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13 ALBUM BOXED SET  
& POSTER

### PINK FLOYD THE FIRST ELEVEN

11 ALBUM BOXED SET  
A LIMITED EDITION

### THE BEATLES COLLECTION

### PINK FLOYD THE FIRST ELEVEN

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dominates and if Jobson's lyrics are little close to sixth form poetry, so what?

These lads are still in their teens and, for all their earnestness, they are likely to be playing the sounds that are to come to the fore in the eighties. Dylan they ain't. But *Days In Europa* will turn grey before you hear me playing *Slow Train Coming*.

John Dix

### Various Artists Business Unusual RTC

*Business Unusual* features a variety of English small label acts who provide the opposite alternative to the complacency represented by the Eagles and their ilk. Compiled by Zig Zag's David Marlow, the underdog's champion John Peel and Cherry Red Records founder Iain McNay, the album is an exuberant if rudimentary cross-section of what we missed out on in the way of grass roots rock'n'roll singles last year.

The eight-track first side concentrates on the young, fast and unscientific. The Leyton



Donna Summer  
On The Radio Greatest Hits Vol. I & II  
Casablanca

Sister Sledge  
We Are Family  
Cotillion

Chic  
Risqué  
Atlantic

Us white folks have a bad habit of picking up on black music several years too late. Sure Chuck Berry had his hits but it was the Beatles and the Rolling Stones that elevated him to the rock'n'roll hall of fame in the eyes of the general public. Later in the decade, the blues boom drew heavily — in some cases almost exclusively — on the advances made by the black bluesmen in the fifties.

Disco however, as you may have noticed, has been more rapidly adopted by the masses. In retrospect that's not surprising for disco, in form at least, is closer to the highly successful output of the 60s black music label, Tamla Mowtown. For both use gospel influenced vocalists singing pop tunes over a big beat. Similarly both are producer's mediums — it takes a distinctive voice to fight its way out of the production line and right now that's where Donna Summer triumphs. Produced by the creative team of Giorgio Moroder and Pete Bellotte, she's graduated from being queen of the vinyl orgasm to a convincing yet still earthy contemporary R&B singer.

On the Radio is a double greatest hits package that traces this development and it's

Willie Nelson and Leon Russell  
One for the Road  
CBS

Leon Russell  
Life and Love  
Warner Bros

The Earl Scruggs Revue  
Today and Forever  
CBS

In the last *Rip It Up* I drew a comparison between Waylon Jennings and the screen persona of John Wayne. If Jennings has parallels with Wayne, then Willie Nelson's are with James Stewart. They share a vulnerability, a humanity that in both men is best expressed in the voice.

For years the Nashville establishment refused to take Nelson seriously as a singer. But it is the seeming inadequacies that give Willie's singing its strength.

Willie Nelson is one of the finest of country songwriters with a touch for themes that transcend categorisation (check out B.B. King's version of Willie's "Night Life" on *Blues is King*). It is therefore remarkable that one of his most compelling albums contains no songs of his own. *Stardust* was a gem, although some saw it as an aberration, failing to perceive the interpretive skills necessary to breathe new life into well-worn chestnuts like "Moonlight in Vermont".

The double album *One for the Road* is two distinct records, one of which is 'Stardust Revisited'. Record the first is a rollicking piece of business with Willie and Leon Russell (any suggestions, matinee fans? Richard Widmark perhaps?) trading choruses on 10 country or country-inflected songs with the aid of Willie's band, plus guests, including Maria Muldaur and Bonnie Raitt (nifty slide guitar on the hoary old "Trouble In Mind", which turns out to be an inspired choice). Only the po-faced purist would quibble with Willie's offering of Cole Porter ("Don't Fence Me In") or Gene Autry ("Ridin' Down the Canyon").

Record the second has Willie running down another set of standards to the backing of Russell, who plays all instruments. In Nelson's hands too-familiar, even debased, songs live anew. That may be a mark of genius.

Leon Russell's not entirely undeserved reputation as an opportunistic manipulator should not blind one to his considerable skills as songwriter and arranger. *Life and Love* matches seductive neo-gospel melodies to his idiosyncratic Dustbowl voice. It ranks with the Okie's best work.

