

Records

Eurythmics Revenge RCA

The Eurythmics' appeal is somewhat like that of an actor who's become a star by playing character parts. Some of our enjoyment of their skills comes by making comparisons with their previous roles. And the Eurythmics have certainly have played a wide variety. On just the first side of their previous album Annie's persona ranged from coy femininity (on 'There Must Be an Angel') to soul-strutting feminist ('Sisters are Doing It for Themselves').

Yet there have also been some consistent musical strands evident since Lennox and Stewart's earliest days together, even going back to the Tourists. A strong shot of soul music is one. Many people who overlooked the Eurythmics' cover of 'Wrap It Up' amongst the synth-dominated sounds of 1983's *Sweet Dreams* were stunned by its intense live workout at Sweetwaters. (A performance which left *Rip It Up*'s publisher, often blinkered in his black groove, muttering that Sam and Dave couldn't have done it that well themselves.)

Now with *Revenge* we get a whole album dominated by the influences of 60s soul and R&B. 'Missionary Man', the first track, may push the style into cliché with its "original sinner" lyric and a riff we've heard too often, but the rest of side one is consistently successful. There's less overt flash but the influences are better integrated. After four gritty, uptempo tracks the side ends with a lovely, gentle ballad.

Side two is paced the same way although the material is not quite as consistent. Nonetheless it's only the final track (ie, the other ballad) that really disappoints. Yet even this one almost makes it on the sheer strength of performance.

Annie Lennox has by now firmly

established herself as among the best pop vocalists currently working and Dave Stewart leads a band that packs as invigorating a punch as you'd wish for. If this is the rhythm section from the Eurythmics' current touring unit then we're in for a dynamite show next January.

Revenge isn't particularly comparable to the Eurythmics' previous set, *Be Yourself Tonight*. There isn't, to return to the acting analogy, the ostentatious array of different roles for us to applaud and admire.

Instead, like the movie star who periodically returns to act in theatre, *Revenge* presents Lennox and Stewart refining their craft by reworking their roots. The results may not please as wide an audience but they are nonetheless worthwhile.

Peter Thomson

The Cure Standing on a Beach: The Singles WEA

When the Cure toured here to promote *17 Seconds* back in 1979 they played the Regent in Dunedin. Just as they were picking their way through 'A Forest' the roof began to leak just above the stage, drip... drip... drip... the effect adding to the cold solitude of Smith's songs back then.

That was the Cure at their best, a band which had evolved from *Three Imaginary Boys* and two buoyant pop singles, 'Boys Don't Cry' and 'Jumping Someone Else's Train' to the delicate introspection of *17 Seconds*, an album described by Paul Morley at the time as being "truly progressive". But since then it's been mostly downhill.

Standing on a Beach is a pretty lavish and faithful reflection of the band's fluctuating form. On *17 Seconds* Smith basically avoided the narcissistic melancholic absorption that plagued *Faith* and the gaunt Joy Division-influenced singles, 'Primary', 'Charlotte Sometimes' and 'Hanging Garden'. As if to claw himself out of this depression and keep in touch with fashion via birds-nest hair-dos,



Annie Lennox

Smith returned to a pop that was maybe too cute in the shape of 'Let's Go To Bed', 'The Walk' and 'The Love Cats'.

Last year's 'In Between Days' and 'Close To Me', two good tunes, suggested that maybe he was again getting the balance right by concentrating on his writing and not the dictates of fashion. As it is, *Standing on a Beach* is only a reasonable collection of singles showing that Smith has a long way to go before he has the knack of crafting classic 45s.

George Kay

Wham! The Final Epic

Shouldn't Wham! be out on *Teenage Epic* as a label? Their young guns were always smart-bombs, heat-seekers that hit the right target so many times it made you giddy. 'Wham Rap' ushered in a wider acceptance of black music in mainstream British pop. 'Clup Tropicana' hit you just on summertime and 'Everything She Wants' slid in on the heels of a funky and synthetic

Frankie. While Martin Fry got clever and Kevin Rowland got conceptual, George and Andy got rich. While ZTT got wordy and Julie Burchill got suburban neurosis, George and Andy got popular. And while everyone else gets old and fat and further away from the magic potion, George and Andy have split up with a \$60,000 Hippodrome bash and *The Final*, a double LP that's a slice of the goodbye cake for everyone.

You can't get much nicer than that, after all. Give 'em a good time and get out quick. Make them laugh ('Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go'), make them snore ('Careless Whispers', 'A Different Corner') and make them squeal like puppies ('I'm Your Man'). Turn your entire repertoire into a yuppie shopping list (the jacket, the girl, the cocktail) and then insist on being underage ('Young Guns', 'Bad Boys'). And just when they thought it was all over, cut one last sizzler — 'Edge of Heaven'.

It's hard to feel anything but admiration for Wham! They have better tans than Robert Palmer and more chins than Nick Rhodes. They epitomise to every last designer thread and bouncy riff The Pop Group. This may be two-and-a-half album's worth of compilation, but it comes at a time when most people are going blind trying to put a 12" single together. Every hit is here, every scrap of inane, intelligent fun that you could hope for.

This is a quality lig. Fun, laughter and a bottled suntan, Wham are alive and well. See you down at the pool.

Chad Taylor

Bob Dylan Knocked Out Loaded CBS

Mention of Bob Dylan these days seems to be an invitation to change the subject. Perhaps it's only fitting. Once Dylan spoke to and for so many. Now he casts about for an audience while his greying devotees of old clutch to precious memories (and also the title of a gospel song given an un-

necessarily souped-up treatment here).

I applaud the album title, a quote from a wonderful old New Orleans marijuana song, and the nerve of opening with Junior Parker's 'You Wanna Ramble' (after all, Parker had a lovely voice, something Dylan is yet to be accused of). T-Bone Burnett on guitar and James Jamerson Jrn on bass help carry Dylan into boogie land, and this is pretty decent.

The rest of the album is patchy. Dylan (short on ideas?) has enlisted some dodgy help. Kris Kristofferson's 'They Killed Him' is as mawkish as these religious parables get, children's choir, nausea.

The big grabber is 'Brownsville Girl', which is credited to Dylan and Sam Shepard. It's a western movie epic, grand and grandiose, and I'm sure I wasn't meant to laugh, but it's all to silly, and too longwinded. That's the problem, more air than meat.

Ken Williams

Patsy Cline Stop, Look and Listen MCA

This album must rank as the pleasant surprise of the year, not least because it exists at all. A long forgotten singer killed in a plane crash in 1963, Patsy had a string of hit singles of eminent class and distinction. Never content to remain a "hillbilly singer", Cline and producer Owen Bradley moved quickly into a more sophisticated pop style as soon as contractual obligations allowed.

This collection, though not a greatest hits, traces this evolution through B-sides and non-hits, from 'Turn the Cards Slowly' in 1955 to the lush string settings and varied musical influences of her later works. This later sound is defined by 'Sweet Dreams', not included here but recorded by Elvis Costello for *Almost Blue*. Not specifically for nostalgia buffs, this is a very satisfying release for anyone interested in a genuine pop stylist. Just the thing for cocktail parties this summer.

Mark Kennedy



rage hard

ZTT



You'll never walk alone with Frankie...



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