

**Linda Thompson
One Clear Moment
Warner Bros**

Although this may be Linda Thompson's first solo album, her recording history stems back more than a decade to the British folk-rock movement on the early 70s. All her previous recordings

have been in partnership with brilliant guitarist-songwriter Richard Thompson, a partnership that terminated with the stunning *Shoot Out the Lights* in 1982 (though only released here last year).

Consequently it is difficult not to hear many of the fine songs on *One Clear Moment* as commentaries, whether direct or oblique,

on the dissolution of her marriage. Certainly, there seems to be a cathartic honesty about the ballads 'Telling Me Lies', 'In Love With the Flaneur' and 'Lover Won't You Throw Me A Line'. There even seems to be a deliberateness about the choice of cover song — a lovely Ann Peebles/Joe Simon oldie, 'Just Enough To Keep Me

Hanging On'.

But all this emotional intensity is cleverly counterpoised by a group of upbeat, even humorous numbers. The title track portrays resilience and hope, 'Can't Stop the Girl' is buoyantly confident and 'Hell, High Water and Heartache' is a scathing putdown of an inadequate lover. 'Take Me On A Subway' even features the extraordinary psychedelic mix of Islam-ish chanting and urban libido.

Yet, oddly perhaps, only one of the nine original numbers here is written solely by Thompson. Six are collaborations with Betsy Cook, two more being by Cook alone. (The women's relationship is expressed in Cook's own 'Best Of Friends'.)

The record sleeve features no information other than that the producer is one Hugh Murphy, Betsy Cook's husband and noted for his work with Gerry Rafferty. Among the top-flight musicians in accompaniment, renowned guitarists Jerry Donahue (Joan Armatrading) and Albert Lee perform the chores once handled by Ms Thompson's ex-husband. *One Clear Moment* is in many ways a more mainstream, commercial album than Thompson's previous work in partnership. It is a nonetheless rich and satisfying work.

Peter Thomson

another version of 'Corrina Corrina' we don't need, even if it is jumpy. As on *Sonola*, George Butrumulis's recording plays a key part in reviving Cammilleri's romance with his past. But all romances, sooner or later, must face a slice of reality and for Joe Cammilleri that comes in the shape of the question: When is he going to put his name to something original again?

George Kay

**Joan Armatrading
Secret Secrets
A&M**

I still recall switching on the radio one day in '73 and being riveted to the spot by a tune I had never heard before. It was a well-crafted, powerfully arranged song, sung by a distinctive vocalist. As is still par for the course it took three separate airings till the DJ announced who it was. The title was 'Lonely Lady', the Artist, Joan Armatrading.

Twelve years later, with the 12th album, we are treated to 10 tracks of mood music Armatrading style, featuring luminaries like Pino Paladino (the British bass player of the 80s) and Joe Jackson. The so-called "mistress of woeful melancholy" is once again baring her soul (I hope she finds what she's looking for), but with the occasional smile on her face.

The music varies from the opener, 'Persona Grata', with its atmospheric intro and dominant bass and sax lines which tend to push the lyrics into the background, to the mood piece 'Love By You', where the vocals sing of lost love over the top of Jackson's solo piano. From the jazz-tinged 'Talking To the Wall', with Paladino's superb bass intro and the five-piece horn section punctuating the vocals, to the synth-seasoned 'One Night', with its laid-back feel and Armatrading pouring her heart out: "Be a hero, you could take a chance on me."

Although there doesn't seem to be the singles here (as per 'Drop the Pilot' and 'What Do Boys Dream'), don't be put off. Buy this and play it at your next dinner party and wait for the favourable comments.

Simon Elton



Joan Armatrading

**The Black Sorrows
Rockin' Zydeco
White Label**

The Black Sorrows is Joe Cammilleri's alter ego; this is their second mini-LP and again he's appearing as Joey Vincent, leader of a part-time R&B band.

