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RECORDS

Shirley Murdoch (Elektra)

This album from the Zapp stable was ignored until the magnificent 'As We Lay' quietly stormed up the black charts. One of the great ballad performances of all time! Phew! The majority of tracks are uptempo synth dance stuff with Roger Troutman at the helm. All good stuff, with 'Be Free' and 'Teaser' being faves. But 'As We Lay' is the track that has put Ms Murdoch on the soul map. Dig it and watch out for the next one. **MC**

Ace Frehley Frehley's Comet (WEA)

Unlike the comet of Haley, this blast from outer-space is a real flash of light from a star of the 70s. Due to a serious car accident, too much booze and too many drugs, it's taken the original Kiss guitarist five years to appear in the spotlight again. It's been worth the wait though, coz Ace is back and he tells you so in the opening anthem 'Rock Soldiers,' which superbly describes his near date-with-death. Then it rolls into 'Breakout' co-written with Eric Carr, a buddy since days of the masked ones and sounding quite a bit like that previous band. Most of the singing is Ace as the tracks continue consistently through till the 'Fractured Too' instrumental. *Frehley's Comet* is 10 good solid songs that Kiss fans and spacerockers will love. **GD**

Sammy Hagar (WEA)

Replacing David Lee Roth in Van Halen was no easy task but Sammy Hagar fitted the bill perfectly, and on *5150* they sounded like they had been playing together for years. Edward co-produces and plays bass on this album and you can also hear his inevitable influence in Sammy's guitar. But all that aside, the new Hagar stands up totally on its own as a neat collection of good time songs like 'Privacy,' 'Returning Home,' and 'Eagles Fly' that carry on in the tradition of the Red rocker. Even if you're buying this for interest's sake alone you will not be disappointed. **GD**

Jody Watley (WEA)

Ms Watley stares from the cover like a dark Bardot, lots of pout and a mess of curls, like some kind of Cosby kid gone wild. Untamed funky pop from ex-Shalamar and *Soul Train* dancer, with the production talents of Andre Cymone, Patrick Leonard and Bernard Edwards adding to the muscular backbeat. Not one slow track in sight, just fun injected grooves like the 'New Love' single, the gritty 'Still a Thrill,' pop splendour in 'Don't You Want Me,' and let us not forget the duet with safe sex god George Michael on 'Learn to Say No.' There's been a few good female soul releases recently, but Jody heads the field with this enthusiastic debut. **KB**

Wally Badarou Chief Inspector (Festival)

His name has appeared on albums by Grace Jones, Black Uhuru, Sly and Robbie, and as Level 42 producer. Now his first real solo work, six tracks of interesting grooves, from the African-styled 'Hi-Life,' subtle B-boy of 'Chief Inspector (Precinct 13)' and the chacha of 'Spider Woman (Novela das Nove).' All propelled by Badarou's rhythmic keyboards and remixed by Paul "Groucho" Smykle. All instrumental but far from mere

background music, it demands your attention, full of rhythmic inventiveness and intelligence. **KB**

Timex Social Club Vicious Rumours... the Album (Festival)

Rumour has it that the real power behind Timex left to form Club Nouveau, and Jay King's new Club certainly sounds in fine form on the interesting *Life, Love and Pain* album, which is more than one can say about this Timex outing. Main man Michael Marshall must have run out of ideas to include two versions of the 'Vicious Rumours' hit, but things don't get any better on 'Mixed Up World' and the lacklustre 'Just Kickin' It.' Things get a little brighter on the cautionary tale of 'Cokelife' and Goffin and King's 'Go Away Little Girl.' But even gimmick laden attempts at B-boy cutups on '360 (Natty Prep)' can't save this baby. **KB**

Concrete Blonde True (IRS)

Originally named Dream 6, Michael Stipe advised a name change to Concrete Blonde. Who needs his advice? Hailing from Hollywood this three-piece headed by the petite Johnette Napolitano play it pretty straight with remnants of punk like the pointed frustrations of 'Your Haunted Head' and 'Still in Hollywood.' They get more adventurous on the guitar chills of 'Dance Along the Edge' and 'Beware of Darkness.' Anonymous but tidy. **GK**

Love and Rockets Express (Beggars Banquet)

This is either a horribly misguided attempt at a send-up of British psychedelia ('Kundalini Express' and 'Yin and Yang the Flower Pot Men') crossbred with mutant heavy metal or else it's a horribly misguided serious attempt at cross-breeding erstwhile British psychedelia with mutant heavy rock (no roll). Spot the difference. **GK**

Colourfield Deception (Chrysalis)

Armed with ace pop producer Richard Gottehrer (Blondie, Go Go's), Terry Hall has tried to make concessions to pop music while still attempting to reveal glimpses of his grey little world. It's a combination that doesn't work. On *Virgins and Philistines* the splashes of musical colour lifted the album but *Deception*'s pop can't rise above the honest plainness of confessions like 'From Dawn to Distraction' and 'Miss Texas 1967.' And covers like Sly's 'Running Away' and the Monkees' 'She' are pale echoes from an artist drying up from the inside. **GK**

Merle Haggard, George Jones, Willie Nelson Walking the Line (Epic)

Country music people don't drink. They get drunk. George Jones got so bad, his wife Tammy Wynette hid all his car keys, so George took off for the liquor store riding his motor mower. Willie Nelson came home drunk one night and fell asleep. His wife sewed him up in the sheets and started whipping him. Willie wrote 'Half a Man' after that episode, and a duet of it is included on this 10-track compilation, half of which are duets between country's three finest male singers, and half of which are about drinking. Not all the drinking songs are duets—forget social drinking, we're talking *lonely* here, gin and misery, feeling single, drinking doubles, and all that. Why, George admits on 'I Gotta Get Drunk' that intoxication is obligatory. That's how he got his reputation as 'No Show Jones.' Now, George knows a man can be a drunk, but a 'A Drunk Can't Be a Man.' But because it can't decide whether the concept is drinking or duets, this compilation is an odd one; the golden rule is, don't mix your drinks. **CB**

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