

Records

Steel Pulse Babylon the Bandit WEA

Birmingham's finest, the Handsworth Revolutionaries, go for the glossy high-tech sound on this, their fifth album, but don't let that put you off. The members of Steel Pulse are urban dreads by upbringing, and their music has always had that slightly refined edge that is a hallmark of all British reggae bands.

Prophet 5, Fairlight and Emulator are all present, but as Iva Davies recently remarked, such tools are only as good as the musicians using them. Steel Pulse retain their twin gifts of strong songwriting and the voice of David Hinds, still among the best in the business.

'Blessed is the Man,' 'Not King James Version' and the title track are all manifest expressions of Jah Rastafari, who remains the band's guiding light. 'Save Black Music' speaks for itself, while in the Lovers vein, Hinds contributes 'Love Walks Out' and keyboards player Selwyn Brown 'Don't Be



Steel Pulse

Afraid,' 'Schoolboys Crush' and 'Sugar Daddy' earn no more than filler grading, to be redeemed by the track that closes side one.

'Kick that Habit' stands out as one of Hinds' finest vocal performances, an irresistibly hummable melody with an all-too-relevant anti-drug message, it inevitably draws requests for a replay after just one listen. As Hinds' top hat-style dreadlock grows taller, so too does his stature as a singer.

This LP was released by WEA af-

ter a petition was started by Sounds Unlimited of Queen St, Auckland. Supporters of reggae deserve credit where due, as does WEA for listening to what the people want to hear.

Now, EMI, about the new Aswad album ...
Duncan Campbell

Vanity Skin on Skin Motown

The story so far: The girl from the Pearl Drops Tooth Polish advert meets Prince backstage and he forms a sing-dirty vocal trio entitled Vanity 6 for her. After one semi-hit, 'Nasty Girls,' and an album as notable for the cover photos as the contents, our girl walks out on her mentor upon reading the script for *Purple Rain*. (Prince replaces her in both movie and trio with the talentless but kewpie-smiling Apollonia.) Vanity meanwhile has signed with Motown, the home of her ex-lover's great rival Rick James (who for his part is busy forming the Mary Jane Girls in opposition to the now-renamed Apollonia 6). Vanity's first album plays up her provocative *Wild Animal* persona, an image further



David Lee Roth

exploited when she spreads for *Playboy* magazine. She also gets to perform in Berry Gordy's movie *The Last Dragon*.

Sound like *Dallas*? You betcha. And if *Skin on Skin* is merely the current episode it's still the best to date. Not that that means a helluva lot y'understand. But whereas with *Wild Animal* you had to snigger at the lyrics as well as bop to the beat — "You've made such a pretty mess of my dress" indeed! — to get your money's worth, here there's three or four tracks you can enjoy without even listening to the words. (Though they're as dripping in soft-core stickiness as ever.) 'Under the Influence,' the single, is a great dance floor groove, and 'Romantic Voyage' makes a smooth, floating change from the predominantly funk format. Side two is the more techno-cliched but at least the title track and 'In the Jungle' swap gimmickry for melody and good rhythms.

But if you're keen on following the Vanity saga and have only limited resources, then buy the single (it's got a picture cover) and save the difference for her next movie. She's starring opposite ex-Kiss leader Gene Simmons.
Peter Thomson

Luke Hurley Make Room Jayrem

There's tension in the wires, and I'm sure in the mind of Luke Hurley. In his own words, "I'm looking for a miracle cure and all the pieces come together, how and when, I'm not sure."

Luke's collection of material is very personal, an astute affair involving clever lyrics and good playing. There are challenges in each track and I sense a lot of inner debate and mental gymnastics.

Parallels? Well there's an obvious apprenticeship of Neil Young guitar joined with a splash of Jethro Tull nasals, and a fairly staccato sort of pacing. Similar in some ways to Jon McCleary from Wellington band the Spines.

'Ghand's Rag' and the title track 'Make Room' are unique, while the previously released 'Japanese Overdrive' gives a touch of colour to spartan surroundings. So too does Alister MacDougal, slipping through some friendly support on 'MacDougal's Blues'.