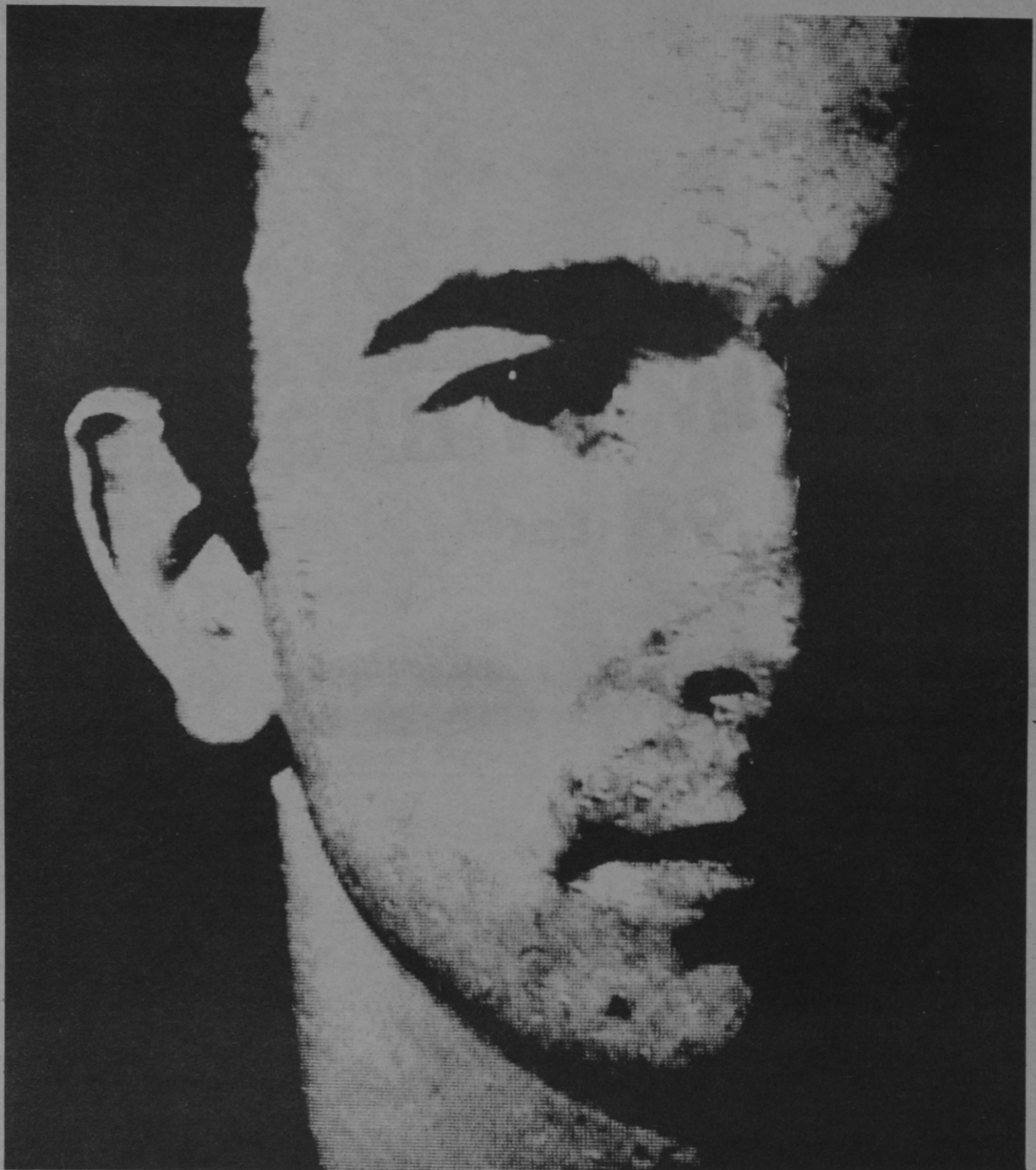
It's a nice scheme and it's cosy. Last year's *Sonola* made few wrong moves, with suitable treatments of 'Brown Eyed Girl' and 'Don't Look Back'. *Rockin' Zydeco* follows the lead and the party warms up real nicely with the stomp of 'The Shape I'm In' (not the Jo Jo Zep song), 'My Negress' and 'Hold Onto That Tiger'. But flip over and Womack's 'Tomorrow Night' mellows things out and

**Mental As Anything
Fundamental As Anything
(Regular)**

For a while there the Mentals looked like they were good enough to be Down Under's answer to the Lovin' Spoonful. Their craziness, wit and pop sensibility peaked on quality albums like *Cats and Dogs*, but then subsided, with mediocre singles and albums like *Creatures Of Leisure*. Now ace American producer Richard Gottehrer has given them a leg-up on *Fundamental*, and although the album lacks consistency, songs like 'Live It Up', 'Surf and Mull and Sex and Fun' and 'Splashing' rank with their infectious best. GK

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