

WHITNEY HOUSTON



HER DEBUT ALBUM

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Includes the hit
'HOW WILL I KNOW'
(available on 7" & 12")



ARISTA

Records

Leonard Cohen
Various Positions
CBS

It was Nick Cave's *From Her To Eternity* that inspired at least one writer to warn of the imminent Leonard Cohen revival. Cohen has undeniably played a major part in shaping an art out of falling apart, but he's never had to rely on the hysterics practised by Cave and his ilk. Instead, his tales of misery were delivered in a sombre monotone, sometimes filled with such regret and resignation that his music could verge on the unbearable. If Leonard Cohen had to drown in his misery, you were going down with him.

But the overwhelmingly melancholic air which made such classics of 'So Long Marianne' and 'Suzanne' is nowhere to be found on *Various Positions*, Cohen's first album for six years. The tone of resignation seems to have developed to the point where anger has given way to wearied politeness. Once Cohen would slit his wrists right in front of you — now he'd worry about putting bloodstains on your carpet.

That's not to say there's not the odd great line. "Here's to the few who forgive what you do / And the fewer who don't even care," is a toast anyone would raise their glass to. And it's a wicked sense of rhyme that couples up "massacre" with "stand by her".

But the melodies here are mainly unmemorable and nowhere does Cohen threaten the combination of potent lyric and mournful tune — a marriage marking his best work. It all seems to work towards the conclusion that the Leonard Cohen revival ain't about to start here.

Shayne Carter

Dead Or Alive
Youthquake
Epic

"Dear Rock Advisor,

I gotta problem. My band is growing old. My hairline's thinning and George and Marilyn wear prettier clothes. Makeup costs a fortune. I wanna be a star and feature in *Vogue*, yet I dunno whether I'm dead or alive. Help! *Anon*



Leonard Cohen

Dear Anon: Familiar problem. Mix a heavy dance beat with a pretty yet paranoid image and relate your LP to youth. Ha ha. Dr \$

On *Youthquake* Pete Burns whines with conviction, "I've got to have my cake and eat it too." I'm sure he will. But his "cake" lacks Edmonds sure-to-rise.

Dead Or Alive know that outrageous dress attracts attention and they know that club sounds sell. Yet they have made the fatal mistake of introducing nothing new to the formula. *Youthquake's* 10 songs are all shallow dance noiz. Even the cover of KC's disco hit 'That's The Way (I Like It)' is lame; the original with a heavier beat.

Dead Or Alive? Now, there's really no question.

David Taylor

Acoustic Confusion
Hazy Days
Real Groovy

Pleasant surprise of the year so far. Acoustic Confusion are an Auckland-based four-piece acoustic folk group who, for economic and time-pressure reasons, perform live only occasionally. This self-financed album was recorded last year and has deservedly sold steadily with little more than word of mouth publicity.

Backbone of the group is Julian McKean, who contributes five of the album's 10 songs. Chris Priestley and Denny Stanway sing tunelessly and forcefully in the best folk tradition and the band's ace-up-sleeve is Brendan Power, who contributes outstanding harmonica throughout.

The album fields a multitude of influences — the English and American folk heritages combine to create a familiar yet original sound. Personal favourites are 'Falling Way Behind', a delightful song about teenage insecurity; Chuck Berry's 'Maybellene' done a la John Mayall's 'Room To Move' and 'One For You', which the whole group sing and harmonise superbly; but there's not a weak track here.

In these (un)musical days where computerised drums and thudding basses dominate everything else it's refreshing to sit back and enjoy an album in which lovely songs and joy of performance are so much in evidence. Treat yourself; and bring back a smile to those jaded eardrums.

Chris Caddick

Divine
The Story So Far
WEA

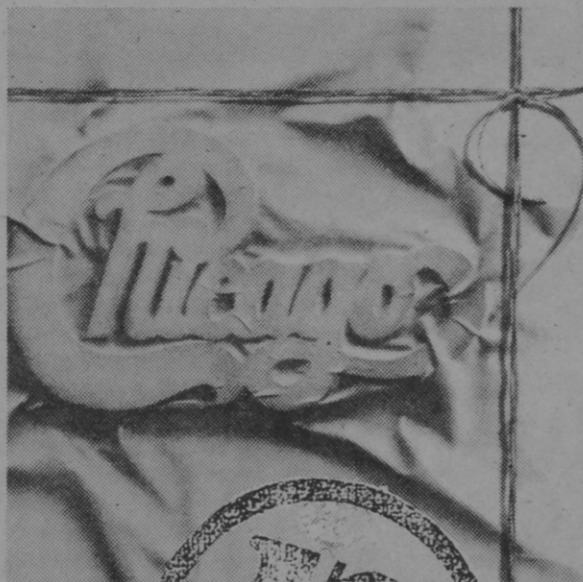
One of the finest moments in the history of cinema is Divine in *Pink Flamingos* strutting down the streets of Baltimore to the strains of the Crystals' 'He's A Rebel'. Then there's the grand finale with Divine eating dog shit — that's what I call method acting!

Now we have the aural equivalent; Divine growling and rapping over some beat crazed Hi-Energy. It doesn't matter that most of the tracks sound like the backing track to Donna Summer's 'I Feel Love' or Frankie's 'Relax', what matters is the feel of the thing. Like the rewrite of New Order's 'Blue Monday' turning into the great 'Love Reaction' or 'Shoot Your Shot', both primo dance textures.

Next to Divine the true star is the production work of Bobby Orlando, by far the best on the desk when it comes to Hi-Energy. Listen to 'Jungle Jezebel' — there's some great stuff going on in that mix. It's much better than Divine's newer stuff ('I'm So Beautiful' and 'You Think You're A Man'), done with Stock and Aitken. Bobby O makes the mix cook, those guys just simmer it a bit.

What a neat cover! Out star in a reclining mood, looking a bit like Monroe but even more like Diana Dors. Don't stop with this record, check out John Waters' great films starring Divine — *Pink Flamingos*, *Female Trouble*, *Multiple Maniacs* *Polyester*. Your life will never be the same.

Kerry Buchanan



THE CHICAGO ALBUM

FEATURING

'STAY THE NIGHT'
'HARD HABIT TO BREAK'
'YOU'RE THE INSPIRATION'
'ALONG COMES A WOMAN'

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