

RECORDS

Terence Trent D'Arby Introducing the Hardline According to ... CBS

There was no lack of hype when USA-born D'Arby released his first single. He had the perfect breeding for a soulman — ex-serviceman, son of a preacher, former boxer — sort of Gordy, Gaye, Jackie Wilson and a bit of Elvis wrapped into a spiffy dancin' package.

For *NME* he was suitably sullen, outspoken and ratty enough to score a front cover for his first 45, while for teen mag *Just 17* he was well-mannered and confessed to admiring Duran Duran, earning pin-up status.

'If You Let Me to Stay' was the question he asked the UK record buyers and immigration. They replied yes, and his LP went to No 1 first week of release. The stuff legends are made of — true — but how genuine is this

legend and why did he go to the UK?

Well, first of all, this LP could not be made in the USA cos it differs from the prevailing post-funk synth tide and self-styled individuals don't get a look in (producers do the styling in the USA). Maybe Trent D'Arby's career wasn't that calculated — he just found himself in London after quitting his German army posting and realised how undermotivated his London peers were and saw a chance to make a killing.

The good aspect of London is that anything can happen. Tina Turner went there to be revived and D'Arby found a collaborator in Martyn Ware (Heaven 17). But this LP has none of the pseudo-modern feels of Heaven 17 — this is a back-to-basics LP reminiscent of 60s R&B — even at times derivative of British R&B. In fact D'Arby has made a very British record — check out the Beatle-ish 'I'll Never Turn My Back on You,' or 'Seven More Days,' like an old Dusty Springfield song. The weakest point on the LP is the very English sea shanty 'As Yet Untitled,' performed in serious artist persona.

Besides the obvious strong

singles, the highpoint of the LP is D'Arby's absolutely superb version of Smokey Robinson's early song 'Who's Losing You.' It's breathtaking, here D'Arby shows his 60s roots, the foundation for a refreshing self-styled album. Don't be put off by the hype, he may be opinionated, self-obsessed and vain, but if that's what it takes to create your own niche in pop music, that's fine by me.

Murray Cammick

Warren Zevon Sentimental Hygiene Virgin

Sentimental Hygiene is Warren Zevon's first album in five years, excluding last year's compilation, and arguably his most satisfying work since the self-titled debut album of 1976. When most of LA's singer-songwriter fraternity opted for saccharin in their coffee, Zevon went for the top shelf. Seemingly out of step with the times, he achieved endless critical acclaim but little in the way of commercial recognition. This may well change with *Sentimental Hygiene*.



Terence Trent D'Arby

The album features the distinctive aspects of Zevon's work. The ballads 'Reconsider Me' and 'The Heartache' emulate the rich melodies of such past classics as 'Accidentally Like a Martyr' and 'The French Inhaler.' The rock side is exemplified by the title track where a rejuvenated Neil Young lends some guitar muscle. Among other luminaries lending a hand are Bob Dylan, playing harmonica on 'The Factory.' Lyrically the honest of 'Detox Mansion' contrasts with the sardonic 'Trouble Waiting to Happen.' The only weak point in an imposing lineup of songs is the single 'Leave My Money Alone,' which sits awkwardly in this collection. Nevertheless, if it drags in the audience he so richly deserves, so be it.

On reflection it seems Zevon has never been away. The five years absence is like interval at the cinema. Maybe the stigma which has beset the singer-songwriter genre is on the wane, and the time has arrived for Zevon to claim his rightful place as one of the true originals in popular music. Get down to your local music shop and pick up a copy.

Dave Perkins

The Blow Monkeys She Was Only the Grocer's Daughter RCA

The Sex Pistols have this great line in 'God Save the Queen' — "There's no future in England's dream / No future no future no future for you." Something that has become a truism, the English re-elect Thatcher just to make sure they really get the shit beaten out of them.

So at the end of the dream, in En-

gland's decline, popular musical culture reflects the crisis. Black musical forms abound in England, as if reaching back to the tradition of the blues, to help put things in context. From the bland soul funk of Level 42 and Curiosity Killed the Cat to the popularity of hard hip hop, black music is the king pin.

