

Records

Cyndi Lauper
True Colours
Portrait

Dear Cyndi,
I still remember the moment I fell in love. It was back in your Blue Angel days, the moment I first heard you climax on that high note in 'I'm Gonna Be Strong.' Wow! Then in 1984 the world found out about you and I could share my enthusiasm. Most folks agreed of course, but there were still a few who couldn't hear. I'll still fight any kid on the block who won't agree that *She's So Unusual* is one of the best albums of the decade (well, its first side anyway).

But what all this background stuff is really about is me working up to say how ... how concerned I am about your new LP. It's always seemed to me that the greatness of your best music involved its contradictions. You know, silly but smart, brassy but sensitive, trivial but with depth. Yeah, trashy but classic. Sure, you'd smoothed things up a lot between *Blue Angel* and *She's So Unusual* but there's still that edge of loopy de-

mentia poking through. Exciting stuff!

Now, on *True Colours* I can't hear it. Maybe it's just all those Linn drums and fancy production techniques distracting me. Obviously you know what you're doing because you co-produced the record. I'm sure tracks like 'Boy Blue' are going to be big hits on the FM stations, yet for me, you best song here is 'Maybe He'll Know,' the one you wrote back with your old Blue Angel partner John Turi.

I like your cover versions though. But aren't 'What's Going On' and 'Iko Iko' pretty well known anyway? Those two you chose for the first side of *She's So Unusual* probably had more impact because so few people had heard them before.

I saw your new video the other day. (We don't get them on TV over here anymore but the local record shop was showing some.) Damn, I learned to conga to 'Girls Just Want to Have Fun' and I really loved the way you put your mum into it. But this new one is all arty-farty with costume changes and symbols and stuff. Are you really into all this now? I almost thought it was a Bonnie Tyler clip!

Oops, sorry. I don't mean to bad mouth, considering what you



Erasure

mean to me and all. Just yesterday I played *True Colours* to a friend and when he said it could almost be retitled *She's So Usual* I properly bawled him out. I just wish I'd felt more confident while doing it though.

Your fan,
Peter Thomson

Erasure
Wonderland
WEA

As the fluff subsides in the syn-
tho versus guitar spat it's clear
that the best songwriters from

both sides are still on their feet. As a member of Depeche Mode, it was obvious that, even if he'd only been the tambourine player, Vince Clarke had enough tunes to set up shop on his own terms.

With Alison Moyet in Yazoo and now with Andy Bell in Erasure, Clarke has extended his dab hand at capturing the moment, at evoking the precious and sometimes lasting joy and resonance of the Popular Song. Vocalist Andy Bell has been billed as merely a Moyet ringer and on the R&B-ish grain of 'Cry So Easy' and 'Push Me Shove Me' he falls into that comparison but is well saved by the songs.

But *Wonderland* is about Love and its accoutrements, foibles and packaging. Right from its toy love cover, the album plays upon the vulnerability of romance, a pain sweetly captured on the pristine pop of 'Heavenly Action' and 'Oh L'Amour,' and laid bare on the slow bluesy 'My Heart...So Blue.'

As yet Erasure isn't continuing the commercial success of Yazoo. A shame, because although *Wonderland* doesn't rub shoulders with perfection, it has a fistful of songs and a deceptively durable concept to prove that Clarke still ranks as one of Britain's best writers, regardless of medium.

George Kay

George Thorogood
and the Destroyers
Thorogood Live
EMI

Omar and the Howlers
I Told You So
Austin

Recorded live in the heart of America's midwest (Cincinnati, Ohio) in a benefit for the Free Store/Food Bank, George and the Delaware Destroyers blast their way through a best of, including 'Who Do You Love,' 'Night Time,' 'I Drink Alone,' 'Madison Blues,' 'One Bourbon,' etc., etc. Showing that "the world's original six-man quartet" (as the drum riser banner states) are no slouches when it comes to full-on hard rockin', kick-ass boogie. George has worked his way into a niche, there ain't no one who does it better, but to these ears it all gets a bit samey. Maybe on his next studio album he'll break out and surprise us all, as I think the guy's got a lot more to offer — though his fans could take plenty more of the same, I guess.

Someone who could give him a run for his money though is Omar Dykes, who fronts a very good three-piece band out of the new musical capital of America (?), Austin, Texas. Basically a booze, blues, boogie band, Omar pos-

sesses a fine whiskey-soaked voice and plays a mean guitar, not unlike George, but he doesn't get stuck in that same 12-bar syndrome that young George tends to stick to. His influences are many and he ain't slow in ripping a few of them off. There's a dead ringer for a 'Maybelline'/'Not Fade Away' cross, and a touch of early Fabulous Thunderbirds, but what the hell, it's still great. Look out for these dudes, they're *baaad*.
Greg Cobb

Dazz Band
Wild and Free (Geffen)

The first album since leaving Motown, and despite bad overseas press, a good solid soul album. Heavy on the funk, with the title track pounding along and the Minneapolis-sounding 'L.O.V.E. M.I.A.' this band has always had a leaning towards P-Funk and tracks like 'The Beat That's Right' sounds like vintage Bootsy Collins, and there's certainly nothing wrong with that. All good dance floor material. On the ballad side, things get a little sticky with 'All I Need' coming on like a Lionel Richie reject. But the variation of styles make it an interesting album, and the guest appearance of Maurice White gives it an added edge.KB

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