

Records

Neil Young
Landing on Water
Geffen

Neil Young's output in the 1980s has been a perplexing mixture covering a vast spectrum of popular music. *Trans* combined synthesised electronics with scorching rock, *Everybody's Rockin'* rejoiced in old rockabilly favourites, and *Old Ways* found Young on safe ground with country originals and old classics, a course charted in the 70s by albums such as *Comes a Time*.

Landing on Water continues Young's eclecticism which has largely contributed to the waning of his popularity. Combining some of his vintage guitar solos with Danny Kortchmar on synthesisers to layer the sound, Young delivers an uncompromising album which firmly cements for him a relevance in the 1980s. Many of the songs are brutal salvos given added impetus by the garage type production and the overlays of wild phasing, as if some madman had taken control of the monitors.

Side one contains most of the album's highlights. 'Weight of the



Sigue Sigue Sputnik

World' lurches from speaker to speaker in an audio celebration; 'Violent Side', featuring the San Francisco Boys Chorus, evokes memories of Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, 'Hippie Dream' savages old myths and will surprise, 'Bad News Beat' and 'Touch the Night' capture much of the blackness of the electric side of *Rust Never Sleeps*. Side two has less appeal but contains the excellent 'Hard Luck Stories'.

Whether *Landing on Water* enables Young to recapture a signifi-

cant following remains to be seen, as there is little here that will get the thumbs up from commercial radio. Diehards will revel in this counterpunching return, and it is to be hoped that a wider audience will investigate the very considerable merits of an artist who has found a new relevance in the 1980s. You too will be singing along with the San Francisco Boys Chorus.

Dave Perkins

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Flaunt It
Parlophone

"Music" reviewers of the world have united in universal horror at this, the *NME* hacks went into overdrive. This is meaningless, this is stupid, this is so teenage, this is offensive, ad infinitum.

A hunk of vinyl devoid of the big A, dangling its artlessness with gusto. So beautifully offensive. Marshall McLuhan in *The Medium is the Message* wrote, "The young today live mythically and in depth," and SSS wallow in the mire of myth. Images from the past collide with those of the present, a collection from the trash heap of popular culture.

The rock and roll of Cochran, T Rex and Gary Glitter merge with Moroder's Euro mix ups of sound.



Neil Young

Myth piles upon myth—"make my day—ultra vixen, sex and rockets, shot it up"—as the global village starts to crumble down.

An album about technology made by technocrats ("the fifth generation of rock and roll") trying to be sex stars or thrill killers. Perhaps one of the funniest albums ever made, such artifice becomes farcical, and comic cut-ups abound in the ultra dumb lyrics of stuff like 'She's My Man'—"Desperate loving made me blind. She's my oriental love, now she's two of a kind..."

With pop music entering a new era of fervent respectability ("Dire Straights" as the new gods, and U2 treated like the sermon from the mount), it sure is good to have SSS reminding us that pop music is just the acceptable face of capitalism.

Kerry Buchanan

Chaka Khan
Destiny
Warner Bros

With 1984's *I Feel For You*, Chaka Khan and producer Arif Mardin hit on a style that was as eclectic as it was accessible. With Melle Mal man Reggie Griffith, they laced the R&B formula with chugging rap, sampled crescendoes and *music concrete*. Cha-

ka's mature delivery and Mardin's self-confessed 'fascination with crossover styles ensured that *I Feel For You* still sounds as fresh as a daisy.

Destiny sounds less exciting. It lacks the strong songs for Chaka to hang her hat on and it feels more predictable, more weighty. Everyone else, from the Art of Noise to Janet Jackson, has been swotting up *I Feel For You* since it came out and the "innovators" have caught up.

Having said that, Chaka falls back on the one thing she has over everyone—experience. Only an old pro can wrap herself convincingly around songs like 'I Can't Be Loved' and 'Earth to Mickey', and no one, but no one can pull the stops out like Chaka does on 'Watching the World'. From the credits, it's apparent that she has done nothing but sing the songs which other people have written for her, but with the glowing heart of herself and no one else. There is none of the production-line feel that plagues her vocals-only rivals.

Along with 'Watching the World', there is one other gem (wait for it...), 'Love of a Lifetime', starring none other than Messrs. Gartside, Gamson and Maher of Scritti Politti. Five years ago,

Green was a skinny Manchester prat who dreamed of Chaka Khan—now he writes her songs.

A lot of stodge, but a lot of Chaka as well—and it's the latter that counts. Maybe she should call it *Density*. What the hell, I'm still in love.

Chad Taylor

Screaming Blue Messiahs
Gun-Shy
WEA

Mention British R&B and odds on some old head will dredge up memories of old lags like Alexis Korner, John Mayall, Savoy Brown, Chicken Shack, early great Fleetwood Mac, permanent bores Status Quo and Dr Feelgood, and the occasionally tasty Count Bishops. All in all a fairly dull lineage, until the Screaming Blue Messiahs.

Driven by a resentment that owes more to punk than to any old blues traditions and led out front by Bill Carter's songs, guitar and Joe Strummer snarl, the Screaming Blue Messiahs career along on a well-oiled dance-floor groove courtesy of Thompson (bass) and Harris (drums).

As a guitarist Carter doesn't fall into the cliched have-riff-will-beat-it-to-death mentality—the almighty opener, 'Wild Blue

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COUNTDOWN

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH		
1	NEW	Weird Culture Weird Custom National Student Radio Compilation	NSR-001 TC-NSR-001
2	1	Brutal Black Uhuru	RAS-3015 TCRAS-3015
3	4	The Cutting Edge Low Profile	FR-4
4	9	Make Room Luke Hurley	JAY-324 TC-JAY-324
5	2	Waiting Turiya	JAY-138
6	NEW	Free Dirt Died Pretty	
7	3	Great Train Robbery Black Uhuru	RAS-7018 TC-RAS-7018
8	5	Live In Concert Linton Kwesi Johnson	ROUGH-78 TCROUGH-78
9	NEW	Key To Your Heart Blitz	JAY-728
10	NEW	Wings Of Steel Stonehenge	JAY-137
11	NEW	Live Sex Pistols	RRLP-101 TC-RRLP-101
12	21	The Legend Marilyn Munroe	CC0016 CC0016C
13	7	Five Sides Working With Walt	JAY-135
14	10	Money In My Pocket IMPORT Dennis Brown	TRL-197 ZC-TRL-197
15	14	Inside John Niland	EELMAN-8 TC-EEL-8
16	NEW	Electrical Storm Ed Kuepper	HOTLP-1020
17	6	All I Have Is Love IMPORT Gregory Isaacs	TRL-121 ZC-TRL-121
18	13	Tribute To A Friend Dread, Beat And Blood	JAY-320 TC-JAY-320
19	NEW	The Turgid Miasma Of Existence Celebate Rifles	
20	11	Elementary Horace Andy / Rhythm Queen	ROUGH-82 TC-ROUGH-82



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