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

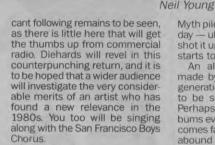
NEW



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

Whether Landing on Water enables Young to recapture a signifi-



Dave Perkins

Sigue Sigue Sputnik 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 Massage 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. 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 mus-ic 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 crescen-does and music concrete. Chaka'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.

Chaka Khan

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

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 Fleet-wood Mac, permanent bores Sta-tus 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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