

Records

The Clash
Cut The Crap
CBS
Big Audio Dynamite
This Is Big Audio Dynamite
CBS

With these two albums, the truth finally emerges about the schizophrenic nature which destroyed the great band that was once the Clash.

The split was inevitable, with two giant egos vying for dominance. Joe Strummer's voice sang the Youth Anthems, the Hit Singles, while Mick Jones provided the light and shade and some of the best moments of *London*

Calling, Sandinista and *Combat Rock*. Strummer became obsessed with the Clash Image, the streetwise rebel, the latterday James Dean. He showed just how much this vision controlled him when the Clash toured here a few years back, avoiding the press conference which Jones so deftly controlled to go out busing in Auckland. So what did that prove? Not much, as the new Clash LP shows.

Even the title lacks shock value, because it's so obvious. About all it will achieve is the dubious distinction of not being mentioned on mainstream radio. The sleeve is just as much a pose, a hybrid of the debut LP and *Black Market Clash*. The music is mostly the same old thrash, dated and sometimes frankly embarrassing (no way would Jones ever have been



Big Audio Dynamite (L-R): Greg Roberts, Leo Williams, Mick Jones, Don Lettes.

associated with a pathetic breast-beater like 'We Are The Clash'). Strummer's voice has become more off-key and raucous, while the rest of the New Clash provide only token support.

Give Mick Jones credit, he's trying to expand on the ideas hinted at in the last two Clash albums. *Big Audio Dynamite* ventures into electrobeat territory and comes out intact.

Jones has a more subtle approach, although his message still parallels that of Strummer. He gains the edge on melody and manages to create a New Dance in the process. His sound is definitely funky, definitely militant, perhaps more American than British. But at least he wears his influences like a new suit rather than an old raincoat (which has certainly let Strummer down).

'The Bottom Line' is one great song the Clash never recorded, along with 'E=MC²', both of which logically follow the patterns of the second side of *Combat Rock*. On 'A Party', which starts out as a reggae-fied disco number, Jones seems to reflect with some bitterness on the Clash Years.

White Knight write our wrongs
Lyrics for the protest songs
Number one, top of the charts
Rock 'n' roll bleeding hearts
Strummer's problem is that he still believes he's the White Knight. Jones (despite his terrible LP cover) seems to have dismissed the myth. He's also writing better songs. No future? Depends on who you believe.

Duncan Campbell

Tom Waits
Rain Dogs
Island

Waits has always been a wild card, a queer fish. Claiming to have been born in a moving taxi, he grew up in California and grew out of the American tradition of

songs you'll hear all year.

And with this in mind it's not hard to see why *NME* ranked this album as being first equal with *Psychochandy* in last year's stakes. Is it that good? Well, it doesn't come up to the genius that shone on *Swordfish-trombones*, but its best has some weird heart that makes Waits pretty well indispensable.

George Kay

Various Artists
Krush Groove
Warners

Rapping has been a vital part of Afro-American music throughout its history. From the rhythms of Africa, stretching through the blues, be-bop singers, Cab Calloway, Bo Diddley, the Last Poets, right up to the hip-hop of Afrika Bambaataa and the metal attack of Run DMC. Now we have *Krush Groove* — the movie and soundtrack which will hopefully make rap a popular form in New Zealand.

It includes some of the true heavyweights of rap, in the Fat Boys, who talk about food and things on 'All You Can Eat' with a fresh beat, but not quite as tough as their monster 'Jailhouse Rap'. But if you want tough, meet the Beastie Boys, a nasty bunch of white boys who used to play hardcore until they discovered the beat of the Bronx. With 'She's On It', they take the strangely hip influence of AC/DC and hop it up — a big sound and definitely Def.

LL Cool J, the 16-year-old master of the rhyme, has a great rap on modern living with 'I Can't Live Without My Radio', which beats the old master Kurtis Blow's declaration of 'If I Ruled the World'.

The rap apocalypse comes in the combined 'Krush Groovin',



Tom Waits

beat poetry and dustbowl blues. Since 1973 he's made eight albums and been involved with Rickie Lee Jones before being dropped by Asylum. Legends have been made of less.

His first album for Island, 1983's brilliant *Swordfish-trombones*, was an odyssey through human wreckage, the losers who populate Waits' imagination, his literary world. *Rain Dogs* is a sequel to this netherworld, this maggotty underbelly. From the one-armed dwarf of 'Singapore' to the family portraits of 'Cemetery Polka', Waits' characters emerge larger than life; ugly parodies trying to avoid the stereotype.

Unlike Springsteen, for Waits reality is only a base for his imagination and in the few recent interviews he's given he flits in and out of the real world mixing fact and fantasy in the same way that his songs often exaggerate the human condition.

Musically, *Rain Dogs* follows the lead of *Swordfish-trombones*, with the bastard blues of 'Gun Street Girl', 'Union Square', 'Blind Love' and 'Walking Spanish' and the orthodox approach of ballads like 'Hang Down Your Head' and the Springsteen-ish 'Downtown Train' being some of the best

with the Fat Boys and Run DMC trading lines with Kurtis Blow and Sheila E. Sadly, that's the only appearance of Run DMC on the whole album. I hope there's more of them in the movie.

The non-rap tracks just die in comparison, with Debbie Harry being particularly weak and the lead track sung by Chaka Khan there for purely commercial reasons.

This is an important album for the commercial visibility of rap in New Zealand and, by the sounds of it, a great movie.

Kerry Buchanan

Tom Petty
and the Heartbreakers
Pack Up the Plantation
MCA

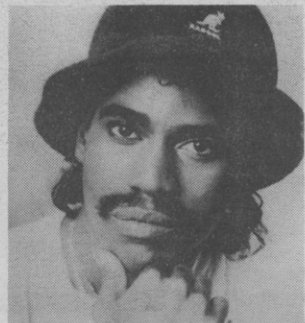
Double live albums have long since been the accepted format for conveying the live performance in totality. Gone are the days of the sharply edited single explosions of the Who, Stones and MC5; the double barrel is here to stay and like its studio counterpart it has drawbacks in an idiom (pop, rock 'n' roll, funk, soul; call it what you like) where the attention span is ideally geared to the three minute single.

Petty's *Pack Up the Plantation*, predictably enough is a stack of his five minute singles backed by some faithful blasts of past standards like the Animals' 'Don't Bring Me Down', the Isley Brothers' 'Shout' and Petty's own career booster, the Byrds' 'So You Want To Be A Rock 'n' Roll Star'. Nice and sweet, and although it avoids the pitfalls of his studio albums (bum songs) there is an overall sickly feeling that Petty is playing to the converted, consequently the performances lack the desperation or keenness that makes great live music.

So we've got to settle for the precise playing of his greatest hits and the preciousness of audience adulation when they take over the vocal of 'Breakdown'. "You'll do me out of a job," sighs Petty and 10 years ago that would've been a threat, now it's a promise.

Like most double live albums (notable exceptions are the Doors and the Ramones), *PUP* is the result of Having Made It, the end product of Success. If only these guys made double live albums when they were starving.

George Kay



Kurtis Blow

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