs, it's a recognisable precursor to the celebrated *Trinity Sessions*. This album has the same haunted confessional air of its successor, the same intimate portraits of pain and redemption. Margo Timmins achingly pure vocals are again the focal point mixed up

close to the Junkies' suitably spare backdrops.

The major surprise comes in the Junkies eschewing the country influences in favour of that other great American musical cornerstone, *da blues*.

In fact, there's only one original on show here, 'Take Me', which is pretty typical Junkies fare and really could

have appeared on later albums and not been out of place. Apart from their version of Springsteen's 'State Trooper' which with its pared down sense of despair is an obvious choice of cover, it's all prime time blues.

Such seminal, genre maestros as John Lee Hooker, Lightning Hopkins and Robert Johnson have their songs sucked into the Junkies milieu. Blues

landmarks like 'Baby Please Don't Go' and 'Crossroads' are remade and remodelled and it's all totally convincing.

Whatever their source of inspiration, it's still unmistakably the Cowboy Junkies, after all, nobody else sounds quite like them.

GARTH SEAR

# MUSICAL SOUNDS LTD

219 GREAT SOUTH RD, GREENLANE, AUCKLAND. Ph 520 1963 - 523 1426

## MAY MADNESS

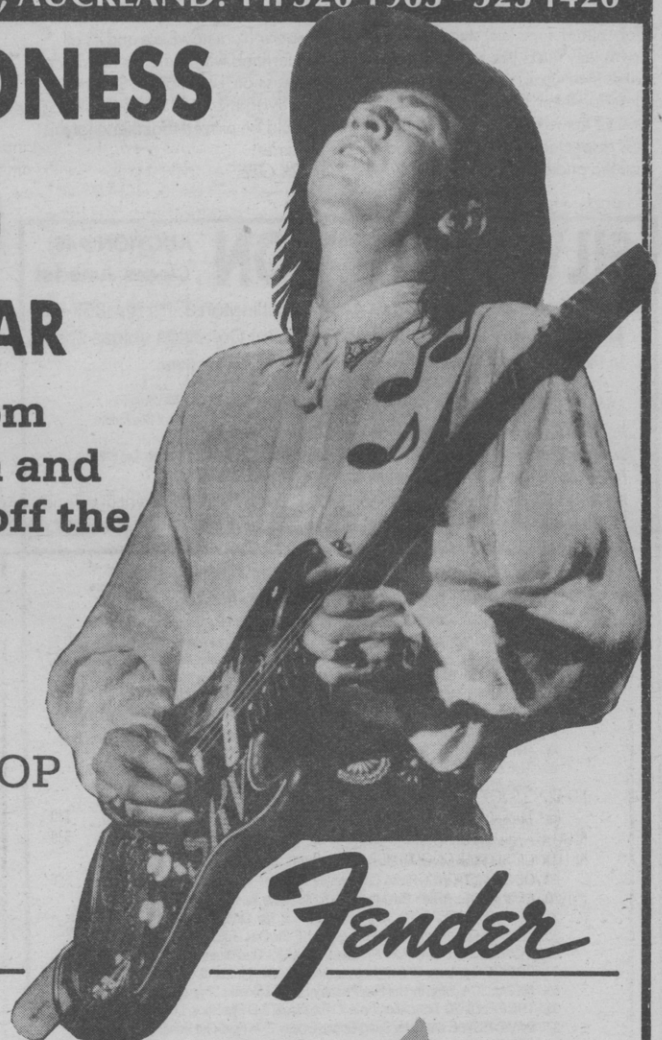
# \$300

## FOR ANY OLD GUITAR

**YES!** get that old guitar from under your bed, bring it in and we'll give you \$300 for it, off the price of any new Fender.

Choose from STD STRATS, TELECASTERS, STRAT PLUS, HEAVY METAL, REISSUES OR CUSTOM SHOP MODELS PLUS FREE Strings, Strap & Lead

NOTE — your trade-in guitar must be playable.



# Fender

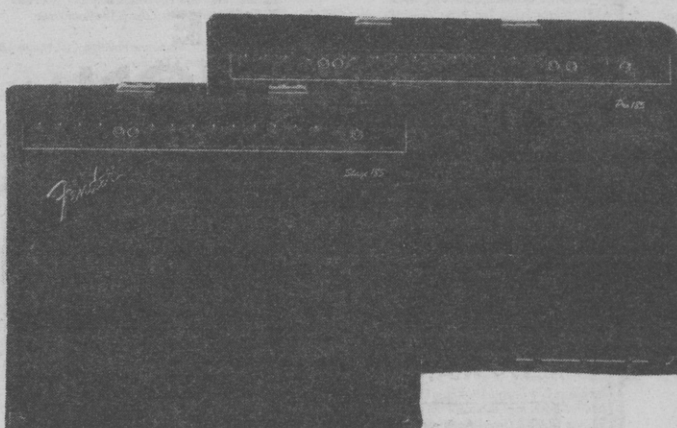
Regardless of age or size — we'll give you \$300 off the price of . . .

A NEW FENDER PRINCETON CHORUS 60 WATT STEREO COMBO AMP

# \$300

## FOR ANY OLD AMP

Features Include ■ Stereo Chorus ■ Distortion • FX Loop ■ Channel Switching • Foot Controller ■ Reverb ■ REC. RETAIL \$1195 or



3 year limited warranty on all Fender amps.

A NEW FENDER PRO 185. 2x12" COMBO AMPLIFIER. 160 WATTS

Features Include ■ Channel Switching ■ Distortion ■ Boost Function ■ Reverb ■ Limiter ■ FX Loop ■ 3 Way Foot Switch REC. RETAIL \$1595