

## Records

## Second Visions

Magazine  
Secondhand Daylight  
Virgin

The Only Ones  
Even Serpents Shine  
CBS

Second albums can be difficult especially if the first met with glowing, near ecstatic, response from press and public alike.

Magazine and the Only Ones have created their own unmistakably individual character; the former, fronted by balding ex-Buzzcock Howard Devoto, have already been credited with the brilliant single "Shot By Both Sides", and Devoto's bleak conception of reality in the album *Real Life*. Following such a beginning has its problems. The Only Ones, revolving around the copiously talented Peter Perrett, also made the initial big splash with two excellent singles, "Lovers of Today" and "Another Girl, Another Planet" as well as with a sound debut album.

It's a credit to both bands that they've managed to surpass such auspicious beginnings with their second albums.

Magazine's *Secondhand Daylight* is a maturation of the morbid threatening power that was present on "Motorcade" and "The Light Pours Out of Me" from *Real Life*. As a vocalist Devoto has also matured, gone are the Steve Harley nuances of "Beautician", replaced instead by a consistent depth that his voice occasionally lacked on the first album.

Lyricaly, he continues the same themes of a stark world devoid of compassion in an individual and general sense, but in *Secondhand Daylight* he conveys them with more confidence and vocal resonance. "Rhythm of Cruelty" gives you some idea as to Devoto's de-sensitized outlook:

*Because in my drunken stupor I've  
got to admire  
Your ingenuity  
And I nod my head oh so wisely to the*



*rhythm of your cruelty.  
Or again in "Permafrost":  
Today I bumped into you again  
I have no idea what you want  
As the day stops dead at the place  
where we're lost  
I will drug you and f\*\*k you on the permafrost.*

Heavy stuff and almost overdone and in poor taste if it wasn't for the impeccable and graphic instrumental abilities of guitarist John McGeoch and Dave Formula on keyboards. The album revolves around three main songs. "Feed the Enemy" (arguably the best thing they've ever done), "Back to Nature" and "Permafrost", mid-tempo cold war epics, ideal vehicles for the band's precise abilities.

*Secondhand Daylight* needs perseverance,

don't expect to be immediately floored, but once you've latched onto Devoto's anguished temperament the album gradually unfolds.

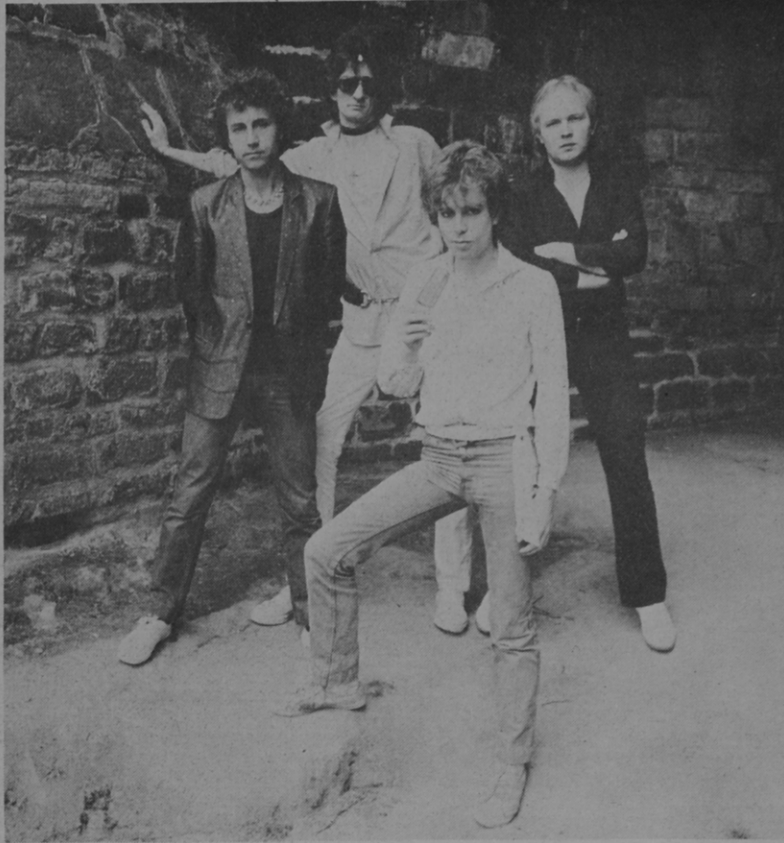
Peter Perrett shoulders all song-writing chores in the Only Ones, but unlike Devoto his songs are shorter, and more in line with traditional rock structures and emotions. Perrett is a new talent with an old band: drummer Mike Kellie saw time with the original Spooky Tooth (1968) and Alan Mair had been playing in Scotland for years. The Only Ones first album had a few obvious stand-outs, "Another Girl", "The Beast" and "Creature of Doom", but, by the same token, some of the songs didn't measure up.

