

# Funky Street

## Various Artists

### Street Music Volume 2 (CBS)

Like Volume One, this is a diverse collection of black dance music, some, like Irene Cara's 'Breakdancing', mediocre, and some so good it hurts. The O'Jays in 'Put Our Heads Together' is their best song in ages (and almost as good as 'Backstabs') — a perfect mixture of politics and music. Delegation's 'It's Your Turn' is a nice Chic copy with a great bassline. Side Two has what most people will be looking for — three exercises in electro-bop, starting with McLaren's 'Buffalo Gals', which we've all heard before but still sounds great. Technofunk's 'Mirda Rock' is similar to 'Freeze-A-Zoid', with all the "space is the place" sound effects and robotic commandments to dance. I like

this one because it's got a good sense of humour and tells an interesting story. West Street Mob's 'Breakdance Electro-Boogie' is already a crowd favourite and has neat percussion.

A good selection — worth checking out for the O'Jays alone. Kerry Buchanan



## TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Director: Alan Johnson

The central problem of any Mel Brooks' film is that of integrating the wealth of gags and one-liners into the structure of the movie itself. In many cases Brooks has found some unity by building the film around the satire of a particular genre (western in *Blazing Saddles*, Hitchcockiana in *High Anxiety*); the latest takes this method a step further.

*To Be Or Not To Be* is a remake of Ernst Lubitsch's classic comedy of 1942 set in Occupied Poland with a troupe of Polish actors

trying to fend off and outwit their Nazi oppressors. The roles originally played by Jack Benny and Carole Lombard have been taken over by Brooks and the real life Mrs Brooks, Anne Bancroft.

While *To Be Or Not To Be* benefits from a beautifully crafted script, there's also much to relish in the cast's seasoned performances. Brooks' outrageously broad acting style has its perfect foil in Bancroft's laconic delivery, Charles Durning blusters energetically as the credulous Nazi colonel and George Wyner's gay dresser is perfectly attuned to the sensibilities of our own Victor/Victorian age.

From the opening scene, when Brooks and Bancroft shuffle and sing their way through "Sweet Georgia Brown" in Polish, *To Be Or Not To Be* has just the assurance to make it the comedy of 1984.

## BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE

Director: Richard Loncraine

Dennis Potter's *Brimstone and Treacle* first appeared as a television play in 1976. Deemed too strong for British living rooms, it was duly banned and waited

another six years before it was remade as a theatrical film, as a vehicle of sorts for the rock singer Sting.

A tale which revolves around a satanic visitor raping a paraplegic, brain-damaged girl is strong stuff, and *Brimstone and Treacle* is a black comedy in the tradition of Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane*. However, Potter's idiosyncratic juggling of fantasy and reality, familiar to viewers of his *Pennies from Heaven* series, is quite different to Orton's more traditional, though bizarre, farces.

*Brimstone and Treacle* has its bizarre touches too, even in the more realistic moments — Denholm Elliott scrawling "In Memoriam" doggerel in the Victorian gloom of his London office, or the strange trio around the small electronic organ singing 'Bless This House'. Elliott and Joan Plowright are marvellously quirky as Sting's "victims" although Sting himself, playing an overly ingenuous Beezlebub, is less convincing. Sting's soundtrack fits uneasily on Potter's grim morality tale — Vivian Ellis' 30s number 'Spread a Little Happiness' sung over the closing credits would seem to indicate the direction a score could have taken.

## TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

Director: James Brooks

*Terms of Endearment* picks up where *Ordinary People* left off — a film about the average American family-next door calculated to wrench the very heart from the audience's collective bosom. The cynic might proffer that it's not every family which has a Renoir heirloom, or lives next door to an astronaut, but the advertising slogan is not one to be ignored as it beckons, "Come to laugh, come to cry, come to care, come to terms."

Unfortunately, it is two films with which we have to come to terms. The first two-thirds of

*Terms of Endearment* bubbles along pleasantly enough as a well-observed domestic comedy — Brooks, the guiding light behind TV's *Mary Tyler Moore Show* has a nice eye for eloquence of the seemingly inconsequential. However, the injection of terminal cancer into the plot is a wrench of unsurmountable proportions. The film never quite recovers.

Above all, it stands as a testament to Shirley MacLaine. Her performance as the dominating Aurora is a tour de force, as impressive in its range as it is in its avoidance of the sentimental or the cliché. By comparison, Jack Nicholson's dipso-histrionics and Debra Winger's self-conscious mannerism left me cold. I suspect at least one of the three will walk away with an Oscar this month — MacLaine deserves it.

## TRESPASSES

Director: Peter Sharp

What is good about *Trespases* is very good indeed. One admires Leon Narbey's fine photography of the New Zealand terrain, although once again the film itself almost gets upstaged by the photographic setting. Emma Piper's performance as Katie Wells has an inner truth that we rarely see in local films — every subtlety and nuance being highlighted by the relative crudity of some of the characterisation around her. The inclusion of a Centrepoint-style commune in the plot must have seemed a promising idea, although, again, its potential is not fully realised in the final film.

