

# Records

## Isley, Jasper, Isley Caravan of Love CBS

The Isley Brothers are a summer band. Every year the radio stations dig out a copy of 'That Lady' and 'Summer Breeze.' Like summer, the Isleys don't change much. And one summer, and one record, can be indistinguishable from the one before.

Even with this new group, made up of the three youngest members, brothers Ernie and Marvin Isley, and cousin Chris Jasper, this is still an Isley Brothers album. Ernie, the guitar virtuoso, brings back memories of 'Go For Your Guns' on the first track. Remember the summer of '77? (No? I told you so.) 'Insatiable Woman' is all about true sex, which the Isleys love to sing about, and it's wrapped up in the same summer we've known since Gaye's *Let's Get It On* album.

'Caravan of Love' is one of the Isley's best ever, with lyrics that make it a hot contender for the Nobel peace prize. And, apart from a brief flirtation with Prince's sound (I am sick of comparing people to Prince), the Isley, Jasper,

Isley experience should definitely be on your summer playlist. **Peter Grace**

## Sting Bring on the Night A&M

This is the in-concert double album of the band that made *Dream of the Blue Turtles*, recorded during a few European dates last December. The material consists of six numbers from that album, five (I think) Police songs and a few new ones. Whether it's all worth buying depends on what you want from it.

It's not a greatest hits. In fact none of these songs would number among Sting's most well known. Instead the repertoire seems selected to suit the jazz background of his new band. And in nearly all selections there's an improvement. Sometimes it's subtle: despite the added instrumentation and vocal backing to 'Tea in the Sahara,' the main enhancement is due to Darryl Jones being a better bassist than the Policeman.

Occasionally the improvement is considerable. The once-stodgy 'When the World is Running Down' gains a pulsating rhythmic lift, and deservedly opens the album. Even the songs this band has already recorded are enhanced (although

'One World/Love is the Seventh Wave' goes on far too long). The treatments are similar but tend to be both more driving and more relaxed.

The only outright failure in an otherwise very good set of performances is a blustering rendition of 'Demolition Man,' which just goes to show that brilliant jazzbos don't necessarily know how to rock.

Which brings us to a wrong motive for investigating this album. The fact that the band contains four of the hottest talents in jazz, and the fact that live performance usually allows musicians to stretch out, might tempt strictly jazz listeners to purchase *Bring on the Night* in expectation of stellar instrumental excitement. They shouldn't. Sure, Kenny and Branford get to solo, but nothing like as satisfyingly as they do on a good Wynton Marsalis album. After all Stingsongs aren't exactly great themes to improvise on.

Ironically however, any criticism one might mount against these musicians for slumming may be short-sighted. For his very act of introducing such instrumentalists to a huge new audience, Sting may one day be seen as having done more for the future of jazz than Archie Shepp.

**Peter Thomson**

## Gotham City Express Reaction

You'd be hard pressed to find a stronger line-up than the 12 musicians in the Gotham City Express. Technically superb, funky and tight at their occasional live gigs, they've recorded this nine-song album live to two-track in Mandrill studios guided by co-producer/engineer Tim Field. That was a good move in an effort to retain spontaneity, and the results are so note-perfect one can only marvel at the musicians' proficiency.

The vocalists Anne Crummer, Peter Morgan and Kim Willoughby particularly shine on the numbers they sing together, especially the opener 'Oh La De Dah,' while Gary Verberne has captured perfectly the HM sound of funk guitar. The backbone however is the five-piece horn section, anchored by Newton Hoons Chris Green and Mike Russell, who get a chance to stretch out on 'What is Hip' and 'The Fight Song.' Larry Martinez's piano is excellent too, playing rhythm or on David Sancious-style explorations.

