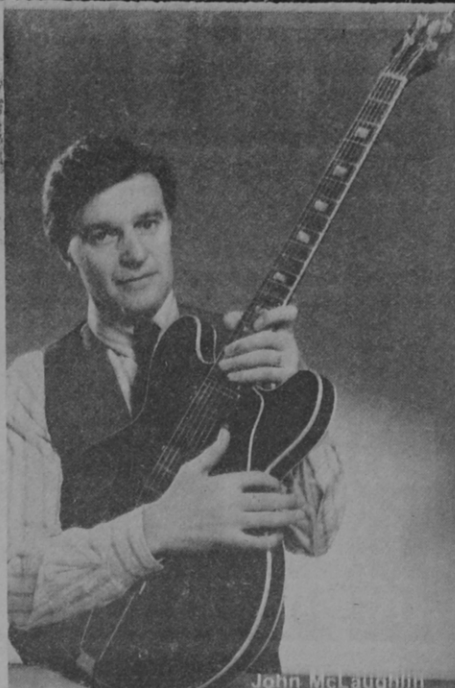
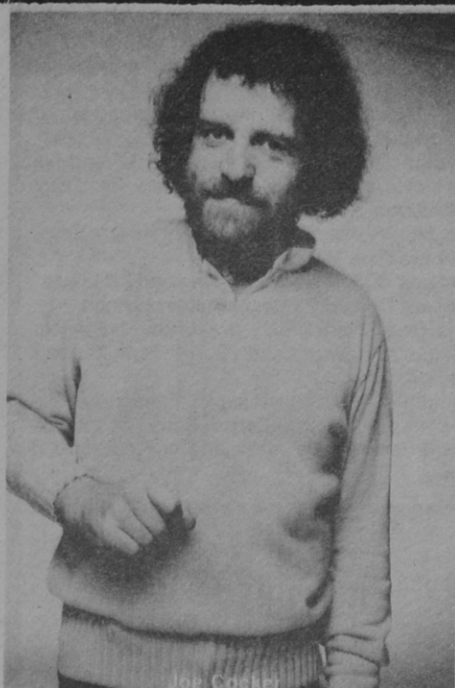


Leon Russell



John McLaughlin



Joe Cocker

## RECORDS

**Johnny McLaughlin**  
Electric Guitarist  
CBS

John McLaughlin has dropped the Mahavishnu tag. The title of this album derives from a business card McLaughlin used to proffer when he was a kid guitarist on the way up. Remember that name, right?

One might argue that McLaughlin's devotion to the mystic Sri Chinmoy led him down paths that were to the detriment of his music. The severing of the public association with his guru has put the guitarist firmly back in the musical vanguard, breathing new life into a form that he (and his associates) virtually invented, the so-called jazz-rock fusion.

Fusion had become a cul-de-sac for so many musicians attempting to milk its commerciality. Here, McLaughlin, with a stellar cast, drives so hard toward the end of the tunnel that the light blinds.

For the seven tracks, he has assembled five different groups of the most noteworthy jazz-rock players, most of whom have been prominent in McLaughlin's past. Included are Billy Cobham, Stanley Clarke, Jerry Goodman, David Sanborn, Jack Bruce, Tony Williams and David Carlos Santana.

The music ranges from the propulsive opening "New York on My Mind", which duplicates the sound of the original Mahavishnu Orchestra, to the closing solo guitar piece, "My Foolish Heart," which broods gently after the hectic guitar-drum dialogue between McLaughlin and Cobham on the preceding "Phenomenon: Compulsion."

After some meandering albums and a spell away from the electric axe with the acoustic intricacies of Shakti, John McLaughlin is back with what may be his best album yet.

**Ken Williams**

**Janis Ian**  
In Concert  
Interfusion

This album is virtually a song-by-song recording of the concert which the singer gave in Auckland last year. So if you enjoyed the concert, this review is quite superfluous. There is the obligatory "Jesse" and "At Seventeen", as well as a selection of songs from her four other Interfusion albums.

I complained of the concert that Ian didn't have enough variety in her songs, and a touch of humour here and there would not be amiss. The one light touch of the concert, "New York in the Springtime" unfortunately gets off to a bad start with a cool audience response and an underrecorded opening.

Ian is a smooth craftsman, albeit a trifle cynical. And considering the horrendous reception that the beautiful *Present Company* album got, who can blame her for not making waves these days.

I'm not really knocking the album, as it is rather a pleasant reminder of the concert, but if anybody had the other four Interfusion albums, they might be worried about the paucity of new songs on this live set.

**William Dart**

**Joe Cocker**  
A Luxury You Can Afford  
Asylum

It's a slimmer Joe Cocker that graces the cover of his latest album, his first for Asylum, to the twelve - pints - a - day - man who toured here with the American Standard Band last year. Cocker's congeniality and easy going attitude have put him at the mercy of many sharp rock businessmen (Leon Russell springs to mind) with the result that he has continually slipped from the formidable R & B presence of his first album.

His new album seems to be an attempt to put much of his past chaos well and truly behind him. As he comments himself on Phil Driscoll's very moving "Wasted Years" — "Phil Driscoll wrote this especially for me. Some might say it sums up my life!" Driscoll is a young writer from

Jacksonville whose two songs on the album, the aforementioned "Wasted Years" and the beautiful "Boogie Baby", aided by Cocker's interpretation easily steal the thunder from versions of "Watching the River Flow" and a rather heavy-fisted "I Heard It Through the Grapevine".

Allen Toussaint, who produced the album at Muscle Shoals with the usual collection of flawless musicians, has one of his own songs, "Fun Time" included, an excellent piece of funk written especially for Cocker. "A Whiter Shade of Pale" was tailor-made for Cocker's Sheffield soul treatment and guitarist Larry Byrom leads

the melody line with plenty of feeling.

*Luxury* is a well organized and professionally executed album which proves that Cocker is still one of the finest blues singers around, but in 1978 people don't seem to care anymore.

**George Kay**

**Leon Russell**  
*Americana*  
Paradise

My friend Phil and I always disagreed about Leon Russell. Phil claimed Russell had a horrible voice and made annoyingly eccentric al-

bums but occasionally wrote beautiful songs which, mercifully, someone else recorded. I defended Russell's singing as distinctive and always found the albums impressively original. I regard *Carney* ('72) as Russell's masterpiece, with *Will O' the Wisp* ('75) close behind. Phil hates both but likes George Benson singing their ballads.

Since '76 Phil's been happier about Russell's new music than I have. Russell got married and with his wife made two albums full of smooth love songs. Phil liked the vocals and production; I feared marital bliss was driving Russell to the middle of the road.

Now on *Americana* Mrs Russell is absent, apparently having left hubby alone with the dog. And if there's some ensuing maudlin lovesickness it's well balanced by numbers which show a resurgence of Leon's old spirit.

However he must share the credit for this. The jaunty brass work is courtesy of Chicago and nearly all the songs are co-written by that inveterate oddball-cum-hustler Kim Fowley.

The songs remain conventional but are strong with it. The sound is still polished but there's fire too.

Phil and I are both pleased with *Americana*.  
**Peter Thomson**

## RIP IT UP

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## BOOMTOWN RATS TONIC FOR THE TROOPS



**IT'S GETTING HOTTER**  
(and I don't just mean the weather)

**THIN LIZZY**  
**LIVE AND DANGEROUS**



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