

**Various Artists
Sounds of Soweto**
EMI

**Various Artists
Soweto Street Music,
Vols 1 & 2**
Avanguard/Ode
**Hugh Masekela
Tomorrow**
WEA

Following fast on the heels of the runaway success of Paul Simon's *Gracelands*, EMI has locally released the double album set *Sounds of Soweto*. Whether you regard Simon a benevolent publicist for African music or a pop

singer only interested in reviving his flagging career, there's no confusion about the motives behind the release of this record.

Soweto would be dull indeed were this an accurate document of its music. Ten artists with 16 tracks between them; a collection of vapid pop music performed with synthesisers and drum machines and sung, for the most part, in English. Little remains of any African content in this homogenous mix save perfunctory lyrical references to freedom, unity and peace.

By whose claim, then, is this the sound of Soweto? South Africa's pop charts reflect a taste for

American soul and disco and it's an influence evident in the songs on this album. Many of the artist here — Brenda and the Big Dudes, the Winners among them — regularly appear in the charts. But South Africa's pop stars aren't representative of Soweto's music. There's not an indigenous rhythm within earshot of this album, certainly none of the popular urban music — mabaquanga and Zulu "jive" — which is surely the *real* sound of Soweto.

Zulu jive (or Zulu "disco") is the pop music of the Bantustans: its driving 4/4 rhythm and bass-heavy beat make it distinct from all other African music. It is similar only to

other Zulu styles (notably mabaquanga and the gospel-style acapella music — isicathamoya — of Ladysmith Black Mambazo) whose elements it incorporates.

Soweto Street Music was released in England in late 1984 as a double album, selling for the price of a single album. Now it is available as an Australian import in its post-*Gracelands* incarnation — two albums, two volumes. And, like the original, not a word of information about the music or the artists.

Definitive it isn't but *Soweto Street Music*, volumes one and two, is still worth its price. There's a variety of styles here, from a raw

rural sound typified by Uthawolfu Amentkentshane and Zuleliphezulu (accordions and fiddles against that insistent Zulu beat) to the punchy and polished Zulu jive of Super Tens, the Editions and the Special Five.

If you want to hear more of this music there's a number of good releases on the Earthworks label (London) and Shanachie Records in the States. I can particularly recommend the Earthworks compilations *Zulu Jive: Urban and Rural Zulu Beats from South Africa* and *Zulu Jive Volume Two: the Indestructible Beat of Soweto* (also on Shanachie), along with records by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, the Mahotella Queens (four jive-singing females backed by the Makgona Tshohle Band) and Kati Eliclean Namanono (*Amalabi*, on Earthworks).

If you're looking for further adventures try to track down a copy of *He O Oe Oe!* by Puseletso Seema and Tau Ea Linare (Globestyle Records, London). Bass and drum are rock hard and solid, and they meet in head-on collision with accordions, wild singing and long shrill whistles; this is Sotho pop music from the small country of Lesotho, isolated and landlocked within South Africa, and the whistles are cattle calls.

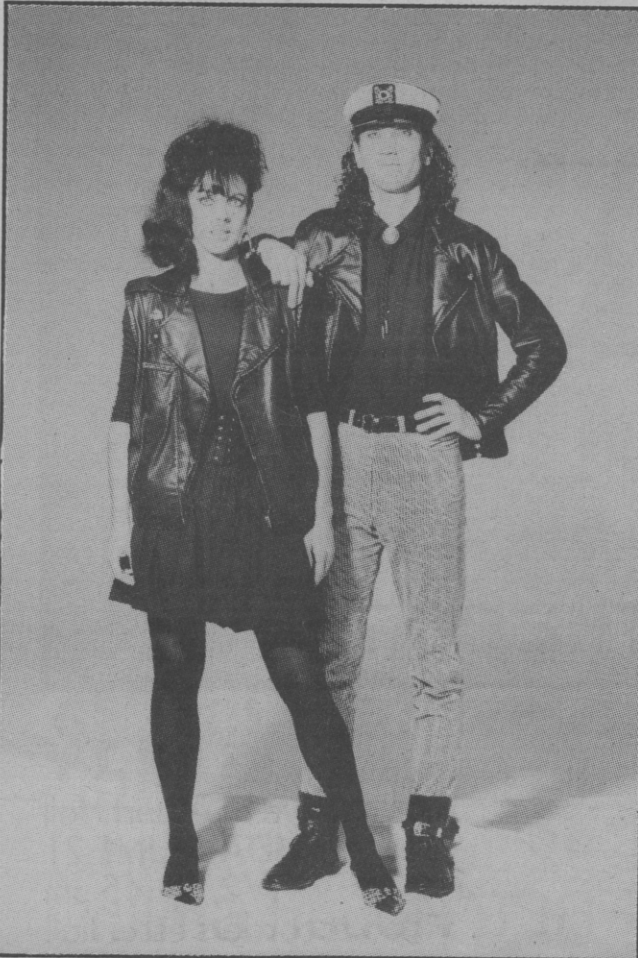
Hugh Masekela is a South Afri-

can exile who has been living in the States for many ears. He had a string of pop hits in the 60s, appeared in the film *Monterey Pop* and re-surfaced with the very successful *Techno-Bush* LP in 1984. *Techno-Bush* was recorded in location in Botswana in the heart of the African bush and Masekela was backed by the band Kalahari. *Tomorrow* continues this collaboration in more convenient surroundings, Trident studios in London.

