

Records

Nick Swan Cry Murder Ode

Rebel music to be sure. This man belongs to the landscape of the Irish uprisings where right and wrong don't exist no more and good and bad mean one and the same.

Excellent musicians support Nick Swan as he sings about the war in between. Neil Duncan and Ross Burge, stalwarts of the Wellington music scene for a long time, now join forces with Martin Walsh and Vincent Burke to guide the listener through war torn lands, as songs from traditional to covers explore issues from both the wider political context to the neighbourhood and home. Check out 'Set Me Free' and 'The Well Below the Valley.'

The album is sparse. It doesn't waste time with sweetening the tone. And so it shouldn't, the message comes through loud and clear. Pain and suffering. You can sense the grimness of the brick and mortar, silent eyes and ears to

the war and its brethren, hear the boots march across the cobbles, and the voices in whispers sing, "Cry murder, my son Patrick dead in Belfast '69." Definitely not for the squeamish. However the simple acoustics and sensitive backings will disarm you — the beautiful lyricism of the Irish voice captured so readily here will take you into the Northern Ireland reality — the reality for some is a fight that will never cease and blood that won't stop running in the fields or the streets.

The pathos of Irish luck.
Tim Byrne

John Wetton and Phil Manzanera Wetton/Manzanera Geffen

Ex-Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera and bassist John Wetton have worked together before. Wetton played bass for Roxy's live album *Viva* and shared credits with Manzanera on Bryan Ferry's *Let's Stick Together* and *In Your Mind* — collaborations a lot more rewarding than this collection of AOR rock ballads.

At first I thought the original tricky-dick guitarist would get away with the collaboration but Manzanera is shunted behind the

drum kit and Wetton's loud vocals. Wetton's abilities sound ordinary at best — why has Manzanera settled for such a dull back seat? It could be smart thinking, seeing as AOR has made such a big comeback (altogether: "hooray"), both here and in the US.

Manzanera fans can spend their money more wisely. Try his recent *Primitive Gardens* and a very capable compilation of his solo albums named *Guitarissimo*. The latter, unfortunately, is a CD-only release. Along with Eno's *Thursday Afternoon* and Harold Budd's *Pavilion of Dreams*, *Guitarissimo* almost makes the purchase of a CD player worthwhile.

Chad Taylor

Delbert McClinton Honky Tonkin' (I Done Me Some) Ode

The title of this collection is an understatement, ol' Delbert having played in honky tonks and dance-halls for nearly three decades now. The music of this perennial journeyman is a distinctive mixture of country and R&B, utilising fiddle, steel guitar and a four-piece horn section. He also possesses a classic southern lived-in voice.

This set represents his personal picks from his first two ABC al-

bums, *Victim of Life's Circumstances* and *Genuine Cowhide*, and a fine piece of drinking accompaniment it is too. About half the songs are Delbert originals, and they prove him to be a capable (if a little one-dimensional) writer. 'Two More Bottles of Wine' being my personal favourite. Still, anyone with a song entitled 'I'm Dying as Fast as I Can' must have something going for him.

This record is unlikely to astonish anyone with innovation or intrigue, but it is nonetheless music with heart, warmth, and above all, spirit.

Mark Kennedy

Basia

Time and Tide (Portrait)

The only soft spot I ever had for Matt Bianco was my living room carpet but this debut solo album from ex-Bianco vocalist Basia is amicable in the extreme. It still abounds with sambas and Bianco-style weaknesses but if you shut your eyes to a wistful piece like 'Promises', the title tack of 'How Dare You' easily wins your admiration, mostly due to Basia's breezy singing. After you start liking it, there's not a lot to talk about; like Sade, she's covering the stylistic points with a minimum of fuss and bother. *Time and Tide* is clean as

a whistle, very quick, very stylish. The smoothness isn't lack of depth so much as good tailoring. And she wears it well. CT

Robert Cray Band Who's Been Talking (Atlantic)

Robert Cray first met his current producers — and frequent songwriting partners — in 1978 when they signed him to their Tomato label. Two years later the label went bankrupt, only months after releasing *Who's Been Talking*. Now, thanks to Cray's current popularity, the album has been dug out, digitally remastered and supplied with an informative and updated inner sleeve. The most obvious difference from his current work is that the music is more strictly in a blues idiom. Indeed half the 10 tracks are covers normally associated with the likes of Howlin' Wolf and Willie Dixon. Nonetheless Cray performs with customary skill and assurance, and at least two or three of the original numbers are well up to present expectations. All in all a fine blues album, with much more than historical interest to recommend it. PT

Painters & Dockers

Bucket (Doc)

Live rock and roll with crass jokes, the Members *At the Chelsea Nightclub* but with the added "bonus" of being Australian.

Comes complete with mock barfs, a cover done in gruesome bad taste, and a horn section that, given the "live" sound and ensuing torrid mix, doesn't do a half-bad job when it gets to drown out the shouting of vocalist Paul Stewart. P&D would be a great time in the flesh I'm sure, but it doesn't translate that well to vinyl. Reduced to the lowest common denominator, 'Kill Kill Kill' sounds like just another ripoff of the 'Taxman' riff, the Libyan terrorist jokes fell flat in our house, and so on. Maybe by now they've got some "good" Fijian cannibal politician jokes. Available through Ima Hitt and selected retail stores. PM

Chad's Tree

Buckle in the Rail

(Nude/Jayrem)
And you thought the Smiths were a maudlin bunch ... Australia's Chad's Tree are led by Mark Snarski, creator of much in the way of "poetic" words (witness a lyric sheet entitled "Words for singing by M Snarski" that turns all the lyrics into one poem ...) but unfortunately incapable of singing them well enough or setting them to anything remotely resembling a nifty tune. Left dull and pretentious. Chad's Tree need a hefty dose of vitality and a cut in Cohenisms. PM

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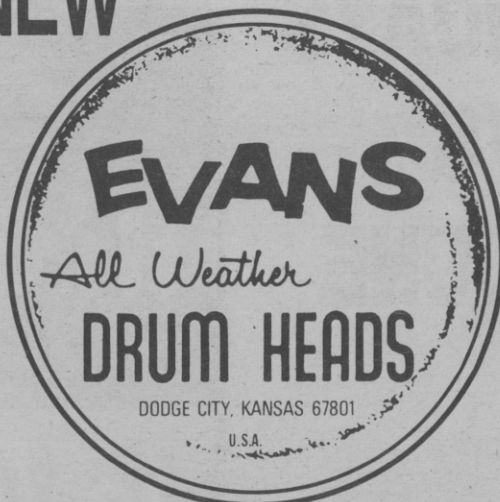
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