This solo project deserves something. A Dunedin venture with a distinctly "non-Dunedin" sound (as we northern stool-pigeons would see it), with no tangible backing save Jayrem distribution. But I fear he will be consumed by the very beast he is chasing.

This is a very electric album; it gets you in the nervous system.
Barry Caitcheon

David Lee Roth Eat 'em and Smile Warner Brothers

From the clown prince of rock comes the album of the year, well I'm sure he thinks so anyways. Yep, here it is folks, the album the world's been waiting for. Bigger, better, harder, faster, rockier, rollier, raunchier, No 15 with a bullet, second week on the American charts, which augurs well for a huge selling album universally.

The record itself is fairly predictable, typical Roth tongue in cheek pomp and grandeur, featuring some exceptional playing from his cohorts, namely Steve Vai on guitar, who Zappa recruited at the tender age of 15 straight out of high school (also ex-Alcatraz), Billy Sheehan on bass who's consistently won critical praise and awards as a top session player, and the (for now) unknown drummer Gregg Bissonette. Apparently Roth wanted Yngwie Malmsteen as his first choice guitarist, who promptly turned him down. "He's got a bigger ego than me," quoth the man. Never mind.

For me the standout tracks are the old Nashville Teens/John D Loudermilk 'Tobacco Road' and the Kay/Gordon classic 'That's Life', brought to worldwide fame by Sinatra, which Dave Lee gives the works. If there's a video around of this I'd love to see it, I can imagine it's totally over the top. If you're into albums larger than life with a great sense of fun and adventure, this is for you. Go for it, I just love it.

Greg Cobb

Total Contrast London

By all accounts this is one of the top dance records we've seen this year. 'What You Gonna Do About It' and 'Hit and Run' are the best cuts, and with 'Takes a Little Time', are strongly D Train influenced; the reliance on keyboards and same naive production. And rich in voices, but smoother still. It's a fine and charming balance.

But that dumb-bum tempering of male sweat and wet conscience that grew up in the bleeding-heart 70s is back — and Total Contrast are wet.

'Where is Love?', a cover I forget who sang first, still has the true-ness and spirit of old doo wop that the Force MD's wouldn't know if they fell over. There's a polish and marketing wisdom on this album that's covetable, right down to a superb record sleeve that will make the girls ga-ga.

Peter Grace



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THE JAYREM RECORDS COUNTDOWN

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH		
1	2	Brutal BLACK UHURU	RAS-3015 TC-RAS-3015
2	5	Waiting TURIYA	JAY-138
3	1	Great Train Robbery BLACK UHURU	RAS-7018 TC-RAS-7018
4	NEW	The Cutting Edge LOW PROFILE	FR-4
5	4	Live In Concert LINTON KWESI JOHNSON	ROUGH-78 TC-ROUGH-78
6	NEW	All I Have Is Love GREGORY ISAACS	TRL-121 ZC-TRL-121
7	3	Five Sides WORKING WITH WALT	JAY-135
8	14	Tihei Mauriora AOTEAROA	JAY-318 TC-JAY-318
9	9	Make Room LUKE HURLEY	JAY-324 TC-JAY-324
10	NEW	Money In My Pocket DENNIS BROWN	TRL-197 ZC-TRL-197
11	10	Elementary HORACE ANDY/RHYTHM QUEEN	ROUGH-82 TC-ROUGH-82
12	8	First Sin CONFESSION	JAY-134
13	20	Tribute To A Friend DREAD BEAT AND BLOOD	JAY-320 TC-JAY-320
14	6	Inside JOHN NILAND	EELMAN-8
15	12	Tales of the Unexpected LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS	HOT-1011
16	7	Dead Sea Scrolls DEAD SEA SCROLLS	JAY-136
17	-	Greatest Hits FELA KUTI	NEMILP-0680
18	15	Judge Not GREGORY ISAACS/DENNIS BROWN	GETI- TC-GETI-1
19	-	Secrets of the Estranged FLESH D-VICE	HER-10
20	11	Rise and Shine PETER BROGGS	GETI-8 TC-GETI-8



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