Masekela's music is that of the rootless exile, a detached romantic view of his African homeland that finds favour with displaced and would-be Africans, black and white. As can be heard on this record, he's an excellent trumpet player but he can make little headway against the melange of musical style served here; a formulated muzak that cannot avoid sounding contrived and soulless.

If you're an initiate to the music of the African continent don't let the obstacles deter you from further investigation. The best African music is varied, vibrant and exciting; it has survived, flourished even, despite decades of colonial repression. In its many different styles there is life and spirit, qualities lacking in the majority of contemporary western music.

Jeremy Templer



BLUE BEAT

CLOTHES
FOR MEN
& WOMEN

BLEDISLOE ST. (BEHIND THE CIVIC) AUCK.

OPEN SATURDAYS 10-2pm

Mail Order Stovepipes for Men:

• **Black Stovepipes \$65**

• **Tartan Stovepipes \$74**

(Tartan in 29" & 30" only)

- *Narrow Leg*
- *Heavy Cotton*
- *Rear Jet Pocket*

Send Name, Address, Money Order or Bank Cheque (No personal cheques please) to:

BLUE BEAT: c/- RIU PO Box 5689, Auckland

STOVEPIPES: Waist: 26 28 29 30 31 32 34 36

Please add \$2.50 P&P on all orders

WHOLESALE ENQUIRIES, PH: 793-153

• DIRECT FROM ENGLAND



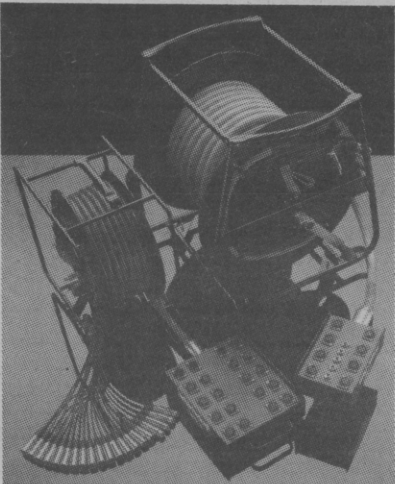
Mixing Desks, Stereo 10-band
Graphic Equalizers,

3-way Active Stereo
Crossovers,

High Performance Power
Amplifiers.



• FIRST TIME IN NEW ZEALAND



whirlwind

Whirlwind Professional Cables from
the U.S.A.

16+4 Multicore Cable, Beldon Guitar
Leads,

DI Boxes, Cable Testers,
Switchcraft Jack Plugs.



P.O. BOX 13-315, ONEHUNGA, AUCKLAND
TELEPHONE (09) 664 915 OR 666 423



PO BOX 3054 • WELLINGTON • NEW ZEALAND

THE JAYREM RECORDS COUNTDOWN

THIS
MONTH

LAST
MONTH

1	1	Bed Time for Democracy DEAD KENNEDYS	AIM-1012
2	NEW	Night Of A Thousand Candles THE MEN THEY COULDN'T HANG	JAY-327
3	2	He Waiata Mo Te Iwi AOTEAROA	TC-JAY-327
4	7	Simon Says LOW PROFILE	TC-JAY-327
5	NEW	Yeh My People THE WRECKERY	FR-5
6	3	Trick of the Light PUTTY IN HER HANDS	MLRR-012
7	6	NO More War DREAD BEAT AND BLOOD	JAY-140
8	11	Buckle In The Rail CHADS TREE	JAY-141
9	5	Mary Yandall & Rodger Fox MARY YANDALL/RODGER FOX	TC-JAY-141
10	NEW	Transmission FLESH D-VICE	FINE-1
11	18	Tension PABLO MOSES	CIRCULAR-11
12	4	Jah Music STICKS & SHANTY	TC-CIRC-11
13	NEW	Revolution AOTEAROA	FDV-7
14	15	The Mystery Unfolds MUTABARUKA	TC-RRS-008
15	10	The Monkey Puzzle THE SAINTS	JAY-326
16	NEW	Clouds SERGE ERMOIL With RICHE COLE & GEORGE GOLLA	TC-JAY-326
17	8	Make Room LUKE HURLEY	JAY-730
18	NEW	I Think This Town Is Nervous THE WRECKERY	TC-RRS-007
19	17	Weird Culture Weird Custom NATIONAL STUDENT RADIO COMPILATION	YPRX-1806
20	13	The Immigrant Tango JAMES GRIFFIN & THE SUBTERRANEANS	AIM-1009
			TC-NSR-001
			CHACE-2
			TC-CHASE-2

CHARTER TOPPER



ADVERTISEMENT