

Records

so ago. Although she's 'diversifying' and there's little in the way of 'pure' country music for the purists to crow about, everything this lady touches — from poppy ballads to real rock'n'roll — turns to Tennessee anyway.

Great Balls of Fire has all the markings of another Parton powerhouse. Her rousing numbers are as strong and gutsy as ever, especially the opener, "Star of the Show" and a surprisingly effective rendition of Jerry Lee Lewis' "Great Balls of Fire."

As is her want, a good half of the tracks are slow, sad ballads. "You're the Only One" even employs that mawkish tactic of breaking into speaking half-way through the song; of course, she handles it superbly and it's a highlight of the album.

For me however, squared up against it's predecessor, *Heartbreaker*, Dolly's new disc pales to a warm glow. It's good and I like it, but in terms of overall impact my heart stays tangled in the pink chiffon of the cover of *Heartbreaker*.

Louise Chunn

John McLaughlin with The One Truth Band Electric Dreams CBS

The overriding impression with this album is of space and restraint. The individual members of McLaughlin's new band here allow their fellows more elbow room than they did at their recent Town Hall concert (July *Rip It Up*). While the record may lack some of the intensity of the live situation, the album has moments of gentleness that were lacking in concert.

The direction of the album is perhaps best summed up in the brief but wistful guitar-violin duet, "Guardian Angels", which opens the first side and leads into the modal "Miles Davis", an outstanding musical homage to McLaughlin's mentor. The densely textured "Electric Dreams, Electric Sighs" (with McLaughlin playing bango lines that have nothing in common with Earl Scruggs) finds the interplay of the band at its best.

Of little account are "Love and Understanding", the album's one vocal with drummer Tony Smith singing like a George Benson/Stevie wonder clone, and "Singing Earth", an exercise in synthesiser by Stu Goldberg which is reminiscent of those outer space doodles Steve Miller uses as bridges between album tracks. Mercifully, Goldberg's interplanetary excursion lasts 37 seconds. But, that over, the album runs to a climax with the Coltrane-ish flight of "The Dark Prince" and the simmering cry of "The Unknown Dissident", where McLaughlin puts an edge on the alto sax playing of the ubiquitous David Sanborn. While police sirens which open this final track and the footsteps and shot which close it may be dramatically effective, the device quickly wears thin.

Electric Dreams isn't without its lapses and while it doesn't match the masterly standard of *Electric Guitarist*, McLaughlin's return to the electric fold, it is a more than acceptable companion piece.

Ken Williams

Aellian Blade Atlantic

Auckland band, Aellian Blade, are defiantly flying in the face of the times with this, their first album. Formed in 1975 around the songwriting nucleus of Gavin Paton and Rob Chamberlain, they eventually recorded the album last year, perhaps three or four years too late for the most sympathetic of receptions.

Paton and Chamberlain have created something which really belongs, at least lyrically, to the rococo period of the early seventies personified by people like Pete Sinfield (King Crimson lyricist), and as such, most of their lyrics come across as hollow, pretentious images:

Carry me up on a circle of fate ...
The twirling slips of broken half cast
meanings were the same.

Far too often the words resort to clichéd comparisons or flowery descriptions. Musically the album is quite ambitious and the band's ability in this area is not open to question, but too many of the songs lose power through overly ornate arrangements and Chamberlain's droll vocals. That's the bad news, the good is that the album contains one or two songs which, although they can't salvage the album, do at least illustrate that Aellian Blade have something to offer. "Follow Me Down" has an effective oozing drunken guitar line Pere Ubuian in tone, and the final track, "In The City", steps out with some determination and purpose. But that's about it.

It's symptomatic of the shifting nature of rock'n'roll that a few years ago Aellian Blade may have been regarded as an important New Zealand album, but in 1979 it appears as a brave but ultimately misguided attempt at originality.

