

Records

'RUN DMC' FROM PAGE 26
purely instinctive. It comes from New York, a city that's exploding with cultures, overwhelmed with information. That's why hip-hop has been open to any music that's got the right feel to it, why the music itself is like listening to a shortwave radio late at night, switching from jamming noise to Chinese radio to a taxicab. Listening to Run DMC, you hear the sounds you might hear coming in a Queens apartment window, you hear why making music that doesn't "front" (isn't false) is Run DMC's insistence.

It's why Run DMC can make a record as true to rock as 'Walk this Way', and why we can shake our balls off (sorry, ladies) and get some satisfaction (sorry, Mick) out of hearing it. And to hear this heavy rock blast forth from a group that's only two guys and a guy with turntables, is completely foreign to most people's idea of black tastes. Blacks like rock? Bullshit!

This album comes from Def Jam producers Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons, and despite what DMC says ("this is all new music/never ever old soul"), this is old soul, like Stax was. It is the very best of hip-hop. It's rare enough to buy an album that you can enjoy from start to finish, rarer still to find one you can dance to for that long.

Peter Grace

Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor

Hello Sailor
Shipshape and Bristol Fashion
Zulu

The only truly witty cartoon Hodgson has drawn for the Listener concerned Social Credit's name-change to the Democratic Party. Garry Knapp and Bruce Beetham, dressed as bodgies, stand beside a hotted-up car, with mag wheels, dice in the windows, raised suspension, the works. "But Gary," says Bruce, "it's still a Skoda."



New Order

As New Zealand's most convincing rock and roll band, Hello Sailor were more akin to a 4.9 Falcon V8. There was a danger, when boy-wonder English producer Liam Henshall was brought in to produce a reunion album for the international market at what appeared no expense spared, that he may have turned that beer-round-the-clock Falcon into a tarted up Skoda. Instead, thankfully, we have a car for the 80s, customised with all the trimmings — and a reconditioned engine.

The first thing that strikes you — after the tacky, dated cover — is that *Shipshape* doesn't sound like the Hello Sailor whose music and antics have kept us entertained for a decade. With New York mixing and enough synths to cause power blackouts, Henshall has made a slick, homogenous, high-tech beast out of the loose, eclectic, charismatic outfit of old. And though it takes quite a while to get used to the new sound, once you've bent your ear in the direction of American FM rock radio, you realise they've done a superb job of tailoring the familiar music towards that market.

But there's the crunch — to young Americans, this may be a fine album of excellent songs from an unknown but seasoned band. How New Zealanders will respond is another question, for half the album consists of re-vamped versions of past singles. While that may limit its appeal to old Sailor fans, none of those singles got the radio play they deserved when first recorded; they're still fine songs, and if the 72-track recording and Electric Ladyland mixing causes our closed minded programmers to give them another go, a new generation of fans may

emerge.

All the pre-released songs, with the exception of 'Fugitive for Love', last year's single for the reunited group, date from the solo years after Hello Sailor was put in dry dock in 1980. 'I'm in Heaven' opens, and immediately the new sound hits you. It's Graham doing the vocals on Dave's song, and the trademark twin guitar attack is well back behind the synths on which the song, full of hooks, coasts along. The grunter 'Kings and Queens' was the best new song on the reunion tour; it was going to be the first single, and as such it's been rearranged and much of the hard attack removed — the great guitar riff remains, but the chorus has been wimpyed out. Keeping consistent, Graham sings 'You (Bring Out the Worst in Me)', but though I miss Harry's boozy, laconic style, the hooks are more prominent.

'Snakes and Ladders' is new, but its excellence could be because it's like an old Sailor song, with those guitars playing against each other, and McCartney's high nasal voice ringing out at the bridge. 'I've always enjoyed 'Fugitive for Love' — sure it's an FM pastiche of every Rolling Stones song, but they made their career out of Chuck Berry re-writes. But where's the balls? There's very little bottom to the album; Henshall plays bass on most tracks, and Ricky Ball's drums have been electronically treated. McCartney keeps the lead vocal on 'Remember the Alamo', with heavier toms and synth touches, but it's still a crescendo without a climax. While the natural sound gave the original of 'Billy Bold' a warmth, the new stylised version (complete with pipe band) has many added hooks to attract radio play, though it was the sim-

ple power of the song that made it an anthem.

'Winning Ticket' to me is the winner of the album, it's a charming piece of Ponsonby reggae. With lovely harmonies, a true melody, and great harp from Graham, it's like an outtake from his sublime *Inside Out* solo album. Significantly, it's the only song with Lisle Kinney playing bass. 'Upon this Hill (Love is a Dog from Hell)' is the heavier side of Sailor with their decadent pose; finally the guitars get a chance to stretch out. 'Dear Diary' is the odd man out, a lovely soft goodnight ballad along the lines of 'Lying in the Sand'.

