

Records

Husker Du Warehouse: Songs and Stories WEA

It was around this time last year that Husker Du's *Candle Apple Grey* and the Go Between's *Liberty Belle* enriched a fairly desolate start to 1986. With hardly any warning this double album has been released into a local environment still awaiting some of last year's crucial records, such as Costello's and Shinehead's, to name but two.

But never mind the complaints, here's *Warehouse*, 20 songs and stories that are bound to be amongst the best of '87. While most bands sweat to knock together a half-way decent album a year, Husker Du have redefined the meaning of prolific with two double albums, three single long players and a host of singles and EPs in four years. And although quantity sure doesn't denote quality, in their case the two have been virtually inseparable.

With its spread of ideas, their last double, 1984's *Zen Arcade* did for hardcore what the Beatles' *White Album* did for pop. Last September in *RIU* Bob Mould hinted that the band wanted to improve on *Zen Arcade* if they could find the time, and *Warehouse* sounds like that improvement.

On *Candy Apple Grey* Mould had found the confidence to get out from behind the decibels to use acoustic guitar on 'Too Far Down' and 'Hardly Getting Over It,'

and everybody expected that facet of the band to be further developed on their next record. But *Warehouse* has opted for a unity and uniformity of sound; the variety is to be found within the three-piece electrical storm that's whipped up at different levels by Mould's electric guitar.

With the exception of Hart's 'You Can Live at Home,' which is the densest, least assessable thing on the album, the writing differences between Grant Hart and Bob Mould still hold true. So on the rockabilly 'Actual Condition,' the folkie 'She Floated Away' and on riffs like 'Too Much Spice' and 'Back From Somewhere' Hart continues to be the more whimsical, pop presence in Husker Du but he's still no lightweight.

Yet it's Mould's festering genius that makes this band so brilliant. On side one 'These Important Years' and 'Ice Cold Ice' are right up there with past monuments like 'Celebrated Summer' and 'Private Plane.' On 'Could You Be the One?' 'Standing in the Rain,' 'Turn It Around' and 'It's Not Peculiar' his pessimism of love and his Beatles' influences come to the fore. And if you want philosophy then 'Visionary' and the masochistic 'Bed of Nails' offer clues to the Mould psyche.

As do the liner notes on one of the lyric sleeves where the band advise that "revolution begins at home, preferably in the bathroom mirror." This sort of honesty and self-awareness coupled with their raw feel for what makes great rock and roll have made Husker Du untouchable. *Warehouse* is a great collection of songs, and in case you haven't noticed this has been a rave review.

George Kay



Husker Du: Greg Norton, Grant Hart, Bob Mould.



Prince

Prince Sign of the Times Paisley Park

His Badness is back, with a little bit of everything for everybody. *Sign of the Times* is a double album of 16 songs, reputedly gleaned from the several album's worth he delivered to the record company. That dubious story is certainly supported by the diverse styles of the songs. There are shades of Cameo (the nerdy 'If I Was Your Girl'), house-style bump'n'grind ('Hot Thing'), slam-dunk funk ('U Got That Look'), woozy Hendrix ('Sign of the Times') and heaven knows what else. The morality ranges from *Controversy*-type flirtation ('If I Was Your Girlfriend') to marital crooning ('Forever in My Life') and the musical arrangement could be a full band or just a simple drumbeat.

Clever little Princey! He's produced, arranged, composed

and performed the whole thing himself, with the exception of some tambourines and backing vocals. And he's so smug about the whole thing that his name doesn't even appear on the front cover — take that, Michael Jackson. In fact, wave this album in front of the whole world and go *nyah, nyah, nyah*. The puppy-faced wimp who clogged your screens for 'I Wanna Be Your Lover' is flexing his muscles.

The variety makes it hard to sum up the album. Experiments keep it loose and fun ('The Ballad of Dorothy Parker,' 'Starfish and Coffee') while other songs sound familiar enough to be taken from the Revolution's warm-up list ('U Got the Look' and 'Play in the Sunshine'). Between the odd average moment are 'It,' 'Forever in My Life' and the title track, all history in the making.

And available on local release,

even. Four sides of claustrophobic brilliance, too good to be true, and a cover that's filled with fab fashion hints (apricot rabbi chic?). A showcase of 80s music; the only thing we now have to decide is if he's pushing it forward or summing it up. Probably both. Is there anything he doesn't do?

Chad Taylor

Cameo Word Up Mercury

Recently on that British institution *Top of the Pops* Larry Blackmon had to filmed from the waist up, a la Elvis. We can't have this black shaking his money maker into the faces of the innocent, now can we?

Cameo have been shaking it to make it for years, a mixture of sly southern funk, smart B-boy cut-ups and traditional hard P-funk of

the Mothership Connection school.

'Word Up' is the new model. Following the success of 'She's Strange' and 'Single Life' the band has followed this form of minimalism — great skank rhythm lines, synth lines that sound like Morricone's Western themes, rock guitar and Blackmon's semi-spoken vocals. Very smooth and very modern.

This is their best and most consistent album to date, from the rock and roll of the title track, the nice balladry of 'Don't Be Lonely' to the soul boy heaven of 'Candy.' Now there's a nice piece of funk, soft, sticky and wet.

Like all good black groups Cameo give thanks to God on the album sleeve, but this is the sort of album that smells more of sex and sweat than the sweet breath of angels.

Kerry Buchanan

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