

# Singles Singles Singles...

It seems that the *Nouvelle Vague* is commanding more and more interest among the singles releases these days — partly because of the abysmal quality of most of the competition, but also because those surfing on it put more faith in the singles market than the rest of the (white) rock business. Consequently, if you want more than the single-from-the-album-of-the-same-name syndrome you are going to have to look to the punks for salvation, however much it grates.

Ironically, the first company to have the distinction of firing the Sex Pistols has now released a record by the band formed by the first musician to have the distinction of being fired by them.

Glen Matlock fell out with the other Pistols because of his publicly-stated affection for sixties pop, and this single shows it. If "Rich Kids" by **Rich Kids** is (ahem) New Wave at all, it is in the American idiom — Richard Hell, Tom Petty et al. — but apart from the obligatory buzz-saw guitar, it is really Pure Pop for Now People.

If the New Zealand release of the Rich Kids album depends on the success of their single, I can't see it taking much more than a month.

**The Tom Robinson Band** second release, featuring "Sing If You're Glad to be Gay" has plenty of the expected sloganeering and clenched fist rock and roll, but there is also an almost vaudevillian taste for a singalong.

"Glad to be Gay," which I imagine you won't be hearing on your transistor, has a tune which Kurt Weill would have been proud of, and the sloganeering is carried off with more wit than likes of the dreary Clash will ever manage.

Of all the so-called punk bands, **The Stranglers** got off to the quickest start into the limelight, and have come closest to establishing some kind of cross-over audience. Even if their macho posturings make them fair game for taunts of being the Bad Company of the safety pin set, it still can't be denied that they have a real flair for well-constructed, hammer and anvil rock and roll.

"Five Minutes," which is not on *No More Heroes*, slams its way into the subconscious very quickly, and it is obviously its obsessive drive which has made it into a stage favourite. I haven't got the faintest idea what it's all about, and even less about the flip, "Rok it to the Moon" which may well

be an advantage.

Of course, punkdom is not a movement — it's a market — and some of the strangest things wind up popular. **Bob Marley and the Wailers** released one of the several potential singles off *Exodus*, "Jamming" which gives physical overtones to the word that I don't think the Allman Brothers had in mind. Not particularly notable you'd think.

On the B side, however, is an obscure little ditty called "Punky Reggae Party" which has become quite a fave amongst London punks I am told, and even locally has been racking up plenty of play on the juke box in the Globe.

It is a description of a mind-boggling shindig where spike tops rub against dread locks, the Wailers fraternise with "The Damned, The Jam, The Clash", and "No Boringoldfarts will be there". It must do wonders for the self esteem of your average punk.

But, despite their pre-emption of the interesting end of the singles market, the New Wavers haven't got it entirely to themselves. Some of the oldest warhorses can still pull off a good one now and again.

**Elton John**, who has always had more re-

spect for singles than most of his contemporaries, has chosen to make his comeback on the hit parade rather than with an album.

The rest certainly seems to have done him good. "Ego" is a more convincing attack on the pop world than he has managed for some time. The hooks are catchier, the pace more frantic, the words less self-indulgent. In fact, if I didn't know better, I'd say he'd been listening to Split Enz.

The flip is notable too. It is a song (with real words) that is credited simply, "E. John". Perhaps he's finally shaking off the eminently disposable Bernie Taupin.

If you listen to "I Can't Hold On," you notice the oh-so-solid rhythm vocals, the immaculate harmonies by the gentleman back-up singer, the instantly-memorable hook-line. It just has to be Fleetwood Mac.

But it isn't

**Karla Bonoff** is one of a small collection of women singers who are currently scuffling in Linda Ronstadt's shadow, and on the evidence of this record, she has chosen the Mac Method for Making Good.

There are worse ways to make a mint. **Francis Stark**.



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## Letters

Now that the Easter 'jazz bonanza' is behind us for another year, many musicians and enthusiasts must be asking themselves 'what now?'

On looking back to the festival at Trillos, it serves as a painful reminder of N.Z.'s lack of confidence in its own artists. Those local musicians performing, or at least improvising, can be counted on one hand.