George Kay

The Sports Don't Throw Stones Mushroom Midnight Oil Powderworks

Here are two Australian bands but that's about all they have in common, which is a bit of a sod really as I still have to review them together. In fact the most noteworthy thing about the two albums is the obvious contrast.

On the one hand, the Sports are a crisp tuneful rock'n'roll combo, apparently stripped of some of their live excitement by this production job. On the other, Midnight Oil are a hard rock outfit of the sort which used to be called 'progressive' (in other words they avoid melody like the plague), but possess a measure of real presence.

First off with the Sports, they are Australia's first signing to Stiff records, due apparently to their impressive support for Graham Parker when he toured this part of the world. Their specialty is the tightly constructed rock melody not a million miles away from the style of Graham Parker.

The comparison with Parker is the more opposite because what they lack is the spark of excitement he can bring to his material. Not that they are dull by any means. But they are reported to be slaying the audiences in Britain and that sort of energy is scarcely obvious on this album.

Midnight Oil turn out standard hard rock, little melody, a lot of wailing guitar and ranting vocals. Yet you could put the same tag to most of what a band like the Stooges have done and that certainly isn't boring listening. By no stretch of the imagination are Midnight Oil in the same league as the Stooges but they have a quotient of the same intensity and presence.

Put it this way. Though it is something of a simplification, what you have here is a choice; between the Sports, long on melody but short on any real presence and Midnight Oil, long on presence but short on any real melody.

Dominic Free

The Records Shades In Bed Virgin

It says here ... um ... The group, they decided, would be known as The Records and would play music in the tradition of pop combos such as The Raspberries and Badfinger, and required ... The Raspberries! Badfinger!

I already like the record heaps and I haven't heard a note, so it almost goes without saying that the first listen is an anti-climax ... it's all too calculated ... the hooks aren't strong enough ... The Razz, despite their brilliance often sounded dated and so do The Records ... the cover's not so hot ... pick pick etc. Yet a few plays later I find myself biting down on two or three of the shinier hooks, "Teenarama", "Starry Eyes" and "Affection Rejected" being the more alluring tracks.

Although operating on similar ground to The

Sports



Midnight Oil

Rubinoos, The Records (including Ex-Kursaal Flyers, Will Birch and John Wicks) employ more sophisticated arrangements, a denser sound and a slightly more aware, even cynical perspective at times. But in the end *Shades In Bed* isn't quite what it promises to be, for reasons that are hard to pin down. Maybe it really is too calculated and lacks warmth, a pitfall for all pop-rock classicists whose inspirers were at their peak several years ago and who were in turn inspired by others who peaked in the decade before. All the good taste and intentions in the world can't conjure up spontaneity and inspiration. But The Records sound like they'd be great 'live' and the albums far from being a dud, the best stuff would sound just fine on my car radio at about 11.30 pm as I was going somewhere or coming back.

If only I had a car radio.

Terence Hogan

UK Squeeze UK Squeeze Cool For Cats A&M

UK Squeeze were formed as long ago as 1974, but it wasn't until three or four years later that they started releasing records and gained some sort of publicity. Fronted by songwriters Chris Difford (rhythm guitar) and Glen Tilbrook (lead guitar and vocals), they wasted no time in adapting to the sharpness of the times, and John Cale was commissioned to produce their first album (released last year). Prior to that they had recorded a couple of frivolous singles, "Bang Bang" and "Take Me I'm Yours" both present on the first album.

Tilbrook himself has described the album as "patchy" and I'm not about to disagree. The Difford-Tilbrook songwriting team who had already gained a reputation for their sexual fetishes posing as songs, very rarely rise above a bouncy throwaway song structure on the first album. Cale's chores as producer seem purely academic as he fails to add distinction or even depth to the mundane content of the material. And he wouldn't be cheap.

Between this and the latest album, *Cool For Cats*, a fairly sneaky and catchy little single was released, "Goodbye Girl", a languid smoothly swaying song about boy-meets-girl-in-pool-room. It appears in a slightly re-mixed format on the new album.