*Even Serpents Shine* has changed all that by being far more consistent, no real highs and no real lows, you get instead an even standard of

excellence. Perrett's songs are about sorrow and love-on-a-precipice, and in this sense he is like Devoto at times, but what makes his songs unique is the contrast between his thoroughly "new wave" Anglo Lou Reed vocal and the 1960's playing style of the band. For example on "You've Got To Pay" and "Inbetweens" John Perry fires in two stinging guitar solos reminiscent of the "old wave" guitar bands, and on "Curtains For You" the arrangement would have suited any decent heavy metal outfit. Perrett's ability lies in the fact that he can combine the old and the new within his very strong material without making it sound ridiculously incongruous.

Both Magazine and the Only Ones have easily passed the second album acid test.

George Kay



## Forever Young

Neil Young & Crazy Horse  
Rust Never Sleeps  
Reprise

*Rust Never Sleeps* is arguably Neil Young's finest album since his 1970 classic, *After the Goldrush*, no mean feat for a man who has produced some of the best music of the last decade. Like *Goldrush*, the new album is a veritable feast of evocative melody and imagery. And, like *Goldrush* and only a few other Young albums, it is consistently rewarding and enjoyable.

Neil Young has always been an enigmatic figure. The twists and turns of his career often seem erratic, even self-destructive. Despite the occasional tangents and periods of marking time, Young remains (with Joni Mitchell) the most enduring and talented of the singer-songwriter proliferation of the early seventies.

Is Young feeling that at age 34 it is time for another journey through the past? *Rust Never Sleeps* is rich in images of America, frontier and urban. Young mourns the loss of the pastoral idyll to inexorable 'progress' and in so doing traverses a continent and several cen-

turies of America. If this is Neil Young's bicentennial album its message is not of optimism. The album title refers to a line in the album's closing song (in fact, a reprise of the album opener but in more apocalyptic mood):

*It's better to burn out 'cause rust  
never sleeps  
The king is gone but he's not forgotten*

Which king? Elvis? The song, "My My, Hey Hey (Out of the Blue)" (reprise as "Hey Hey, My My (Into the Black)"), has as key lyrics — *Rock and Roll is here to stay/It's better to burn out than to fade away and This is a story of a Johnny Rotten*. Does Presley equate with Johnny Rotten, a faded away, rusted one-time iconoclast? Or is this how Young views America of the seventies?

It's to Young's credit that the album is free of the uncomfortable self-pity that has marred earlier work. Musically, this is as tight as *American Stars and Bars* was sloppy (enjoyably so, let me add).

Side One is almost totally acoustic. The shimmering sound of one or, more often, two acoustic guitars makes *Comes a Time* seem over-orchestrated. What Young manages to do with acoustic guitar is a salutary lesson in these days of synthesised electricity.

Neil is in great voice and his songs are crisp and crystalline. Given that songs are for performance and not the printed page, try this, from "Pocahontas", an angry recounting of the genocide of the American Indian.

*Aurora borealis  
The icy sky at night  
Paddles cut the water  
In a long and hurried flight  
From the white man to the fields of  
green  
And the homelands we've never seen*

Side Two opens with "Powderfinger", a miniature of conflict on the frontier (much of the album harks back to the superb "Cripple Creek Ferry" from *After the Goldrush*), the album shifts gear entirely, with Young and Crazy Horse discarding the delicacy of the acoustic tracks for all-out garage band rock, replete with no-frills drumming and guitar distortion of a kind not heard since the pre-San Francisco 'psychedelia' of such yobbo bands as the Blues Magoos and Count Five. There's a lot of "Psychotic Reaction" in "Welfare Mothers" and "Sedan Delivery". The music is screechy and edgy, real white rock and roll.

The sounds gets heavier and even more distorted for the final tune, a cacophonous and tremendously exciting reprise of the lilting opening song:

*Rock and roll can never die*

*There's more to the picture*

*Than meets the eye*

In five minutes Young says all there needs be said about the spirit of rock and roll. His stinging guitar sounds as if it's wired straight to his heart and he sings with the pain and joy of creation, harrowing and exultant.