Now the latest Blow Monkeys has more black references and influences than a pit bull has teeth, and also the most direct political nature of any popular record for a long time. Combining the two on 'Celebrate (the Day After You),' a great anti-Thatcher song about the "eight long years in the wilderness," with Curtis Mayfield adding credence. Dr Robert uses the black music references to make his case stronger, as in the intro to the dream styled 'Don't Give Up,' where the melody of Marvin Gay's 'What's Going On' makes you reflect on the meaning of the song, that even in periods of confusion, never give up.

The ghosts of Philadelphia must haunt Dr Robert, with the album full of real horns, plenty of strings and a touch of wah wah guitar. Like the beginning of 'How Long Can a Bad Thing Last,' with the doctor scat singing like the O'Jays. Again a strong political comment: "A woman I know makes a living out of this / And the sad thing is that the victims don't resist." The theme of resistance occurs on the majority of tracks, not really an aspect of white pop music, but certainly a vital part of black music.

Another ghost walking the grooves is Marc Bolan, the guitar strums and vocals of 'Cash' is pure Bolan and 'Rise Above,' with the quick vocal phrasing. Of course there has to be

ballads, and if you find 'Beautiful Child' a bit twee, then there's always the contemporary soul feel of 'Out With Her.'

A lot of people have dismissed this album as some form of camp pop culture, and it certainly has its camp side. But to dismiss it as mere "pop" is to do a disservice to the Blow Monkeys and to popular culture in general, both of which are in tip top fighting condition.

Kerry Buchanan

Duane Eddy EMI

It must be tough being a fad whose 15 minutes are up. Most know no other road and fade into merciful oblivion. Some (Bowie, Joe Jackson) step off to explore other directions. Only a few, like Jerry Lee, can do the only thing they know, and every time make it sound like the first time.

Duane Eddy was just another hula-hoop before a brief reappearance some years back with the numbingly limp 'Play Me Like You Play that Old Guitar.' Then after another lean spell he took up with last year's fads the Art of Noise to guest on their 'Peter Gunn Theme,' and jolly G it was too. Duane has found a new approach to his music, and he continues it here by gathering some heavy friends around him. Musos include George Harrison and Steve Cropper, but his trump card is having Paul McCartney, Ry Cooder, Jeff Lynne and the Art of Noise write and produce eight of the 10 tracks.

As there is often an inverse ratio between talented musos and interesting music, I was prepared to thoroughly dislike this album, but the first track 'Kickin' Asphalt' kicks along in fine 12-bar style. So far so good. Next up is Paul McCartney's bombastic 'Rockestra Theme,' which ain't no 'Band on the Run,' but Macca gets a powerhouse sound by pumping those limiters to breaking point.

Unfortunately from here on the album tends to run out of ideas, with Lynne's two vaguely western tracks-in-search-of-tunes and run-of-the-mill rockabilly romp. The Art of Noise numbers highlight just how boring and incompetent much of today's "sampler" music is, and their track 'Spies' sounds like fourth form danceband stuff. Even Ry Cooder can't sprinkle enough fairy dust to revive the album or this flagging listener. Nice try Duane, but there just aren't enough tunes here, which for an instrumentalist is shaky ground indeed. Get out your yo-yos.

Ian Morris

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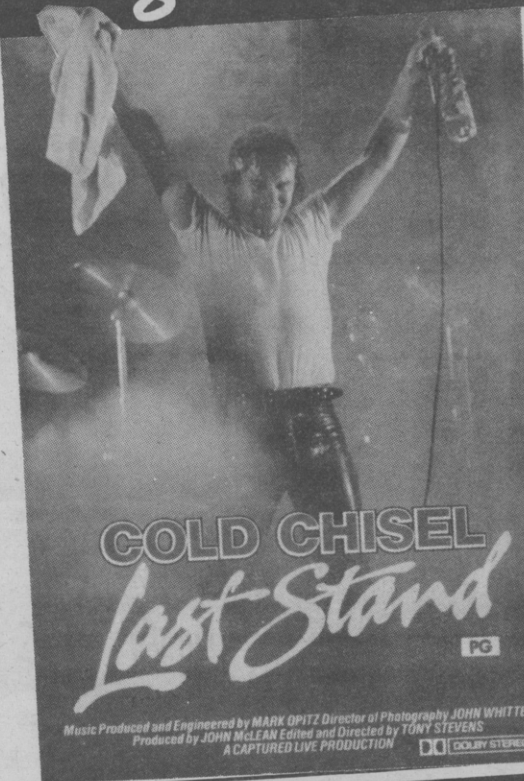
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