Cool For Cats is a vast improvement on *UK Squeeze*. It partially continues their penchant for sexual quips and fetishes, but the songs are fresher, often Merseyside in delivery, recounting whimsical snippets about pulling birds and getting "Slightly Drunk." The melodies are more inventive and you get half-a-dozen everyday off-the-street stories per side, unpretentious, humorous and workmanlike.

It would be easy to underestimate UK Squeeze because they're writing about the ordinary easily-forgettable aspects of life where there's little glamour or poetry. But their honesty and no-frills approach ensures their credibility and reputation as one of The Pop Outfits On the Rise.

George Kay



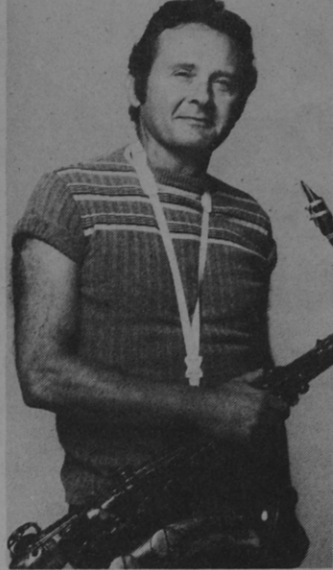
Roger Chapman Chappo Acrobat

Family are long gone, Streetwalkers have strutted their brief, erratic moment, and now Roger Chapman is alone, and doing very nicely, by this showing.

Chappo is one of those perennial, amiable, boozy souls who still haunt the British rock scene. The difference here is that Chapman is not content to live on past glories, nor do they overshadow what he's doing now.

His voice, once heard, is never forgotten. That strangled, often frightening vibrato graced such classics as "The Weaver's Answer" and "In My Own Time", and had he been at all pretty, he could have gone as far as Rod Stewart.

On *Chappo*, he assembles a bevy of bywords in backing musicians and takes the lion's share



Stan Getz

of the songwriting credits. Songs like "Who Pulled The Nite Down" and "Always Gotta Pay In The End" show a strong leaning to black R&B, and the whole effort smacks of enthusiasm and a whole lotta love.

An unqualified thumbs up to a really fine, emotive singer. It's nice to see at least some of the old guard still producing the goods.

Duncan Campbell

Eddie and The Hot Rods Thriller Island

Generation X Valley Of The Dolls Chrysalis

The Rods and Gen-X are both bands in a quandary; one trying to stay abreast of current trends, the other unable to come to terms with its limited horizons.

Eddie And The Hot Rods emerge the winners, largely because of their unpretentious approach. They were hailed in pre-punk days as the saviours of British music, playing white hot R&B, with frontman Barrie Masters thrilling the little girls.

Make no mistake, Masters can sing, hard and fast, and the Rods have all the kick in the world. They've made the transition from their beginnings to a high-energy form of powerpop (dreadful word, that) which undoubtedly works best in a live situation.

Thriller contains no surprises, but suggests The Rods are far from a spent force, though whether they can continue to move with the times remains to be seen.

Generation X have existed on their looks and their ability to construct the odd hit single. "Your Generation", "Ready, Steady, Go", and the fiery "King Rocker", included in *Valley Of The Dolls*, display their forte; the three-chord, three-minute thrash.

Spread out over two sides of an album, the formula wears thin. Ian Hunter's production gives the sound a cutting edge, and Billy Idol confirms his status as a first class singer-poseur, but when he tries to be profound, he gets out of his depth.

Valley Of The Dolls has too much filler to make Generation into an album band. The sooner they realise this, the better.

