

a thunderous slap in the face of a song — "I don't shoot so give me a smile" bellows singer, guitarist and John Coltrane fan Page Hamilton. A nice introductory song about a rapist and a heavy beginning to an album that has tension but never quite explodes. 'Better', 'Unsung' and 'Ironhead' are also standout songs, featuring huge, yummy riffs and delicate (in a rough way) crazy leads rounded up awesomely with a flawless rhythm section. This kind of formula is familiar throughout the album with Page Hamilton's street bellow sometimes reduced to Ozzy-like vocals without losing any of that dog-throated intensity. Tracks like 'He Feels Bad', a nervous breakdown of a song, winds you up and makes you feel like doing something crazy like housework to its relentless rhythms.

'FBLA II', the sequel to 'FBLA' from their debut album *Strap It On* (Amphetamine Reptile) stands for Future Business Leaders of America, a nice (not) little ditty about young punks with attitude evolving into corporate businessmen with suits. Go figure.

This album is not so much songs as four people letting out bodily demons through their instruments. All their songs are exorcisms, you can tell these guys want to hit someone, it all comes out on this record. There's no niceness here, no sing-alongs but a great album to do something you hate to. Try it, you'll like it.

SHIRLEY CHARLES

THE WEDDING PRESENT
Hit Parade 1 (BMG)

This is the collection of the first six A and B sides of Wedding Present's threatened single-a-month campaign for 1991. The title *Hit Parade* would be ironic but the statistics are that the crawling, reasoning 'Three' and the more punkish 'Silver Shorts', where Gedge tries to hit notes outside of his modest range, both made number 14 in the charts, with a bullet.

Smart-ass comments aside, this is an imaginative bid to regain lost impetus that many felt they surrendered with the harangues of *Seamonsters*. The Gedge originals show an increasing appreciation of the singles' art form beginning with 'Blue Eyes' with its sediment of Albini toughness and ending with the eventually catchy 'California'.

The decision to stick covers on the B-sides has had mixed success. Gedge rates his cover of Lynch's 'Falling' as adding something to the original but I find it tedious. On the other hand they capture the essence of 'Cattle and Cane' which is the best you can achieve with a perfect original, and the Wedding Present are ideally suited for conveying the sense of suburban boredom that permeates 'Pleasant Valley Sunday'.

Realistically the bluntness of the Wedding Present assault offers scant room for adding multi-dimensions to originals but this whole single-a-month project has not only focused a little attention on the dying breed

of the seven-inch single but also helped the band to a slice of justified fame.

GEORGE KAY

THE CHILLS

Soft Bomb (Flying Nun)

Another line-up, another Chills album, a further tightening of the lens on Phillipps' view of the world and his place in it. Successive albums and band changes have brought into focus his obsession with trying to capture the moment or the emotion.

We all have our favourite Chills singles — 'Pink Frost' or 'Heavenly Pop Hits' but they are great songs, in isolation, contrasts to the growing emphasis on the flowing entities of their albums, music as a continuous stream as in *Soft Bomb's* seventeen tracks linked by the recurring title. This is the Chills best and most complete album not only because Phillipps' songs are more consistent, better arranged and lyrically more precise than ever but also the Killop's production matches the depth of the material.

There's some great songs here, some in the Chills almost nursery rhyme/folk delivery and others like Van Dyke Park's brilliant string arrangement on 'Water Wolves'. The single 'Male Monster From the Id' with its Jekyll and Hyde admission, relives the classic pop exuberance of 'Heavenly Pop Hit' and the love-from-a-distance angles of 'So Long' and 'Halo Fading' are beautifully delivered.

On the 'Song For Randy Newman' Phillipps identifies himself with the Syd Barretts and Nick Drake's — the outsider casualties of rock n'roll, and explains how his need to escape the complacency of NZ has removed him from emotional security. Deep stuff but at a more physical level, on 'Background Affair' and 'Sleeping Giants', social protest is hammered home. Although all the songs deserve attention the title track 'Soft Bomb' (not the shorter II and III) is a perceptive analysis of compromise and the long trip from the ideals of the Clean to the betrayal of "those harnessed, harmless stars".

There isn't the space to do the rest of the record justice, suffice to say this is a superb, coherent album and joins *Hellzapoppin* and *Here Comes The Cars* as the local highs for the year.

GEORGE KAY

MEGADETH

Countdown to Extinction (Capitol)

Last year's offering from Megadeth, 'Rust In Peace', firmly re-established them as the premier exponents of hook laden heavy metal. *Countdown To Extinction* is not the world-beating record one may have expected but it is certainly a positive step for a group once dogged by internal instability.

Roping in Marty Friedman (ex Cacophony) on lead guitar was an inspired move. He has brought an originality to the group that puts them miles ahead of any other metal

group. This is very apparent on 'Ashes In Your Mouth' and perhaps the finest track, 'Architecture of Aggression'. Both Freidman and the Megadeth spinal cord, Dave Mustaine, have resurrected the spirit of UFO/ Michael Schenker group and put it in a musical atom bomb fit for the 90s. The Nuclear weapon analogy is no coincidence.

Mr Mustaine is still obsessed with the various armaments of the United States military complex.