On the other hand, Patrick McGoochan's characterisation of the father has its unconvincing moments, particularly in the last thirty minutes of the film and this is a serious flaw when he is the crux of the whole plot. And then there is the script itself, which chooses to relinquish character development in favour of some fairly laboured plotting — the

deadly scenes with Terence Cooper and Don Selwyn in the local constabulary are too much in the shadow of *Mortimer's Patch* for their own good. Bernie Allen's tired score also sounds like a television left-over.

*Trespases* is a good example of the Hamlet complex that haunts New Zealand film-makers. They seem so often loath to pace their work with sufficient action. The one murder in *Trespases* is staged with almost squeamish restraint. Perhaps the answer for our local industry is for someone to make an unflinching splatter movie. Imagine what George A. Romero (*Dawn of the Dead*, *Creepshow*) would have made of *Strata!* If McGoochan had been allowed a few more victims in *Trespases*, it could have been an altogether more lively affair.

William Dart

## 'LIVE' FROM PAGE 32

musical ability. These performances vindicated the people who have long admired their songs, their sound, and their persistence against the massed indifference of hostile pub audiences.

Founder-members Alastair Galbraith (guitar/vocals) and Robbie Muir (bass) were joined four months ago by Jeff Harford on drums — after the retirement of longstanding skinsman Matthew Ransom — and now they're ready to take off.

The good sized, good natured and appreciative Empire audiences on these nights were evidence of the extent of support which the Rip now command. What these people heard was the songs (which are the Rip, their own experiences and dreams), their distinctive trebly Commodore-driven sound, and their tightness. By closing-time neither they nor the crowd had had enough.

The Rip are here, but they mean art — not business.

Bruce Russell

## 'VIOLENT FEMMES' FROM PAGE 14

Victor. "It's funny, we go through all these different musical styles in the nine songs and then on the last song you hear Gordon say 'Who, who, who do you think I am?' and it just caught me like 'I wonder who you are?'"

"That song's about Noah's Ark, so that's a little different to the songs on the first album," Gordon puts in.

"Why can't I get just one fuck' to Noah's Ark..." Victor ponders.

"There's a greater variety in the subject matter and also in the types of music," Gordon says. "Certainly our country roots and our love of country music will come through much stronger. We had some guest musicians so we've got a greater variety of instruments. It's pretty wild, I think... like a roller coaster from one song to another."

Victor: "The president of our record company described it as a nightmare."

Gordon: "Our bass player Brian described it as demented but that's his way of saying it's good. And yet, for me, I think there's a lot of stuff that's just downright beautiful."

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56 Teardrop Explodes, D.D. Smash and Mick Jones Part 2, Neighbours, Richard Burress.  
57 Clean, Pretenders, South Island Bands, Joan Armatrading, Mental As Anything, Chas Jankel.  
58 Blams, Teardrops, Hall & Oates, Bill Wyman, Kottke/Redbone interviews.  
59 Human League, Men At Work, Chills, Tim Finn, Motels, Elvis Costello live, Furtive EP.  
60 Split Enz in Canada, John Hiatt, Narcs, Dance Exponents, Lindsay Anderson.  
61 Graham Brazier & Harry Lyon, Fall, Jim Carroll, Daggy & Dickheads, Hip Singles, Dropbeats.

62 Split Enz on Road Part 1, Fall's Mark E. Smith interviewed, Altered Images, Randy Crawford, This Sporting Life, Cold Chisel.  
63 Simple Minds, Jim Kerr interviewed, Split Enz Part 2, Renee Geyer, Nocturnal Projections, Willie Dayson Blues Band, Hunters & Collectors.  
64 Icehouse interview, Simple Minds interview, Hunters & Collectors, Alastair Riddell, Dance Macabre, Naked Spots, ABC, John Cooper Clarke.  
65 Yazoo, Joe Cocker, Zoo (ex Pop Mechanix), Guriz and Jo Jo Zep interviews.  
66 Psychedelic Furs, Dexy's Midnight Runners (Kevin Rowland), Midnight Oil, Neil Finn and Jed Fetalmania interviews.  
67 Siouxsie & The Banshees, Toots, Church, Sweetwaters, John Martyn, UB40, Psych Furs.  
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69 Joni Mitchell, Dance Exponents, Who, Neighbours, Dire Straits, Talk Talk, Miltonov Stowaways, Blond Comedy.  
70 Fun Boy 3, Birthday Party, Split Enz, Diehards, Spines, Marching Girls, Body Electric, Wgtn Punk.  
71 Marianne Faithfull, Tall Dwarfs, Mockers, Stones, Mental As Anything, Big Sideways, Car Crash Set, Blancmange.  
72 Talking Heads, U2, Malcolm McLaren, Netherworld Dancing Toys, Beatles' Photographer Dezo Hoffman.  
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