

records

Marley Delivers the Goods

Prime Time Television

Television Adventure Elektra

Television have a lot to live up to. Their first record received such universally good press that any sign of faltering, however slight, might be taken as evidence that it was all too good to last.

The obvious way out for their second album would have been to carefully reconstruct their debut, *Marquee Moon*, in the best tradition of second albums. Instead, *Adventure* covers new ground. Side Two has a strong resemblance to *Marquee Moon*, but Side One contains five songs which are more closer to the traditional concept of rock and roll songs, and which could help Television to make the step from being fashionable to being established.

Side one cuts any possibility of Television turning into the Pink Floyd of the Blank Generation, as the long guitar work-outs are kept in check, and a much wider range of styles is revealed, from the neo-Byrds 12-string of "Days" to the rock and roll of "Fox-Hole". It is hard to believe that they

have gone far enough to persuade New Zealand's timid radio programmers to let the record anywhere near their turntables, but they seem likely to impress a lot of those who do hear.

One thing is for sure, *Adventure* should convince everybody who is still in any doubt that Television have nothing whatever to do with the punk label. They demonstrate enough versatility to dispel the possibility of the band being caught in a stylistic strait-jacket, and have nothing in common with the pin-head bop of the Ramones.

As a final pointer to the band's possibilities, the last song on Side One, the ethereal "Carried Away" does away with the usual two-guitar backing to float along on Tom Verlaine's organ playing like some latter-day "Whiter Shade of Pale". Whether he will use this kind of format more is debatable, but it shows up the extent to which Verlaine and his band are aware of the dangers of becoming too highly stylised.

Very few bands could have made *Marquee Moon*, even fewer could have followed it up with an album that was significantly different, yet every bit as good.
Francis Stark

Bob Marley & The Wailers Kaya Island

It's like ... you reach a certain spot, right? In your journey, it's like you're driving down the highway and you reach a rest-place and you go in and get a cup of coffee and t'ing and this an that. Slow down and take it e-e-e-easy ... 'Easy Skanking', y'know." Bob Marley on *Kaya*.

Let's get this right out in the open: *Kaya* is 1978's most rankin' commercial elpee — a celebration.

Well ... *Exodus* was for Marley the first record in the new phase of his musical expression. A rhythm & blues, soul, disco synthesis within the bounds of reggae. An approach designed to win him a larger audience without sacrificing any originality. His ploy has proved remarkably successful, especially in Britain and Europe where he has undoubted number one status.

Bob has always had an ear for good music outside the reggae idiom. *Catch A Fire*, a masterpiece and his first Island release displayed art-rock overtones — Pink Floyd, King Crimson etc. A return to a more traditional reggae stance delivered *Burnin'*,

Natty Dread, *Live and Rastaman Vibration*. These albums, all of them excellent, kept his audience growing steadily. It was not until *Exodus* however that the real potential Marley audience could be seen.

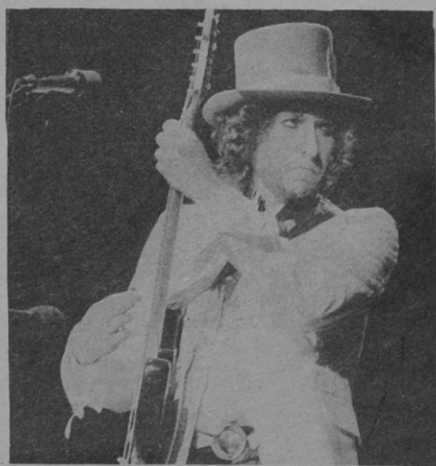
Now *Kaya* ... These songs were largely recorded at the sessions for *Exodus*. They represent however a lighter more optimistic view of the world, rather than the call to arms *Exodus* portrayed ... and, to my mind, *Kaya* is a superior album because it is so much fun. A party album par excellence! Not one bad note, wasted lyric or indulgent solo. Marley's voice could not be better. Every phrase has that sexual, knowing, lilt.

Obviously Bob Marley is setting himself up as the prophet come superstar of reggae music. Some may dislike his stance but one can't discount his courage and, if you believe in music, he cannot be faulted. Personally I can't wait for the next step in the Marley plan for world reunification.

So ... If you want one album to wash away those disco overdose blues ... *Kaya* is the one. Rastafari! Seen!
Ras Roger Jarrett



Bob Paints his Masterpiece



Bob Dylan Masterpieces CBS

Bob Dylan may not be in the Elvis Presley class yet, but he is getting pretty heavily anthologised. After *Greatest Hits Volume I*, *II* and *III* comes *Masterpieces*, about two hours of selected Dylan songs, ranging from "Song to Woody", off his first album, to "Lay Lady Lay" from *Hard Rain*. Of course, it doesn't include any cuts from Dylan's two Asylum albums, and thus contributes further to the burial that *Planet Waves* seems doomed to suffer.

