

Shake Summation

Debbie Harwood
If That'll Make You Happy
(CBS)

This is an Ashford and Simpson composition and as any fool knows, they've turned out more than their share of good songs over the years; a wise choice. After a wobbly beginning, the calibre of the performance meets the song and it all ends up a damn fine start to a recording career. Stuart Pearce is also to be congratulated for his production. Unfortunately, the flip 'Driving Me To Distraction' isn't up to much at all.

The Legionnaires
Nosferatu (Hit Singles)

A good song, an adventurous approach to the vocal melody ... and a profoundly uninspired musical backing. Is it touring a lot that makes musicians this boring? Brazier again sings well on 'Shantytown' and 'Waiting Room' but the overall effect of the arrangement and performance is dull. Rather a shame.

Circus Block 4
Take Another Look (Jayrem)

A much more interesting single than 'In Stone, In Steel' (which, incidentally, was supposed to be described as "light industrial funk" rather than "light instrumental" in my review last year), mainly because it's much more sophisticated. 'Take Another Look' is a particularly unhurried stretch of rhythmic and melodic interplay. 'Jump' and 'Sleepless' are experiments in using texture for effect — again, a big leap from the first record. It's just a shame that the vocals can't quite match the measured, purposeful feel about the playing. The most appealing thing about Circus Block 4 at present is their dexterity — but methinks they'll continue to improve.

Big Wide World
A Sudden Feeling (RCA)

I've been hearing murmurs



about this record for months now and I was expecting something a little more gripping than this — a nice piece of quiet synthpop in the vein of China Crisis or yer older Depeche Mode or ... whoever those bands are. The flip, done in a live take, is still less exciting. I think someone needs to learn there is more to writing a song than carefully constructing a series of nice bits.

The National Anthem
Please Say Something (Mushroom)

A pleasant enough song that sounds as though it was written alone, on acoustic guitar, but here falls unhappily between the bigger sound of the first single and a sparser production which might have been closer to the mark. Not remarkable.

Russell Brown

CHRIS THOMPSON

Chris Thompson has been on the road with his guitar since 1968 and in that time he's made or played on about a dozen albums — but you may not have heard of him.

You may, however, be more familiar with some of the people he has played with overseas — names like Julie Felix, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee and even members of Led Zeppelin.

His most high-profile appearance recently has been as opening act for Stevie Ray Vaughan. The prospect of going out in front of a Stevie Ray crowd with just an electric guitar and a batch of folk-blues songs would seem pretty frightening but Thompson says he found it "very exciting". He finds it less hassle to play without a band anyway.

He's undertaking a North Island

tour this month, mainly in folk clubs and theatres, the bread and butter for a traditional acoustic performer (see *Coruba Calendar* for details).

His last LP in this country was *The Natural Blues* and he's working on another one at the moment, again to go out on Hastings label Country Life, a "grass roots" folk label — as he's getting married soon this one is turning out to be full of love songs.

He has also done a demo for TV with Frank Gibson Jnr and Billy Kristian; electric versions of two songs off his last LP. He has signed up with publishers Southern Music, who as well as trying to sell his new songs to the likes of Don McLean, are chasing up royalties he's owed from years back.

On Tape

The Bongos
Windsor Bash (Last Laugh)

The Bongos reunited for a weekend at the Windsor last August and Last Laugh was there to record it. The result, although it doesn't sound very live at all, is enjoyable. The different songs quite clearly show the two divergent paths the Bongos' music was taking — I prefer the quirkier Gill Civil songs to Jon Quigley's jumpy funk but that's just personal taste. The performance throughout is remarkably good and the recording is seamless. Now let's see this kind of treatment done on a functioning, rising band.

Religion Of Higher Thought / Maggotty Anne and the Cot Death Babies (\$8 from Real Groovy or Performance Cafe)

I understand there were originally plans to release this tape inside a hollowed-out Bible, which would undoubtedly have garnered these young men an indignant *Truth* expose. As it is, it comes in a nifty "Post-Holocaust Survival Kit". Side One is the most interesting, containing snatches of the Auckland marijuana debate late last year and other situations I can't identify, comedy and punkoid kind of songs, all tied up with a few basic political prin-

ciples. I really like bits — but then I've always been a sucker for individual autonomy and that sorta thing. The second side is yer actual Maggotty Anne and the Cot Death Babies and I don't like it much — it's both musically and lyrically less incisive. But the thing that carries this tape beyond most political treatises is that these people had fun making it (there is nothing worse than people who think politics shouldn't be fun). RB

Wayward Witches
Trouble's Brewing (\$4.50 from PO Box 13570, Christchurch)

There was little to get excited about in Christchurch last year but one of the few bright spots was the appearance of all-woman band Wayward Witches. They never overdid their political/feminist stance and wrote some clever pop songs, four of which are on this tape. At times the recording is a little flat and Arnie Van Bussell has overdone the echoes but if you're a fan or simply curious then this tape is for you.

Thin Red Line
Seclusions Paradise (\$8 from 34 Birmingham St, Palmerston North)

This a tape that just oozes professionalism throughout. Thin Red Line present nine tracks of commercial mood music, made all the better listening by the amazingly good sound they've got from the four-track recording. Great flute by Catherine Wallace on 'You Too' and the smart lyrics by keyboardist Dave White are all well sung by Karen Rush. Neat cover, too.

Various Artists
Nightshift 2 (143 Wilsons Road, Christchurch 2)

Like the first tape of bands who had recorded at Christchurch's Nightshift Studios, *Nightshift 2* is a real mixed bag. The track listing sees McNaughton and Craw's short, intense (if not wildly original in theme) synthscape 'Grey Pawns' rubbing shoulders with Scoyo's drippy falsetto meanderings. Side One is generally better than Side Two, with the highlights being the typical battery of the Bats' 'Downfall' and the relentless humour of the Haemoglobins' 'Inside Mom'. A useful record but I don't think any one person could like more than half the songs. RB

'RUMOURS' FROM PAGE 6
amplifier will be used. Special shows this year will include uncut funk, soul, reggae, Psychick Contact show (UK industrial music), wimmin's music, classical, jazz and French rock sessions. Yay! ... **Agenda** is the name of a new giveaway arts and music diary for the Wellington area.

Willie Dayson, who has become well known to local blues fans, is returning permanently to the UK on March 22. He will be missed ... forthcoming releases include the second record from **Circus Block 4**, the 3-track *Take Another Look*. It should hit the shops at the end of Feb, with the debut **Spines** 11-track EP, *The Moon* ... in March, there will be releases from Hamilton four-piece **Step Chant Unit** and **Freudian Slips**. The latter have a new guitarist and keyboard player and have drastically improved the production for their new 4-track EP *Are You Laughing?* ... an untitled LP of 40s and 50s blues/swing tunes will be released by Roger Fox and Midge Marsden late in the month ... Jayrem will also be releasing a flood of Oz music lately, including a Hot compilation, *No Worries*, which includes rarities from Nick Cave, the Birthday Party and the Go-Betweens. The Trifids' *Treeless Plain* album, which is now gracing the Top 10 of the UK independent charts, will see local release shortly, as will the Laughing Clowns' *Law Of Nature* LP. A Laughing Clowns compilation, *The History of Rock 'n' Roll, Part One* is also due very shortly. **David Taylor**

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