Granted, the accusation that the Jazz Festival committee were excluding not only local musicians but all contemporary forms of the music was alleviated by the late addition to the line-up of Mike Nock. Mike, however, was given a paltry twenty minutes at the start of each programme and returned to the States very dissatisfied with the slapdash organisation. Still let's not have those weird avant-garde chappies going on far too long before we get down to the real old-fashioned bebop everyone's come to hear!

One good thing came out of it though — the decision of some of N.Z.'s top jazz rock groups to combine in their own festival later this year. Let's hope readers of *Rip It Up* will give us their full support and come and hear where jazz is today, not where it was twenty years ago.

**Phil Broadhurst**



**The management promises not to ever again delete the letters column as been the habit in the past.**

We refer to your review of the Earth, Wind & Fire album "All 'n All" in your very fine March issue. The second to last paragraph states that only the first shipment of this album received the original deluxe double cover. We would like to advise your readers that this statement is not factual, and that all copies sold in New Zealand of this album are in the deluxe cover.

We take your reviewer's comments as a compliment to our New Zealand produced sleeve and we are pleased that he could not tell that it was a locally printed version.

You have probably noticed that since CBS Records New Zealand opened (this January), all our sleeves have been four colour front and back, and where the overseas version features a deluxe fold-out, this has been retained for New Zealand.

**John McCready CBS Records**

## Them'n'Us By W. Dart

Let's make up sides. We're the left-wing and they're the right-wing. You know — all those people who go to Symphony concerts and squat on hard chairs in the Art Gallery every Thursday lunchtime to hear some pianist or other. Fair makes ya sick to see 'musicians' who haven't even heard of Joni Mitchell and Randy Newman. Anyway, we know that it takes the magic name of Tchaikovsky to pull them out of their padded cells, part money from wallets and plop plump posteriors in town hall seats for two hours. And one day they will all be lucky enough to hear the *1812 Overture* with real cannons. It is certainly pretty vomitous to see the dreck that they seem to enjoy when they let their hair down — good old Ron Goodwin or Leroy Anderson.

It's a bit sad the way their music seems to stop just before Christmas and gather up to a creaking start in March sometime. And all that decadent ritual that the right-wing seems to go in for! Like all those *Messiahs* every Christmas. Just imagine Johnny Rotten writing a Christmas album which could be regurgitated every Yuletide by amateur punk groups around the country.

They all have sealed ears — the safety pins in our ears are purely for deco, 'daring. Watch them trying to lay the heavy word on our music — doesn't work, does it? But then are we doing the same thing? How many of us know this right-wing stuff only via Emerson Lake and Palmer. This would be the equivalent of a right-wing reactionary knowing Joni Mitchell's new album through a cover version by James Last.

Well the Auckland Festival has come and gone, and there certainly wasn't much of our music being offered, apart from the regular at the Island of Real. But what an opportunity, Siouxsie, for some of us to unglue the old headphones from our ears, and drag into town to pick up some opera or something.

And there were three on in town. At the

Maidment we had a double of Mozart's *Impressario* in thirties deco and *Tristan and Iseult* by our own Gillian Whitehead, which was brilliantly staged and performed but perhaps a little lacking in blood and guts for some tastes.

But Purcell's *Fairy Queen* — now that there Purcell, he's a pretty approachable guy and with that line-up of overseas soloists it was almost like a minor supersession in rock terms. But Purcell as a punk rocker? Well, when the two fairies were pinching the Poet black and blue (a concert version, so cheeks weren't bruised) who would expect the poor man to scream out "Hold, you damned tormenting punk!"

Certain Purcell is able to compete with Johnny R for sensationalistic lyrics. take this little catch for instance — and it is not the only example by any means:

*As Roger last night to Jenny lay close,  
He pulled out his budget and gave her a dose.*

*The tickling no sooner kind Jenny did find,  
But with laughing she purged both before and behind.*

*"Pox take it!" quoth Roger; he must himself be beside  
that gives Pulls, against wind and 'gainst tide.*

Anyway, it was rather sad to see so few bobs at this Purcell opera, and an average audience age of about 40 to 45. It is just tremendously vital and "alive" music. There is high camp (with even a drag scene), low comedy (a drunk song), astonishingly beautiful moments of pure romanticism and above all, a sheer revelry in the pure and unadulterated sound — which is what I thought a lot of rock was all about.

So let's stop getting our classics in minimal doses at fourth hand, get out and wrap your ears round something new — P.S. I took my safety pins off first.