For the statistics freaks, the only album not represented is (of course) *Dylan*; the albums with the most songs (four each) are *Freewheelin'*, *Bringing It All Back Home*, and *Desire*; there are six songs not previously available at 33½ RPM (except for those of you who have an original mono pressing of *Greatest Hits Vol. I*, who, of course, have "Positively 4th Street") and

there must be scores of other ways of categorising the contents of *Masterpieces*.

The six sides seem to have been arranged with some kind of thematic plan in mind. Some of them obviously adhere to a common type. Side four, for example, has a representative sample of the 'protest' songs, and side six of love songs. Some of the others are a little harder to typify, but you can't help feeling that they have been arranged, and not just thrown together. I don't know how much Dylan himself had to do with the selection, but it is speculations and little historical considerations that make retrospective albums interesting.

As always, there could be quibbles with various omissions, but it is hard to see how they could have been accommodated without extending the collection out to four discs. Still, I would have liked to have seen "Visions of Johanna", "Tonight I'll Be Staying Here with You", "The Wicked Messenger", "Man in Me", and "You're a Big Girl

Now" in there somewhere. Perhaps we'll have to wait until *Masterpieces Vol II*.

If you don't own yourself any great number of Dylan albums, I suppose this would suffice, although any compilation reduces the feel generated by a single album. For those of you who have some of the more obvious Dylan landmarks, this is an ideal way of fleshing out your stock. For those of you who aspire to the lot, I know there is no hope, and even one new or variant recording, would persuade you to buy *Masterpieces*. The fact that there are seven, including the singles, "4th Street", "Could You Please Crawl Out Your Window" and "George Jackson", means there is no way out.

Some people are train spotters, some collect paua shell jewel boxes, some people look through second-hand shops for original mono copies of *Greatest Hits Vol. I*.
Francis Stark

Talking Heads Debut

Talking Heads Talking Heads 77 Phillips

We have all heard the phrase "new wave". It is a rather silly blanket term for any remotely original rock-and-roll that has surfaced during the last eighteen months. It encourages the foolish association of English punk bands with Rhythm and Blues revivalists and even with current New York experimenters. Such mental sloppiness is lamentable.

American band Talking Heads are perhaps the most misplaced bedfellows of all within this so called movement. It is an historical accident that Talking Heads nurtured an audience at CBGBs, the club in New York also known as a venue for the Ramones and Television. Talking Heads are as different from these two bands as each is different from the other.

For one Talking Heads draw from sources people like the Ramones shun.

Using a standard small band line up the Heads profess and develop a taste for pop, soul, disco. "The big difference between us and punk groups is that we like K.C. and the Sunshine Band," says Chris Frantz, the Heads' bass player, "you ask Johnny Rotten if he likes K.C. and the Sunshine Band and he'll blow snot in your face." After all Talking Heads are reputed to cover an Al Green standard in their live show.

However, the real proof comes in the form of the band's much acclaimed maiden L.P. *Talking Heads 77*. Released belatedly in N.Z. it is in many ways a difficult album. Not because like Television's output it demands a re-thought aesthetic but because it is an amazingly complex welding of rhythms, melodies, catchy arrangements and suggested styles.

Talking Heads 77 takes at least half a dozen listenings before it begins to sink in. One has to accustom oneself to singer David Byrne's peculiarly aggressive voice, to the sheer wealth of melodic fragments, to structural changes that occur with astounding rapidity. There is little wonder that Talking Heads' New York crowd is supposed to be swarming with folk who have intellectual pretensions, college students and young academics. However out of vogue the description, this is intellectual music. I am even tempted to believe that

had Talking Heads first emerged in Britain they would have run into critical flak as art school clever-dicks.

But because Talking Heads are demanding is no reason to run scared. Eventually 77 is sing-a-long. David Byrne is able to conjure more than his fair share of tunes which ingratiate their way into the consciousness. I'm not wholly convinced about the splendid virtues claimed by many for *Talking Heads 77*, but it has slowly become a record I enjoy. And that's not to be sneezed at.

Not the least part of the enjoyment derives from Byrne's lyric talent. As a songwriter David Byrne specialises in persona pieces. This has earned him comparisons with Randy Newman that are misleading. Where Newman is economical and enigmatic, Byrne is prosy attempting to imitate the mental progressions of characters ranging from civil servants to psychopaths. As such he is attempting a fairly original combination of elements and achieves a fair measure of success. Like other features of this album the lyric content takes time to assimilate which is probably as good an indication as any that it will take many more playings before it palls.

And I intend to give *Talking Heads 77* those several more playings.
Bruce Belsham

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