

Petty's albums have always been frustrating affairs made up of the odd classic rocker climbing above general competence. On *Into The Great Wide Open* he's helped out again by Jeff Lynne on about half of the songs and that along with Mike Campbell's small writing contributions have given the album a consistency that's previously eluded Petty.

In fact, the first nine songs are minor triumphs of warm melodic rock'n'roll writing that are steeped in frontier imagery of open spaces, highways, sunsets and gunslingers — old standbys for sure but Petty and the Heartbreakers play them with assurance and an ear for what can only be termed as accessible authenticity.

'Learning To Fly' is a tune that's instantly familiar with its Willbury flavour and the bluesy slide guitar on the title track and 'All Or Nothin' adds sting to Petty's pleas. 'King's Highway' and 'The Dark Of The Sun' offer the jauntier side of Petty's material but with a nice feel for pathos while 'Out In The Cold' is when the rocker lets loose.

The last three songs may drop the pressure a mite but that still leaves nine straight humdingers for getting on with. Petty on a roll.  
GEORGE KAY

#### PAUL BRADY Trick or Treat (Fontana)

Fans of Bonnie Raitt's latest album *Luck of the Draw* will want to check out Paul Brady for his songwriting alone. For even though Raitt's album is stuffed full of fine songs Brady's two contributions — the cruisy, hit-destined 'Not The Only One' and the yearning title track — still stand out as highlights.

Brady is an Irishman in his mid-40s and a veteran of several minimally selling solo albums. Now, the fact that *Trick or Treat* finds him accompanied by a hot band comprising several of California's finest sessioneers is an obvious testament to Ms Raitt's influence and Fontana's faith. It's a faith founded on a set of songs that may well see Brady become just as favoured a source of material for others to cover as, say, John Hiatt. His lyrics embrace a similarly hard-won emotional wisdom while his music can switch from the gently melodic 'Nobody Knows' to driving rock on 'Can't Stop Wanting You'.

Brady is a strong but not particularly distinctive singer — he sounds like disconcertingly like Chris De Burgh in a couple of places — and wisely he doesn't offer us his versions of the songs recorded by Bonnie Raitt. Take 'The Crown', for example,

Instead she joins him for a terrific duet on the track which deservedly gives the album its name.

Standard wisdom has always been that any struggling singer-songwriter who wants others to record his work must give away his best material. *Trick or Treat* provides ample evidence that Paul Brady has plenty of songs just as good as those which initially brought his talent to a wider audience.  
PETER THOMSON

#### DADDY FREDDY Stress (Chrysalis)

As that classic Jimmy Castor Bunch song goes, "let's go back, way back", back to the early days of hip hop. Kool DJ Herc, arrived in New York, 1967, taking with him the Jamaican idea of the big bass sound systems, monstrous speaker boxes of thunder. Not only that, but the idea of the 'toaster', when the break beat of dub hits, the DJ starts talking, rhyming over the beat. So what do you think happens?

All hell breaks loose, rap starts to grow, via Herc's sound systems and filtered through the whole spectrum of Afro-American culture. Which brings us to Daddy Freddy, an Englishman talking raggamuffin in a hip hop style. Take 'The Crown', for example,

reggae voices set against Donald Byrd's seminal ethnicity rap, that works so well. As does his first single, 'Ragga House (All Night Long)', a strange (as only reggae acts can do) mixture of Stephen Bishop's "On and On" with Gussie Clark samples. Reggae, like rap, has that great ability to look anything straight in the eye and think 'how can I use this?', like using the Stones 'Miss You', Led Zep's 'Whole Lotta Love', mixing everything up, and presenting something brand spanking new.

*Stress* is a good title for this nifty collection of ragga beats, like a rubber band pulled to breaking point, the beats get stretched to their fullest, pumped up by producer Simon Harris. Key tracks are the remix of 'Go Freddy Go' with the dancehall fervour of 'Tenor Fly', 'Nuff Respect' with Aretha's tune banging around the speakers, 'Daddy Freddy's In Town', 'Article Don' and 'Roughneck Nuh Ramp'.

It's exciting, pulse pounding stuff, maybe a bit effervescent for some, in that there's no let up, everything is full speed, like a ragga roller coaster ride. Daddy Freddy, man of the moment.  
KERRY BUCHANAN

#### NATALIE COLE Unforgettable With Love (Elektra)

Of course it was inevitable that, sooner or later, Natalie Cole would record an album in homage to her father Nat. However the fact that it appeared this year almost smacks of career desperation. After her hugely and justifiably successful comeback with 1987's *Everlasting* the follow-up album was an unmitigated critical and commercial failure. So the move to milking the platinum cow of nostalgia must have seemed commercially prudent.

But for us, now, after all the hype, the question simply becomes, if we've so far avoided the marketing blitz and haven't heard the copy someone got for Father's Day or whatever, is this album actually worth investigation? The answer, gentle reader, depends on whether or not you know the versions by Natalie's dad. If you do you won't need *Unforgettable With Love*, if you don't, here's why.

The recordings which brought Nat King Cole world-wide stardom in the 50s and early 60s were violin soaked mush, the schamltziest MOR you're ever likely to spin off your radio dial. But there was an earlier Nat Cole who played piano and sang with his own

jazz trio in the 40s. That Nat Cole has a chapter devoted to him in Nick Tosches' book *Unsung Heroes of Rock n' Roll*. That Nat Cole gave inspiration to the likes of Chuck Berry, Ray Charles and many more besides. Even the Rolling Stones recorded one of his trio numbers on their debut LP. And that Nat Cole, if you haven't already done so, deserves investigation at your earliest opportunity. He had a voice of pure silk and a trio that swung with inimitable taste and style.

Daughter Natalie, who here sings music from both her father's distinctive eras, possesses a strong and flexible voice but it simply isn't in his class. So her versions, despite the impeccable musical backing, inevitably suffer by comparison. Her forte is the 80s-styled pop-funk which made *Everlasting* so enjoyable. On that album she took a song long associated with her father, stripped it down and reworked it. And once we'd got over hearing 'When I Fall In Love' shorn of much of its melodic flow, her version could be seen as a valid interpretation. Perhaps she should have done something similar with some of her father's repertoire here.  
PETER THOMSON

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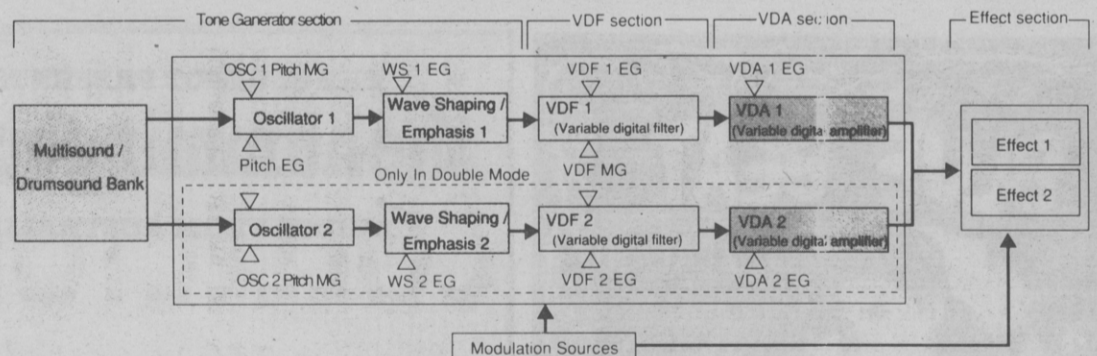
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