

**Frank Zappa  
Joe's Garage Act I  
Zappa/CBS**

**Orchestral Favorites  
Reprise**

Frank Zappa's work is dominated by his personal pre-occupations and obsessions. At his most vapid, Zappa seems merely pre-occupied — the bodily function as riff.

Happily, *Joe's Garage* is Zappa at peak efficiency, drawing together with enviable economy the strains that have run through previous albums — political paranoia, garage bands, various sexual activities, wet T-shirt contests, social diseases, more sexual activities, rock groups on the road, etc etc.

The libretto to *Joe's Garage* is an hilarious document (for those not easily offended), with the Central Scrutinizer, a raspy-voiced, mechanical enforcer of the laws which haven't yet been passed being an especially engaging creation.

Zappa describes *Joe's Garage* as "a stupid story about how the government is going to try to do away with music (a prime cause of unwanted mass behaviour). It's sort of like a really cheap kind of high school play." Cheapness is another Zappa pre-occupation.

*Joe's Garage* has a concentrated unity of thought rare among Zappa's often fluctuating work, and musically it is as good as he gets (check his stunning parody of a certain Famous Rock Group, represented by Frank as Toad-O).

Acts II and III are reportedly on their way. Is this *The Great Work* in progress? Or is this Cheapness? Time will tell.

*Orchestral Favorites* is for the diehard who must have everything associated with Zappa. The album is large group explorations of standard Zappa instrumental themes, culled from tapes left with Warners when Zappa left the company, and released against his wishes.

**Ken Williams**

**Jane Aire and The Belvederes  
Virgin**

Akron, Ohio has thus far produced a somewhat incredible string of world-renowned new wave hitsters. Scampering along at the tail end comes Jane Aire, a local girl discovered (singing along to a jukebox) by none other than Akron producer, Liam Sternberg. Who, while on the subject of Akron almost-stars, was Rachel Sweet's mentor/producer.

The Rachel Sweet connection is not arbitrary. Liam Sternberg discovered, wrote for and produced Ms Sweet, and he does the same for Jane Aire. But whereas Rachel Sweet's goopy jail-bait stuff palled, Jane Aire's talents shine.

Definitions are difficult. Sternberg's songs are up-tempo and now more like pop-cum-Motown than the pseudo-country style he had previously assumed. With Aire's chameleon of a voice and the aid of her pacey backing band, The Belvedere's-aka British club band, the Edge — it works a treat.

The single off this album is "Breaking Down the Walls of Heartache", a catchy super-

**The Jam, L-R, Bruce Foxton, Rick Buckler and Paul Weller.**



Supremes type number which deserves airplay more than much of the pop currently played on radio. Like the entire album it will possibly attract neither mass nor cult appeal, but I hope Jane Aire does well in the little league.

**Louise Chunn**

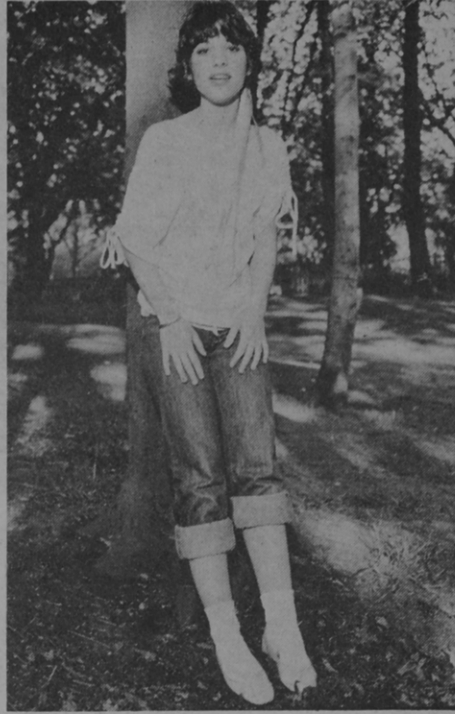
**Stevie Wonder's Journey Through the  
Secret Life of Plants  
Tamla Motown**

This double album (with splendid cover, one might add) has its origins as a soundtrack for a forthcoming film *The Secret Life of Plants* which accounts for the amount of straight instrumental work, and also the overlaying of spoken voices and natural sounds on many of the music tracks. Sometimes, as in the 'bed-time story' intro to the song "Power Flower", the whole thing trembles on the brink of kitsch but on the whole it is a virtuoso collection of songs around the central theme of the flora around us.

Musically, Wonder is at the center of the universe as far as the album is concerned, and many tracks feature instrumentals wholly played and organised by the singer. The sounds of the synthesiser are to the fore, ranging from the delicate staccato effects in the opening of "The First Garden" through the neo-Baroque idiom of "Ecclesiastes" to echoes of Kurt Weill in the "Finale". Perhaps amongst the songs there is nothing quite as immediate as many numbers of *Songs in the Key of Life* but "Send One Your Love" is a charming ballad, and "Outside My Window" is fairly punchy.

A major piece of work, and who knows it could help you to a new relationship with your rhododendrons.