The only criticism that one could level at this record is that some tracks appear rushed. The album does not seem as instantly listenable or cohesive as *Rust In Peace*. Megadeth have perhaps sacrificed some of the song crafting timespan to keep up the momentum of releases. They are no doubt eager to put their track record of inconsistency behind them.

Megadeth have carved out a new melodic niche in a fundamentally extinct musical genre that has largely been abandoned by those who once stood at its peak. Unashamed of their heritage, Megadeth are the only traditional metal group that hold any long term interest for the disillusioned metal music fan.

LUKE CASEY

THE TROGGS

Athens Andover (Essential)

THE STAIRS

Mexican R&B (Go! Discs)

Two novelty items — one intentional, the other by default. The Troggs, aided by three-quarters of REM, are the latter. With ridiculously self-serving liner notes from the Troggs old producer Larry Page, who claims that this album will become "a landmark in R&R history", the scene is set for one of the greatest unfulfilled boasts in R&R history.



The Stairs

Chief Trogg Reg Presley, when the band toured NZ on a resurrection tour many years back, had to stand with his legs apart to hold his paunch up. And yet on *Athens Andover* he still feels obliged to do the horny myth trip and so 'Crazy Annie' has got "hot lets, hot pants" and when romance is the caper as in 'Together' he reveals profoundly that 'we got up to dance because we both liked the tune' and promises the great lie of sixties pop, "I love you only... I'll always be true."

Ignoring titles like 'Hot Stuff' and 'I'm In Control', the only thing left is a thinly disguised re-make of 'Love Is All Around' in 'Don't You Know'. Buck, Mills and Berry must be wondering how they got involved in this attempt at re-kindling a very old and extinguished pop flame.

Liverpool trio, the Stairs, make it clear that satire's their game with the mono recording claims and the three amigos posing on a very sixties cover layout. Jagger and the Stones are their major targets/heroes and Edgar Summertime has a brilliant, sharp wide-voweled drawl like Prince Mick and he uses it to full effect on 'My Joanna' and 'Sweet Thing'.

Elsewhere it's spot-the-source as 'Mr Window Pane' nicks the psychedelic fell from the Fab Four's 'Rain' and the 'Weed Bus' is a cunning cross between the Stones' 'The Last Time' and the Who's 'Magic Bus' and 'Fall Down the Rain' is a dead cert for 'Day Tripper'.

And so it goes like an in-house joke, very clever, but after nineteen tracks, very pointless.

GEORGE KAY

SILVERFISH

Organ Fan (Creation/Flying In)

The cover of this is a brilliant parody of the Boys Own/ dungeons and dragons metal aesthetic: an unfeasibly muscular Aztec warrior (or something) is carrying his swooning groupie over a mountain range Laibach would be proud of. Silverfish go way beyond mere mockery of the Great Tradition, though: they make it utterly redundant by kicking so much ass that a large intestine emerges through their unfortunate victim's mouth.

The album's produced by Mr J Foetus Thirlwell, so you don't get much flatulent feedback or soloing, just one explosive bass pattern after another, a constant build up of nervous energy that's never released or dispersed. Imagine, if you can, SPUD if they were suddenly infected by Albini's obsessive will-to-concise. What you won't be able to imagine is Lesley Ranganine's vocal style. It's a million miles from the tormented howl of, say, Courtney Love; it's something like an aural translation of the most sarcastic smirk human idiocy deserves, a sound that suggests huge untapped reserves of destructive force, sometimes almost like Diamanda Galas in her re-



AND



PRESENT

DIRECT FROM THE U.S.A.

AL PITRELLI

GRADUATE OF BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC

Guitarist with.....

- ★ ALICE COOPER
- ★ MICHAEL BOLTON
- ★ TAYLOR DAYNE
- ★ BILLY SHEEHAN
- ★ GREG ALLMAN
- ★ DANGER DANGER

An exciting educational
GUITAR AND AMPLIFIER CLINIC
featuring the very latest in
gear and techniques
ALL AGES WELCOME!

TICKETS FROM YOUR LOCAL
PEAVEY DEALER - \$10.00



AUCKLAND

The Powerstation, 33 Mount Eden Rd.
Tuesday Sept 8th, 7:30 pm

WELLINGTON

James Cabaret, Hania St.
Wednesday Sept 9th, 7:30 pm

CHRISTCHURCH

Southern Blues Club, 198 Madras St.
Thursday Sept 10th, 7:30 pm

BRISBANE

Southbank Cultural Centre.
Auditorium, Sunday Sept 13th, 2:00 pm

SYDNEY

The Phonician Club, Broadway.
Monday Sept 14th, 7:30 pm

MELBOURNE

The Carousel, Aughtie Drive, Albert Park.
Tuesday Sept 15th, 7:00 pm

ADELAIDE

The Front Page, 90 Hindley St.
Thursday Sept 17th, 7:30 pm

PERTH

Charles Hotel, 509 Charles St., North Perth
Sunday Sept 19th, 2:00 pm

AT LEAST

25%

DISCOUNT

OFF ALL...

- DOD footpedals
- Digitech Rackmounts, effects, mixers etc
- ROSS Guitar, bass, keyboard amps
- Audix (USA) Microphones
- Kittyhawk (Germany) Amps, preamps

PHONE FOR FURTHER DETAILS - NOW!

Mainline Music
TAKAPUNA

42 Taharoto Rd, Takapuna, Auckland
Telephone (09) 486 2285, 489 5919