Duncan Campbell

Stan Getz Another World CBS

Tom Scott Intimate Strangers CBS

L.A. Express Tom Cat Epic

What we have here is two of jazz's most widely acclaimed tenor sax players. Tom Scott entered the jazz field in the late sixties and by 1970 had won both the readers and critics polls in *Downbeat*, the jazz bible. In 1974 Scott formed the L.A. Express, a superlative unit who have provided some of the finer moments of the fusion movement. To coincide with the release of *Intimate Strangers*, Scott's first outing for CBS, the company has re-released *Tom Cat* (recorded in 1975 for Epic).

Tom Cat has already proved itself to be an album of seminal importance and a must for any jazz buff, fusion freak or not. Unfortunately, *Tom Cat* has proved to be a high that Scott has found difficult to repeat. *Intimate Strangers*, with able support from Gale, Gadd et al from the New York crowd, is an insipid affair that never takes off. Like the late Dave Sanborn, Scott has found himself in something of a rut — able to steal the show when appearing as a session muso, yet completely without inspiration on his own albums.

Getz, on the other hand, is far from uninspired. Hitting the scene with the fifties' Californian 'cool school', the sixties saw Getz out of favour with the jazz fraternity because of his preoccupation with first the bosa nova craze and his later concentration on the pop market. In the seventies, however, Getz has regained his credibility and has proved himself to be one of the truly great sax players.

This double set, ladies and gents, after all these years, is Getz's greatest album. Expertly assisted by four young relatively unknowns, Getz covers a wide spectrum of styles — reverting back to a tasteful bosa nova on "Sum Summ" and even slipping into the electronic excursions of the title track with relative ease. Without a bum track in evidence, *Another World* is one of the best jazz albums to come out of the seventies.

John Dix

TASTE RECORDS

Southern Cross Building, High St,
Auckland, Ph 370-317.
279 Parnell Road, Ph 779-285.

PARNELL STORE
OPEN SATURDAYS!

IMPORTS NOW AVAILABLE

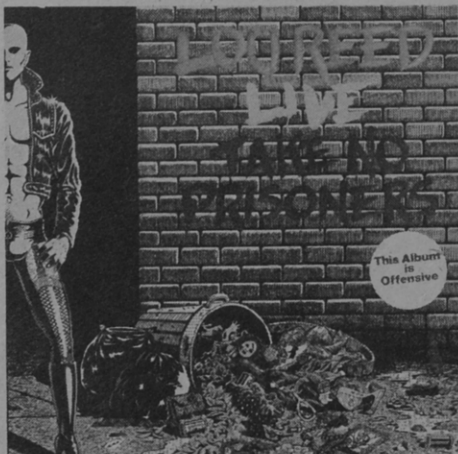
Klaus Schulze Black Dance — \$9.98; **Tangerine Dream** Alpha Centauri/Atem double — \$17.98; **Gong** Gong Live — \$17.98 (with Steve Hillage), NB early Gong studio albums also available; **Rolling Stones** 1st album — \$8.99; **Rolling Stones** 12 x 5 — \$8.99; **Rolling Stones** Out of Our Heads — \$8.99; **John Mayall's Bluesbreakers** — \$8.99; **The Band** The Band — \$8.99; **David Bowie** Images — double \$13.98; **Steve Harley** Best Years of Our Lives — \$8.99; **MC5** Kick Out the Jams — \$8.99; **Joni Mitchell** Clouds — \$8.99; **Joni Mitchell** Mingus — \$8.99; **Chris Spedding** Hurt — \$8.99; **Capt Beefheart** clear Spot — \$8.99; **Dave Sanborn** Taking Off — \$8.99

VIRGIN REGGAE IMPORTS

A large range of Virgin reggae imports are now available, including — "The Front Line", Gladiators, Culture ("Harder Than The Rest"), Johnny Clarke, Delroy Washington, I-Roy U-Roy etc.

FOR JAZZ ENTHUSIASTS.

New Milestone, Prestige, Concord and Impulse imports are available now. Call and see our full range!



TASTE ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Lou Reed "Take No Prisoners" (live double album — English import). Cut this ad out for \$1.00 off the Recommended Retail Price of "Take No Prisoners".