Like his fellow Canadian Robbie Robertson, Neil Young remains fascinated by America, but while Robertson's vision is largely of an America Past of Norman-Rockwell hue, Young draws on Hollywood and television, urban drabness, drug casualty and endless highway as well as the pastoral (but not peaceful) frontier.

*Rust Never Sleeps* is his American pilgrimage, rich and evocative, rare in its beauty.

Ken Williams



## No Frills Joe

Joe Jackson  
Look Sharp!  
A&M

I haven't liked pop music since I was fourteen, when the British Invasion started to dredge up the third division bands for mass acceptance. With pop, once you get past the catchy melodies and slick arrangements, you find a big plastic void. I like music with some kind of *real feeling*.

Lately there has been a few talented performers in the pop field, most of them British, starting with Costello and including latter day bands such as the Police. It can be dangerous stuff; you'll be singing it in the lift and the doors open suddenly on the eleventh floor, to vast crowds. Be warned.

Joe Jackson is one of the more talented English chaps writing pop rock. He sounds a lot like a lot of current British bands (eg the Members), but he certainly has the tunes to cut it. Put "Is She Really Going Out With Him?" on your turntable and instantly recognise a great pop song. It could be 1963.

What makes it different from Abba and Boney M (who are, after all, the epitome of Pop Success) is one thing; production. *Look Sharp* is as clean as a whistle, no overdubs, no digital delay, no added fat. The band is a three piece, with Jackson's piano adding frills about twice during the whole album. They duplicate their live sound perfectly. The guitar (Gary Sanford) is so thin, it could be David Byrne (Talking

Heads to you) and the bass (Graham Mayby) holds down most of the melody. Like 1963.

Jackson can actually play piano well, but on stage with his band he is the vocalist, well-dressed and wired up to the point of overt antipathy. He's reasonable harmonica player too, but he's no blues man. His songs are about common subjects, teen love, lust, the music biz, the sunday papers. More than a few of them stand out. "One More Time" has a bitter Jackson exposing the ironies of his ex's parting shots.

I'm not going to back down, though. Pop Music is still a dirty two words in my well-thumbed book. Here's one thing: When you've had enough of aggression and petty fascism in music (there's a lot of it about, I hear), let your ears stop ringing long enough to let a few tunes in.

John Malloy

## 16 New Waves

Various Artists  
That Summer  
Arista

Let's call it a new wave compilation because that's as close as we'll get in three words. Maybe it's even the best yet and it points up the diversity of styles that we accept as falling into the new wave cubby hole.

Highlights for me are the two Elvis Costello tracks — "(I Don't Want To Go To) Chelsea" and "Watching The Detectives" whose incandescence stands out in even the finest company. Wreckless Eric's "Whole Wide World" which blends some of the charming naivety of Thunderclap Newman with the obsessiveness of the Velvet Underground into a classic expression of frustrated teen passion, The Only Ones' whole new slant on the cosmic whine — "Another Girl, Another Planet" and the grand malevolence of The Undertones' "Teenage Kicks" — beautiful rock'n'roll pure and simple.

Our familiarity with Mink De Ville's "Spanish Stroll" shouldn't let us deny this evocative and brilliantly performed song its merits — if only the charts were filled with real personality like this, and similarly Nick Lowe's "I Love The Sound Of Breaking Glass" is forever fresh. I only like a couple of Eddie & the Hot Rods' songs and "Do Anything You Wanna Do" hasn't been one of them, but it's been growing on me and it's an established favourite with my flatmates. The two Ian Dury tracks are not necessarily his best but "Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll" has at least provided a catch-phrase and rallying cry for a lifestyle that lots of folk think they actually epitomize.

And there's the Ramones great "Rockaway Beach" from their surf revival album *Rocket To Russia*, and Richard Hell's fractured "Blank Generation" (yet another catch-phrase born!). I'm unconvinced by The Boomtown Rats but there's "Kick" and "She's So Modern" if you like 'em. The Zones' "New Life" means very little to me and I'm not sure what I think of Patti Smith's "Because The Night" — I probably admire it which isn't very exciting.

That's it — a few songs I'd defend to the death, a few I'll never get to hate and a few I can live without. This might be the best compilation since *The Buddah Hit Explosion*.

Terence Hogan