

Records

New Order Low Life EMI

Apparently destined to follow no one, this group has headed in many new directions over the years, often seen chipping away at the heavy millstone of their history with pneumatic drills of the substance of 'Blue Monday'. They arrive at the second staging-post of their career with *Low Life* (*Closer* being the first), less exuberant than on the previous album, *Power, Corruption and Lies*, but utilising their electronic noise to create a wider range of moods and Peter Hook's bass to run short melodies over that noise of synths, sequencers and drum machines. They remain unmatched in the elite of electronic groups with humanity.

The heralded "break with tradition" of including photos of the group on the cover all comes to nowt, cos that's all you get. Written information ('New Order' and titles) is confined to a plastic wrap-around. All very artful, all very tasteful (ta ver' much Peter Saville), but as informative and functional as every bloody Factory sleeve (ditto, lad).

The new-found strength of Bernard Sumner's vocals is evident from the first song, 'Love Vigilantes'. Ironic then, that when he's finally proved he can sing, the group record their first instrumental, the moody 'Elegia'. Especially ironic considering that after his initial weak attempts (as witnessed on 'Procession', *RWP* last month!) critics suggested they drop vocals altogether, but Sumner persisted and succeeded.

Perhaps less wise is the breaking of seven years of noble tradition by the inclusion of the (albeit re-mixed) single 'The Perfect Kiss'. It loses some of the special magic that their singles have all had as separate entities with its inclusion on an album.

The last song, 'Face Up', as-

sumes huge importance as the group do just as its title suggests, from the line "Can you see your own dark face / It's dying in a lonely place"; running through the drumming power of 'Denial'; the sequencer kick of 'Blue Monday'; and the song regurgitated as a whole, new 'Temptation', leading to its final, strangely exuberant cry of "Oh, how I cannot bear the thought of you." It is New Order's purging, the rounding off of their first real phase. Ignore the past, face it or assimilate it ... who cares? New Order do what *they* want, and do it so well. Ra-ta-ta-ta-ta hey! The future is *theirs*.

Paul McKessar

Luther Vandross The Night I Fell In Love CBS

Say ooh whee! Luther returns with a classic, a solid gold collection of sensual soul gems. Even better than last year's *Busy Body* — leaner, more sparse and ultra smooth.

The single 'Til My Baby Comes Home' comes on like a pure rhythm 'n' blues blast from the past, with touches of Sam Cooke and Marvin Gaye, held together by the bass of Marcus Miller and a pumping organ from Billy Preston.

The title track opens with Luther telling us: "You see, I was going to the movies / I mean it actually happened, just like this ..." and then it's goosebump time, with an immaculate vocal arrangement over an understated synth rhythm. Sophisticated schmaltz at its best. Next to 'The Second Time Around' from the 1976 *Luther* album, 'the Night I Fell In Love' is my favorite ballad from the prince of ballads.

Vandross can do no wrong; every track is a finely crafted work of art, from the uptempo 'It's Over Now' to the intense romanticism of 'Other Side of the World'. These are superbly written lyrics, full of great wit and charm — listen to 'My Sensitivity (Gets In the Way)' for soul inspiration and to 'Til My Baby Comes Home' for sexual anticipation.

When the "rapture" comes, God's gonna take Luther up first to be his right-hand soul man.

Kerry Buchanan



Talking Heads: Chris Frantz, Jerry Harrison, Byrne, Tina Weymouth.



Style Council

Talking Heads Little Creatures EMI

In the last year David Byrne must've been in danger of making the cover of *Time*. Ever since *Speaking In Tongues*, *Stop Making Sense* and the ensuing film made their commercial impressions felt,



Luther Vandross

Byrne has become everybody's favourite eccentric, the playful psychotic only too willing to play up to people's preconceptions.

That sort of recognition would be the kiss of death for a band that's worked too hard to funk and educate a world that currently doesn't need another dose of escapism. For that reason it's a relief to see that Byrne has trimmed his excesses and the band back to the standard pre-*Remain In Light* four piece.

It's to *More Songs About Buildings and Food* that *Little Creatures*

is most closely related. 'Big Country' was a birdseye view of this wonderful world and now Talking Heads peer into the absurdities of its inhabitants. Humour gets a look in on the country hokum of 'Creatures Of Love' and on the deliberately infantile yabber of 'Stay Up Late'. Getting serious and 'And She Was' gets funky about death, a good song, and if you wanted to take Byrne literally for once, then the gliding intentions of 'The Lady Don't Mind' mean suicidal tendencies.

'Perfect World' and 'Road To Nowhere' effectively touch the same nerve, leaving 'Television Man', a two-part story of sly funk that breaks into abandonment as the album's opus.

Little Creatures is a double coup; it's cute, accessible and a vital change back to the small-band completeness of *Fear Of Music* and *More Songs*.

George Kay

Style Council Our Favourite Shop Polydor

Ever since *The Gift* Paul Weller's music has appeared contradictory to his beliefs. If you accept the motion that the Jam were, and the Style Council are, protest bands then Weller's means of dissent have undergone some slight changes.

From *The Gift* 'Precious' and 'A Town Called Malice' to last year's *Cafe Bleu* cocktail mix was a jump for most fans that Weller's past black influences couldn't bridge. *Our Favourite Shop* as compensation makes a progressive leaps backwards to the firm but sweet black styles that made 'Speak Like A Child' and 'Long Hot Summer' such great singles.

