

Records

Netherworld Dancing Toys Painted Years Virgin

When Virgin NZ took on Netherworld Dancing Toys, it was obviously on the basis of their live performances, because none of the records (and there had been four) had really captured the band's ap-

peal. A fairly brave move, then, and one which appears to be paying off, with the album Top 20 and 'For Today' adopted by radio stations up and down the country.

The band's first record for Virgin, 'The Real You', fell down in moving too far from what made it good live, rather too nicely arranged. On *Painted Years* the

Netherworlds shift back towards the live feel but still retain the arranging skills — and that's why it's ultimately a success.

'For Today' isn't like anything else on the album and it'll be interesting to see what the follow-up single is, but it's something the band can live with. It opens the album and the first side is generally the

stronger, with the songs arriving at a kind of halfway point betwixt their guitar origins and brassy trimmings — rock-soul. 'Painted Years' and 'Nurse Next Door' are the standouts, both products of Malcolm Black's slightly self-conscious viewing of the middle class condition. 'Too Full To Fight' traces similar themes.

One effect of this record is to focus attention on the songwriting of Black and Nick Sampson and they both come through well. On the other hand, songs like 'Old Friends' and 'If This Is Tomorrow' suffer from a rhythm section chug that might do live, but not on record. In terms of singing, Black damn near holds his own alongside the heady company of top-line backing vocalists and Sampson's is the best he's put on record. The small army of session guests is in most places kept relevant and in check — the most glaring example of excess being the long-winded trumpet solo in 'Change To the Contrary'.

So that's the record — one that's honest and worthy without ever really cutting loose, finishing up somewhere between sheer sweat and sheer skill, which is perhaps where Netherworld Dancing Toys are. The NDTs may be conventional in some aspects, but they're not copyists and this record is theirs, a pretty good depiction of their strengths and weaknesses. And it's a good record.

Russell Brown

The Dynamic Hepnotics Take You Higher White Label Records

With godfathers like Jo Jo Zep's Joe Camilleri then it's easy money that Australia's Dynamic Hepnotics are part of the blue-eyed soul mafia. And sure enough, *Take You Higher* is the sort of Tasman soul sound that has so far eluded the likes of Rick Bryant and his various bands in the studio vacuum.

Vocalist Robert Susz takes pride of place in the Hepnotics with a style that coaxes and prods and an industry that accounts for 50 per cent of the songs. 'Soul Kind of Feeling', a riff carved out of classic black traditions, is so instantly obvious and simple that it seems to have existed for years just waiting to be grabbed out of soul's subconscious. Susz also takes care of the album's other shaft of inspiration, the new single 'Gotta Be Wrong', an effortless piece of soft funk where everything is just right.

Third and fourth place could also belong to Susz with two classy shuffling ballads, 'Just A Dream' and 'Believe Me', but on a par is keyboard player Mike Gubb's 'Talk About Her Sister' and a couple of stabs at R&B from sax player Bruce Allen, 'Whenever You're Ready' and 'I Don't Want Nobody'.

It's fair to say there's nothing new here. How can an Aussie six-piece in the 80s discover a new soul mine? Still, they rework that old motherlode with a skill and a vengeance.

George Kay

New Model Army No Rest For the Wicked EMI

These angry young men of Bradford cross the 80s sound of Killing Joke with the early Gang Of Four's politics and music (minus that guitar sound). Their strategy is simple: fill an album with the socialist message and not a helluva lotta variety, music-wise.

'Frightened': everyone's scared of Thatcher, but apathetic ("Perhaps you'll see it on the news / Well it's nothing to do with you"). 'Ambition': help! The NMA trapped in small-town Bradford. 'Grandmother's Footsteps': anti-imperialist stomp. 'Better Than Them': let's get those capitalist-disco-bunny-running-dogs! 'My Country': stand up and revolt. 'No

Greater Love': oh God ... they're closing our mills. Let's have a revolution anyway. 'No Rest': NMA stuck in Bradford cos of capitalist pigs. 'Young, Gifted and Skint': the government is starving the country's youth. 'Drag It Down': "The times they are a-changing" — 'bout time for the revolution innit? 'Shot 18': there's a war and people are dying and we're all apathetic. 'The Attack': at last, the bloody New Model Army revolution — conceived, plotted and achieved in 40 minutes.