The result is an album of consistent quality in sounds and songs. While the personality of Hello Sailor — still present in their live shows — is difficult to pick out in the synth wash, it's that consistency that makes this an excellent, if unsurprising, album. Are Sailor shipshape? Their new songs and live act say "certainly," and this may bring them the commercial success they always deserved. The international production has been achieved; the more demanding artistic test, however, will come with the songwriting for the next album. Bon voyage, Sailor.

Chris Bourke

New Order
Brotherhood
Factory

I liked *Low Life* for its variety. I like *Brotherhood* for its spirit. New Order have plumped for less adventure here — there's even a conventional rock song ('Way Of Life') on the album — but they still do their own thing well ...

The first side of *Brotherhood* is made up of guitar-based songs. The choruses of songs like 'Paradise' and 'Weirdo' sound too similar, too ultimately detrimental effect, but the highlight is the very acoustic 'As It Is When It Was'. Bernard Sumner's world of parties and fun-times has a constant double edge of pain, sour endings and long walks home alone. His lyrics are enjoyable for their simplicity and sincerity — "I always thought we'd get along like a house on fire, but ..."

The production is more confident on the second side, which consists of mainly synth-based songs. 'Bizarre Love Triangle', released as a single in the USA, is

unexciting, but 'All Day Long' is enjoyable, complete with melancholy and stirring snippets of national anthem-like stuff in a tale of some cruel despotic leader. And 'Every Little Counts' is a good ending — a bit loopy, and who could not laugh, singing a line like "I think you are a pig / You should be in a zoo!"

Even though it's not going to set anyone's world on fire, *Brotherhood* is still a pleasant album. Perhaps the next one will be New Order's *Riot Grrrrr* ... could they do it? Who knows?

Paul McKessar

Freddie Jackson
Just Like the First Time
Capitol

Nelson George in that Bible to the stars *Billboard* was lamenting the lack of a truly great soul star, one that can dominate black music. The soul crown has become vacant, there is no monarch of melody, no titan of tears, no new regal ruler. Nelson George offers Mr Jackson, which without demeaning Luther or Alexander, I certainly wouldn't argue with.

The new album depicts Mr Jackson on the cover dressed in very regal attire, purple sash and gold chains. The back is too cool for words, a startlingly white suit and what appears to be the World Wrestling Federation Championship belt. Poised from his penthouse suite, overlooking his soul kingdom.

It would be hard to follow up such a gem as his first album, the bad news is that he doesn't, the good news is that he comes close. Mr Jackson is the modern master of the lost love ballad, a victim of romance rather than the predatory stud of many soul songs. Things like 'Still Waiting' with lines like "This just wasn't like you / I'm still waiting for you." This guy doesn't "wait till his baby gets home," because she's already up and left him. But things aren't always that sad on *Tasty Love*. Mr Jackson has found himself "an awesome lover" and pleads to "keep it there, right there".

It comes as no surprise that the songs that really cook are the ones handled by his old production team of Paul Lawrence and Barry Eastmond, where the song, voice and groove fit wonderfully. Some of the other tracks lack the

depth, both emotionally and musically that Lawrence and Eastmond seem to give. But there is still that ultra fine voice that can carry any sort of material into great heights. Best track for me is the immaculate slow jam of 'Have You Ever Loved Somebody', which will, I'm sure, become a soul classic.

Kerry Buchanan

Big Audio Dynamite
No. 10, Upping St
CBS

Mick Jones left the Clash in 1983 in a showdown with the rest of the band over the decision to re-hire their old manager Bernie Rhodes. Jones's stand of "it's him or me" resulted in his walking out and forming BAD a few months later with reggae-punk video savant Don Letts.

BAD has emerged as a continuation of the black influences he struck in New York with the Clash, namely funk, hip-hop (check out Run DMC) and the potential of the beatbox — influences which he had transferred onto *Sandinista* and *Combat Rock* via songs like 'Rock the Casbah' and 'The Magnificent 7'. On BAD's first album, 'E=MC²' and the title track were the most successful hybrids, with 'The Bottom Line' sounding like a guitar out-take from *Give 'Em Enough Rope*. Nobody complained.

In some ways, *No. 10, Upping St* maintains the odd balance between Jones's English vocal and guitar playing and Letts's black additives. But at least half of the album is *Combat Rock 2*, the Clash album that never was, as Strummer has co-produced the album and co-wrote at least half of the songs. And the old chemistry is there again with Strummer's outlaw swagger shining through 'Beyond The Pale', 'Limbo The Law' and 'V. Thirteen'. Letts's weight is felt in 'C'mon Every Beatbox' with its voice-overs, and in 'Hollywood Boulevard' whose tune sneaks beneath the percussion.

Jones's problems don't lie with his music, there he's making sense and with Strummer back in the fold he's once again nudging special times. But he's still presenting the band as chic bandits with a name that's just bad. Only James Brown was baad.

George Kay

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