Gone then is the aimless patter of *Cafe Bleu* and the endless filler that dissipated the album's purpose. *Our Favourite Shop* keeps its styles close to the chest and its songs close to Weller's political heart.

So the unemployment blues of 'Homebreakers' and the social cynicism of 'With Evrything To Lose', 'The Lodgers' are as wsee as a Chaka Khan smile. 'Come To Milton Keynes' takes a pop hint from UK Squeeze and 'A Man Of Great Promise' and 'Boy Who Cried Wolf' deal with different kinds of loss. A harder funk provides the foundation for the socialist flavour of 'In-

ternationalists' and 'A Stone's Throw Away' takes account of the cost of protest while the singles 'Shout To the Top' and 'Walls Come Tumbling' provide the catch-phrases.

Our Favourite Shop (steward) is Weller's toughest stand ever, yet it's also his sweetest; positive proof that he doesn't need the Jam to make some of the most powerful and persuasive music of the year.

George Kay

Scritti Politti Cupid and Psyche '85 Virgin

Never one for unbridled press enthusiasm, Scritti Politti's last album, *Songs To Remember*, was stacked with rich jazz, complex soul and, even less forgivably, previously released singles. The arguments over the latter swamped confusion over an album of superb versatility, depth and innovation; not since Roxy Music's *Country Life* had a genre been taken so to heart and played on at the same time ('Sex': "Don't bush around the beat / This is the soul indiscretion / So let's get indiscreet") and, at a loss for its limp reception, Green Gartside left the country.

Cupid and Psyche began at that point, including as it does all the post-*Remember* singles ('Wood Beez', 'Hypnotize' and 'The Word Girl') and the big, big big-city influence of Scritti's base for the next year or so, New York. There they progressed unharrassed, helped by a smattering of Joseph Beuys, Arif Mardin and Michael Clarke. Hermeneutics for the haute-coiture, the new songs easily pay off any remaining dancefloor deficit, the old rest even better with age and the total sum is disarmingly wonderful. With hooks that would make Green's dross-peddling rivals weep, *Cupid and Psyche* weaves a spell of luxury, funk and gleaming enthusiasm equalling that of 'Remember' yet within a pop medium (white synthetic dance singles, fer chrissake) usually reserved for dullness and sloth.

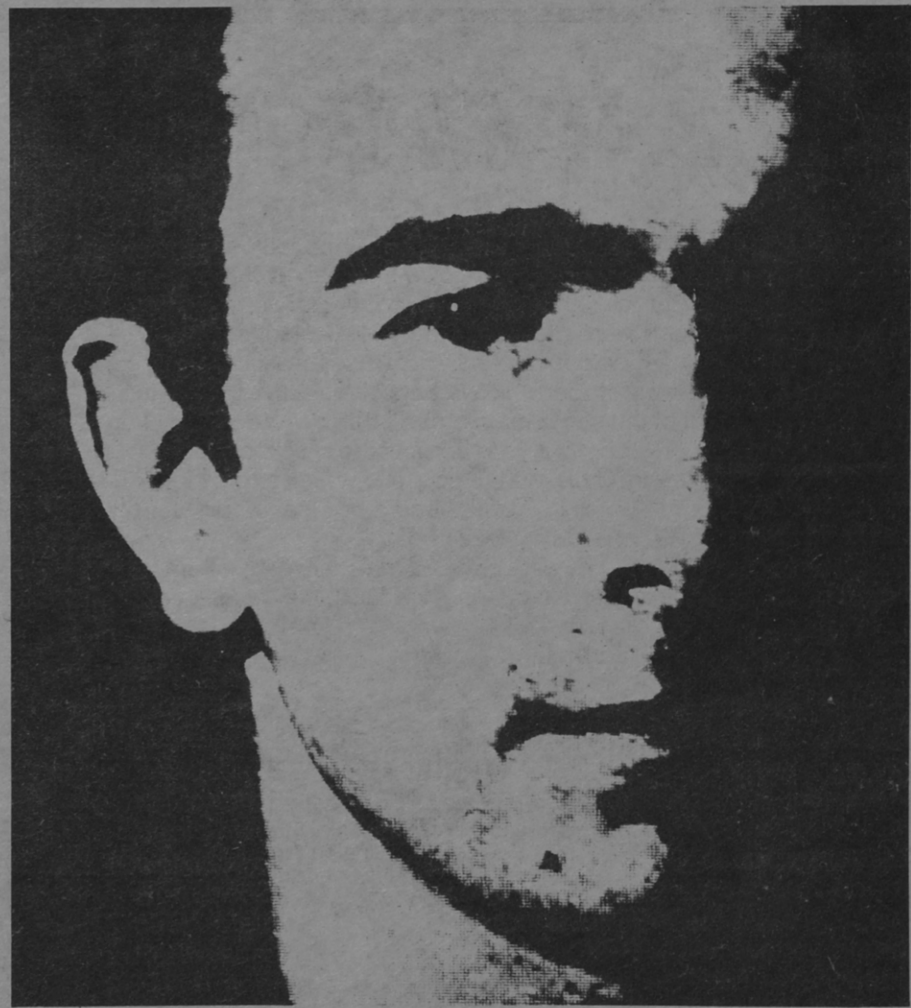
And how, paradoxically, can a Marxist achieve such class? Don't know, but he hasn't put a foot wrong yet. One in the heart for even the most casual admirer of Mr Gartside and one in the bag for Scritti Politti.

Chad Taylor

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