But now that I've given away the plot, do you really need the record? Predictably dour listening that's not inspiring, but not bad. In fact, it's the type of music you'd expect to come from Thatcherite Bradford — bitter and harsh. Music to revolt to on EMI ...

Paul Mckessar

Sister Sledge When the Boys Meet the Girls Atlantic

If any of you have been following the career of Nile Rodgers since the demise of that beautiful machine called Chic you might be getting a bit depressed. I mean, producing David Bowie you can take, but INXS — Jesus!

Well it's time for celebration, he's back in the fold. The last really great production was Sister Sledge's *We Are Family* album — now, in '85, Nile and the Sisters are back together.

The title track bounces in and out of the speakers in ultra modern style, with some great singing and interesting rhythms. 'Frankie', the first single, is a bit of a strange one; a nifty 60s tune with the "Down ... down, down, down" chorus from the Shangri Las' 'Leader of the Pack'. I like it a lot. The real gem is 'You're Fine', with Nile and vocals and that classic guitar sound.

This is fun stuff and shouldn't be missed. A bit on the light side but don't let that stop you. It may not be J.P. Satre, but then he couldn't play guitar like Nile Rodgers.

Kerry Buchanan

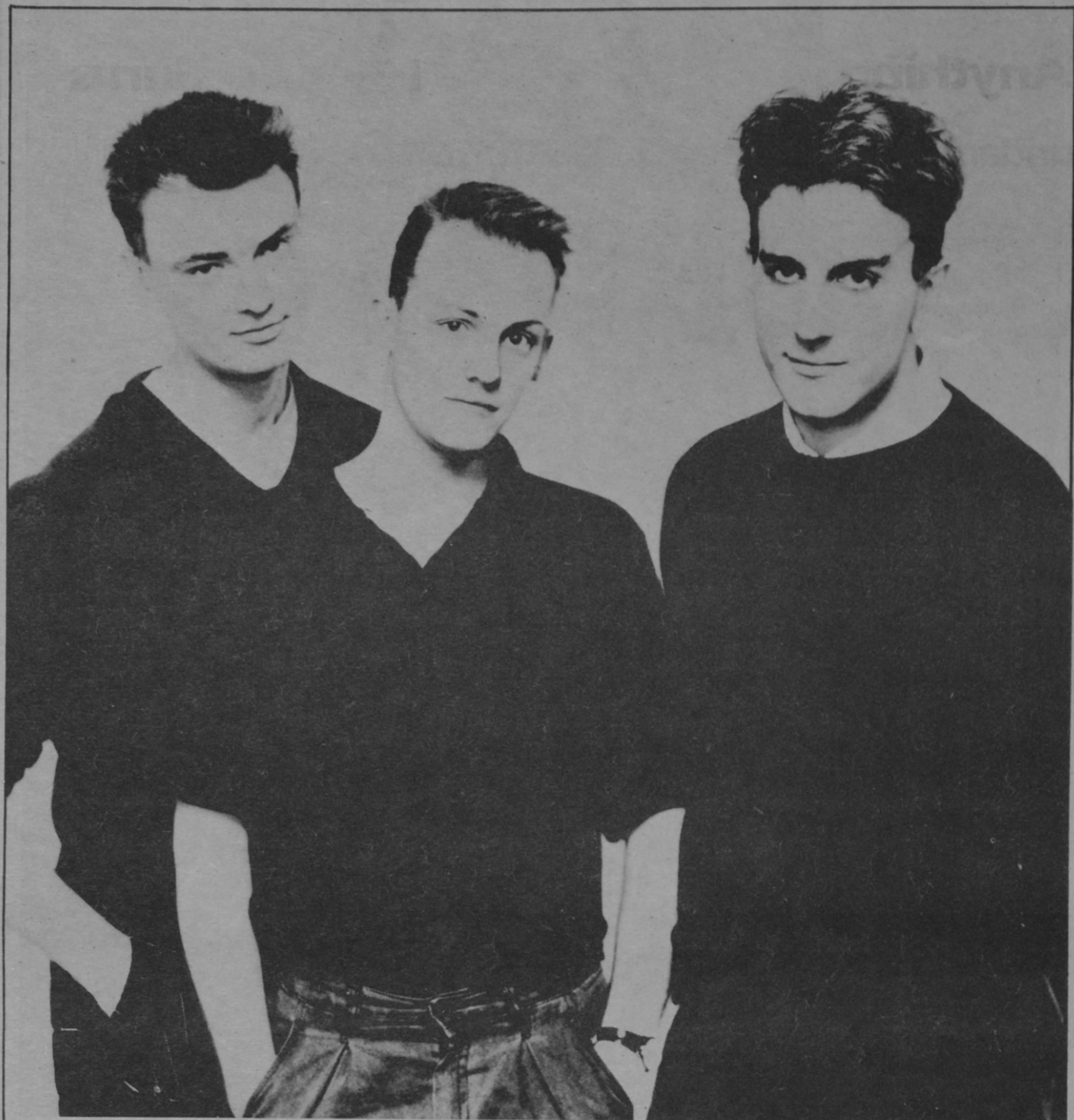
Yukihiro Takahashi Wild 'n' Moody Interfusion