The Earl Scruggs Revue employs a stricter

Buzzards' "19 and Mad" (which only hints at the stature they've achieved with their superior pop singles this year "Saturday Nights Beneath the Plastic Palm Trees" and "I'm Hanging Around") and the naive "New Wave Love" are the best amongst them.

But the second side is as good as a compilation can get. Starting with the Tights' evocative "China's Eternal" this side peaks with Thomas Leer's "Private Plane" — pulsing bass as Leer and synthesisers construct a rising melody, a gem. Robert Rental, Throbbing Gristle (remember Genesis P. Orridge? you don't?) and Cabaret Voltaire conclude with their novel ideas of what young men should be doing with electricity.

The album's only fault is the omission of artists from the Fast label — Gang of Four, Mekons and the Human League — all mandatory stuff. A minor criticism in an otherwise intriguing compilation.

If it came to a choice give me these enthusiastic amateurs anyway.

George Kay

her latest role as brassy vocalist of such radio favourites as "Bad Girls", "Hot Stuff", "Dim All the Lights", "Heaven Knows" and "Last Dance" that best display her talents. She may not have the voice of Aretha Franklin or the intensity of Gladys Knight but then they've not made singles this good in many years. (Warning: The versions of the singles on this album in most cases are of 45 single length and not the longer album or 12" 45 cuts. Also added effects and drumbeats between songs to give a danceable flow often have a jarring effect and ruins the lovely connection between "Hot Stuff" and "Bad Girls" from the *Bad Girls* album.)

Chic, in case you didn't know is also The Chic Organization Ltd. and is controlled by guitarist Nile Rodgers and bassist Bernard Edwards — the songwriters, producers and brains behind the outfit. While unashamedly commercial in their approach (Rodgers told one writer that if country and western were the next big thing, he'd be out there with his cowboy hat on), they've still developed an appealing and original approach based around Rodgers' jazz-style chording and Edwards' propulsive bass playing. But Chic's concern with style and elegance results in a coolness in approach — this beautifully crafted music may entertain but it's unlikely to move you. For that reason Rodgers and Edwards best work so far comes on the Sister Sledge album *We Are Family*. Here, the sisters Sledge function not as a cool and anonymous chorus but as soul singers giving character to the otherwise slick Chic machine. Standouts are the title track and the singles "He's the Greatest Dancer" and "Lost in Music" but the strength of the songs and instrumental work makes this the most consistent disco album I've heard.

As Graham Parker has said disco is just modern soul music. Believe it and you won't have to wait till the 1980s to discover that for yourself.

Alastair Dougal

country approach than either Willie or Leon. A pioneer of bluegrass banjo, Scruggs and his sons lay down an appealing blend of bluegrass tinged with rock, a sound that brings to mind one of the more interesting 'forgotten' albums — *Kindling* (WB, 1973) by ex-Byrd Gene Parsons.

Ken Williams

The Boomtown Rats  
The Fine Art of Surfacing  
Mercury

In the last couple of years the Rats have gone from being a kids band to being a rock'n'roll band, fullstop. If with this goes American tours and production numbers, maybe we'll get to see them out here sometime. I could stand it.

This album has got to have about the worst cover of the year. It opens with Geldof's paen to unreasonable beliefs, "Someone's Looking", including the immortal lines,

On a night like this  
I deserve to get kissed  
At least once or twice ...

Most rock writers have touched on the subject of paranoia, but Geldof does it well. They follow with a brilliant putdown of the non-stop party life that some music biz people succumb to.

They said she did it with grace  
They said she did it with style  
They said she did it all before she died ...

Both songs come complete with melodies and hooks you could give to your bank manager as collateral.

There's more. "Having My Picture Taken" pokes light-hearted fun at the instant nostalgia business. It's not *deep* but it's got a tune you can hum. Throughout it all the band plays like a unit and the production is good — you can hear it all.

The trouble is, The Rats don't have a whole lot to say. They press on some touchy subjects and then pull back before it starts to hurt. "Keep It Up" is a catchy little number about the sexual combat zone that doesn't get past superficiality. "I Don't Like Mondays" documents pointless violence without really making much of a point. And the couple of tunes that lack hooks don't have much to justify themselves.

But that's okay. There's a wide range of possibilities between the intensity of a Graham Parker and the classic dumb fun of the Ramones. The Rats are entertainment, a hot live act. I counted six good tunes out of ten. It may not be a home run, but it puts them in the right ballpark.

John Malloy