The Gotham City Express are hot live, but on vinyl there's something missing. What it is is personality; on a stage you can see the musicians responding to each other, which takes the indulgence

out of the improvisations. As it is, there is plenty of slick playing here, but the only one of the jazz/rock/funk tunes that's memorable is 'Imagine,' and that sounds as if it was arranged by TVNZ. Otherwise, it's the sort of hot licks you used to hear over the PA at Western Springs while reading your *Hot Licks*. **Chris Bourke**

## UB40 Rat in the Kitchen DEP International

A fair year, this, for UK reggae. Aswad and Steel Pulse have both proved that high-tech doesn't mean a loss of Roots, the Mad Professor's Ariwa Posse has brought further innovations in dub production, the MC's may yet sustain their initial burst of popularity, and UB40 produce another UB40 LP.

That is to say, UB40 maintain their consistent, catchable melodic touch, their lyrical simplicity and clarity and their deft arrangements. If this seems to be damning by faint praise, it's not meant that way because *Rat in the Kitchen* is no letdown. Rather, UB40 now inspire a friendly familiarity, like a favourite T-shirt. It's a colour plenty of people will be wearing this summer, as they've done in previous years with *Geffrey Mor-*

*gan* and *UB44*. The new UB40 album will be essential warm weather listening.

If there's an air of formula creeping into UB40's work, it's certainly one that pays off. Fans will feel instantly at home with 'All I Want to Do' and 'Watchdogs,' both filled with mellow Campbell brothers harmonies and insistent horn punctuations. Astro aficionados will delight in 'Tell It Like It Is' and the title track, being typically smooth toasts, the latter featuring an instrumental dovetail courtesy of Herb Alpert (how the hell did he get in there?). The band's politics remain firmly in the court of equal rights and justice. 'Sing Our Own Song' being sufficient to ensure *Rat in the Kitchen* will not be released in Bothaland. UB40 now have sufficient control over their product to ensure this doesn't happen, anyway.

So what if it's just another UB40 album? Sure, it breaks no new ground, but then UB40 still occupy a unique position as Britain's most internationally popular multiracial reggae band. Their original gifts have not deserted them, nor have any of their original members. Praise the unity of these Brummies, and the banner they carry. So why do I keep wishing they'd surprise me? **Duncan Campbell**



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## THE JAYREM RECORDS COUNTDOWN

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH		
1	6	Free Dirt <b>Died Pretty</b>	CITLP-504 TC-CIT-504
2	1	Weird Culture, Weird Custom <b>National Student Radio Compilation</b>	NSR-001 TC-NSR-001
3	NEW	Stoneage Cinderella <b>Died Pretty</b>	CIT-020
4	2	Brutal <b>Black Uhuru</b>	RAS-3015 TC-RAS-3015
5	NEW	E Hine <b>Aotearoa</b>	JAY-139
6	19	The Turgid Miasma of Existence <b>Celibate Rifles</b>	HOTLP-1024
7	NEW	Dancing in the Dark <b>Cool Daddy</b>	SNAP-1204
8	3	The Cutting Edge <b>Low Profile</b>	FR-4
9	7	Great Train Robbery <b>Black Uhuru</b>	RAS-7018 TC-RAS-7018
10	NEW	Mona With The Children <b>Doug Cameron</b>	SNAP-1203
11	NEW	Speed Of Life <b>Smithereens</b>	SNAP-1201
12	16	Electrical Storm <b>Ed Kuepper</b>	HOTLP-1020
13	4	Make Room <b>Luke Hurley</b>	JAY-324 TC-JAY-324
14	NEW	Fay Lovsky <b>Fay Lovsky</b>	JAY-325 TC-JAY-325
15	10	Wings of Steel <b>Stonehenge</b>	JAY-137
16	12	The Legend <b>Marilyn Munroe</b>	CC0016 CC0016C
17	9	Key To Your Heart <b>Blitz</b>	JAY-728
18	15	Inside <b>John Niland</b>	EELMAN-7 TC-EEL-7
19	11	Sex Pistols Live <b>Sex Pistols</b>	RRLP-101 RRLC-101
20	25	Lawson Square Infirmary <b>Lawson Square Infirmary</b>	HOTM2

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