The electronic music of consumer Japan as seen by a Westerner, as spotless and well-scrubbed as ever, picking up the failed pieces of Yello's *Stella*, the mixed-it-on-a-four-track production of the Eurythmics, boiling it, digitally crisping it, playing it backwards, mixing out everything but drums and an ounce of melody and Hey! One Julio Iglesias and a Dalek album!

An album of crisp fridgity; sparse, articulate pop zip that capitalises on its design idiosyncracies like one of those toy cars that folds into a nine-inch robot. The second solo album from Takahashi, one-third of the Yellow Magic Orchestra (along with the more Westernised and melancholy Ryuichi Sakamoto) and keen fisherman (well that's what it says here ...). *Wild 'n' Moody* suffers little from the faults of his previous album, *Murdered By the Music*.

Or, rather, it does exactly the same things wrong/right, but enjoys it, exaggerates it to the point of a plug-in bop-burlesque; our R&B traditions (hal) mirrored so faithfully as to become something quite odd. When an American pop band goes verse-chorus-verse-chorus-instrumental-chorus-fadeout we yawn; when Takahashi does the same we smile at oh-the-quaint-imperfection-of-it-all. Whether that says something for his sense of fun or our lax attitudes I'm not sure, but in a Western pop context, *Wild 'n' Moody* sticks out as perky (as in perculator) and cute. Efficient fun for all the family.

Chad Taylor



The COLOUR FIELD

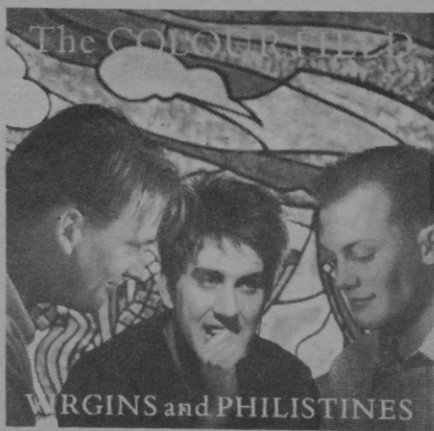
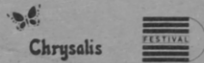
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