

# Records

**Jay Clarkson**  
*Flying Nun*

A long time in the making, this mini-album brings Jay Clarkson's songs into a new setting, no longer the songwriter in a band (Playthings, Expendables), but solo, calling in various Expendables, Chills, TKPs and others to assist, with the ever-present Terry Moore at the controls. How does it work? Very, very well — up there with the single 'The Flower/Man with No Desire', the Expendables' major achievement.

The themes of the record revolve mostly around personal relationships, set out in the record's opening lines:

*"She could not hold a job  
She did not trust her friends  
A deep distraction seemed to  
run in her veins  
Some kind of haunting."*

These melancholic moods are really allowed to create a lot of space on the record, slipping from dreamlike feelings to jazz on the last track, 'Gone', and with Clarkson's voice leaving a strong, lasting impression. A solo album whose eight songs succeed best on the strength of their consistency, a major achievement.

**Paul McKessar**

**Wayne Gillespie**  
*New Locations*  
CBS

What are the two most important requirements for a singer/songwriter? Obviously, the ability to sing, and write songs ... and Wayne Gillespie is a master of both. With *New Locations* he has produced a polished album of consistently strong songs, given colourful settings by a band of top-class musicians. It's an album of such quality that big things could be in the wind for Wayne Gillespie.

He has a knack for writing melodies which stay with you for hours, sung with a voice that's full of character: warm, weary, rich and smoky. 'This Place' and 'Losing

One' are the most immediately accessible, the former driven by synth hooks and ringing guitars, the latter bouncing along to the bass, with Gillespie's voice reminiscent of Lou Reed and Leonard Cohen. But further into the album are songs of even greater depth, 'Number 37' and 'Ten Francs', which chronicle Gillespie's European sojourn, and the introspective 'Shadows.' Especially moving is 'Invercargill', a Randy Newmanesque tale about the breakdown of a relationship, related by someone selling a car full of memories. With lovely backing from piano and strings, it's the direction I'd like to see Gillespie move in.

On *New Locations* he is sup-

ported by an assured group of Australian session musicians, under the guidance of ex-Fairport Convention producer Trevor Lucas. However the person who stands out the most is the Auckland backing vocalist Denny Starway, who shines throughout the album, particularly on 'That's What Your Heart's For' and 'Ten Francs.' The album's got an upbeat feel to it with a lovely rich sound. Sometimes however elements of the band tend to overdo things, the guitarist in particular being rather heavy handed.

Wayne Gillespie is unique in the current music scene; he combines the traditional skills of songwriting with traditional musical values. But he's made a record at home in the 80s full of class and depth. Very few records emerge with such consistently good music as the 10 songs he's written for *New Locations*.

**Chris Bourke**

**Between Two Fires**  
**Paul Young**  
CBS

Paul Young is like the comment teachers used to put on my school reports — "Has a lot of potential but is not performing to full abili-

ty." The English singer has a great voice but his material does not always seem to match it.

An example of this is Young's new album, *Between Two Fires*. His songwriting confidence has obviously grown since previous efforts. Only two covers are included here, when other people's songs used to dominate his records. The other eight tracks are co-written with longtime collaborator and keyboards man Ian Kewley, aided by bassist Pino Palladino on a couple. Unfortunately some of the song ideas are not fully developed, leaving the lyrics or arrangement clumsy.

Musically, the album is more rock-orientated than its predecessors. Young has said in an interview the change was made to stop him turning into a cufflink crooner, though three ballads still sneak onto the record. Side one is the stronger, with most of the songs potential singles: 'Wonderland', 'Some People' and 'War Games.' The other side is less than the sum of its parts, though the final track 'Wedding Day' stands out. *Between Two Fires* is not a bad album, but Young can do better. Maybe next time.

**W Bishop**

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