**William Dart**



**Jane Aire**

**The Cure  
Three Imaginary Boys  
Fiction**

**The Jam  
All Mod Cons  
Polydor**

**Siouxsie and the Banshees  
Join Hands  
Polydor**

Released over a year ago in Britain and here, belatedly, a few weeks ago, the Jam's *All Mod Cons* contemptuously swipes all post-1977 upstarts into the shadows. After warming up with two timely albums, the second, *This Is the Modern World* being a necessary attempt at concept writing, Weller has realised his dream of writing the perfect seventies' English album.

Brilliantly moving from specific close-ups of society's stereotypes, "Mr Clean", "Billy Hunt" and "To Be Someone" he then turns in his most moving, provocative songs, as scalpel jobs of the modern world, "In the Crowd", "A-Bomb in Wardour Street" and the bloody magnificent "Down the Tube Station At Midnight". Debts to the Who are forgotten and transcended as Weller proves for the third time that it's none other than Ray Davies who is the source of inspiration for his sharp observations. And the word is that the Jam's new album, *Setting Sons* is even better than *All Mod Cons*, hopefully we won't have the same release delay. Surely not.

Fiction Records is a small independent label established by Polydor's London A&R man Chris Parry. The Cure are his blue-eyed boys, three clever young gents who gained attention

earlier in the year for their cold, tense "Killing An Arab" single. Actually I preferred the flip side, "10.15 Saturday Night" in its recollections of love freshness, and, fittingly, it is the opening track on *Three Imaginary Boys*. The album is unusually presented as there are three objects on the cover each one representing a member of the band and to add to the confusion there are no song titles on this import review copy so I have to match the pictures on the reverse sleeve to the possible titles of the songs. Unusual but infuriating.

The music, well, the Cure are thoroughly hip to what is going on. Their songs are distant, melodic, rhythmical and often jagged but they don't always make the most of their original ideas, too often things are left hanging, unrounded. But despite that the album is strangely addictive, another side to pop.

Siouxsie and the Banshees have indeed slipped since the sharply drawn traumas of *The Scream. Join Hands* coz we're in hell (it sounds like it anyway) is a might too close to over-the-top melodrama for its own good. John McKay's absolutely crucial guitar has lost its clean thrust in a fairly dense production, and the whole second side is almost completely taken up by the endless anguish of "The Lord's Prayer". Only the atmospheric propulsion of the excellent "Playground Twist" and "Icon" could survive the quality test laid down by their first album.

Since this album drummer Kenny Morris and John McKay have left, reasons as yet unknown, but I wouldn't mind betting that the unsatisfactory condition of *Join Hands* had something to do with it. We'll see.

**George Kay**

**Santana  
Marathon  
CBS**

It is tempting to breathe a sigh of relief in finding the Santana band's latest offering is free of tiresome remakes of other people's old hits. But the proof is in the ears and the *Marathon* is hardly afoot before one is crying out for a Blind Faith, a Zombies, a whoever, a song at least. The suspicion that Santana is bankrupt of ideas seems confirmed.

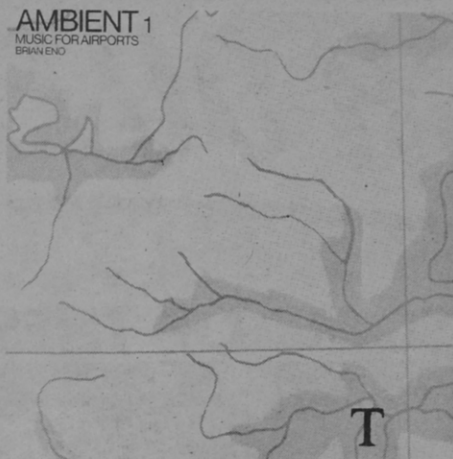
After the artistic triumph of Santana's solo endeavour *Oneness* earlier this year it is not only disappointing, but perplexing.

Only "Stand Up" (second rate Santana, but here it sounds almost inspired) and "Aqua Marine", a meditative instrumental, have anything of the old fire. The other songs are quite undistinguished, as is the delivery of lead singer Alexander J. Ligertwood, and, most curious of all, Carlos Santana is scarcely in evidence.

The guitarist's soaring improvisations have always been the essence of his bands. His is one of the truly individual electric guitar sounds. It reflects the depressed state of his work that here he could be any one of his own imitators.

**Ken Williams**

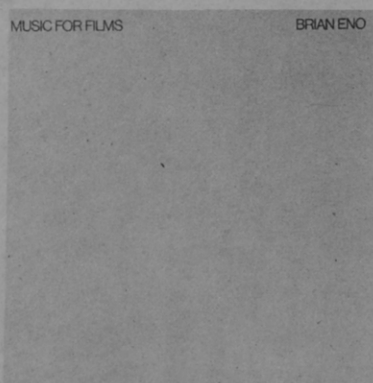
# The Eno Collection



MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS, 1978.



BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE, 1978.



MUSIC FOR FILMS, 1978.



HERE COME THE WARM JETS, 1972.



TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN, 1974.



ANOTHER GREEN WORLD, 1975.

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