

# RECORDS

## Able Tasmans A Cuppa Tea and a Lie Down Flying Nun

Talented people make warm, friendly record. Lovely. With good humour and hands on their hearts, Able Tasmans have made one of the best releases of the year. *A Cuppa Tea and a Lie Down* seems to become more familiar each time I play it (which is often). It even looks friendly — wonderful bright cover and a Family Photograph on the back — people smiling! It's a move onwards from 'The Tired Sun,' but doesn't forget that foundation ('Virtues Asunder' and 'Evil Barbecue').

Able Tasmans keep things distinctly New Zealand with the pastoral pleasantness of 'And Relax' and 'And We Swam the Magic Bay,' and the joyous 'Rainbow.'

They've used all sorts here — viola, flute, great vocal arrangements ('I See Now Where' and 'Fa Fa Fa'), and Graeme Humphreys' marvellous keyboards. Working with Te Kani Kani o te Rangitahi has made great impact — giving space and depth to a sometimes frantic past.

See it, buy it, listen and enjoy.  
Fiona Rae

## Jean-Paul Sartre Experience Love Songs Flying Nun

What charmed me most about last year's debut EP from the JPSE was its ambience and elusive, unsettled moods. Its five songs eluded categorisation and only hinted at influences. It was a fine record. *Love Songs* is a fine record too, though not as good — it's fault seems to lie in the fact that it appears to be an exercise in stylisation, the exact opposite to what was true of their EP.

Basically, *Love Songs* is a guitar album. Gary Sullivan's drumming never really forces its way to the forefront as it can do in the live setting; only on 'I Like Rain' do we sense his precision and control reaching out to shift the entire song — here the effect is marvellous. The record's styles stem from that guitar focus — what we receive is Sartrean interpretations of styles, from outta-the-garage rockabilly crawl ('All the Way Down'), Velvets and solo-Reed ('Einstein'), 'Grey Parade', wah-wah ridden 70s disco ('Crap Rap,' 'Let There Be Love') and more.

Hell, it's almost as if the self-styled 'Gentlemen of Rock' have made a Prince album! But it's mellow, though not so subtle as it could have been — giving up its secrets all too readily. Maybe that's a production fault; not so much the laidback-ness but the pervasive lazy mood of the songs, making it unfocused (aside from the obvious motif of the record title) when it could have been more.

They say, "you gotta get with the Experience." I say "I agree." It's not the vital work that it could've been (though I'm sure they have that in them yet), but it will make the return trip to my turntable many times, I'm sure.

Paul McKessar

## That Petrol Emotion Babble Polydor

During their years at the top, the Undertones were happy to leave the risky business of writing songs specifically on the Troubles to incompetents like Stiff Little Fingers, contenting themselves with refining the pop art to teenage wastelands and personal responses to Northern Ireland.

But even boys grow up, and it's as if Sharkey's newly revealed commercial appetite had previously subdued the Undertones of old, because the brothers O'Neill have come out blazing about injustices in Ireland in That Petrol Emotion. The singles 'Keen'

railed about Irish political prisoners being separated from their families, and 'V2' tore into the degradation of strip searching Irish women. And *Manic Pop Thrill* was just that, an uneven combination of the manic political emotions of newcomers Reamann O Gormain ('Lifeblood') and Ciaran McLaughlin ('Tightlipped') with Sean O'Neill's lingering tortured romances ('It's a Good Thing' and 'Natural Kind of Joy').

*Babble* reconciles these seemingly opposed extremes, particularly in a first side of hard-nosed hardcore rock 'n' roll, through a guitar sound that borders on a R&B dirtiness mixed into a mechanically violent tension that makes Damian O'Neill's 'For What It's Worth' and 'Static' so frightening they're brilliant. Brother Sean, not to be outdone, does out two of the most natural riffs you'll hear all decade — 'Swamp' and the gigantic 'Big Decision,' leaving vocalist Steve Mack to



That Petrol Emotion

steal some fame for 'Spin Cycle' and Ciaran McLaughlin room to breathe his last on 'Creeping to the Cross.'

Forget any veiled praise, this is a great album only diverted from immortality by a second side that occasionally puts noise before songs. There is no justification for not having this album.

George Kay

## Bunny Wailer Rootsman Skanking Serengeti

With two of the original Wailers now deceased, Bunny Wailer assumes the mantle, whatever title you may choose to confer upon him. Neville Livingston has never actively sought superstardom, unlike his two colleagues. He bowed out of the group in 1974 because he couldn't stand touring, partying and all the isms and schisms.

A devout Rastaman, he returned to the life of a farmer, founding his own Solomonic label, which allowed him to maintain artistic freedom. He didn't perform live again until 1982, when he tore apart Jamaica's Youth Consciousness Festival with a set which produced an outstanding live album. This finally encouraged him to return to regular concerts, and by all accounts, his performance at this year's Reggae Sunsplash was a killer.

The fact is, Bunny Wailer has produced some 10 LPs in his solo career, four of which (*Blackheart Man*, *Struggle*, *Sings the Wailers and Rock 'n' Groove*) must be regarded as brilliant. It is from the last-named album that comes much of *Rootsman Skanking*.

Free of various pressures and trappings, Bunny has followed his own path, producing reggae of timeless beauty and passion. His voice is a mixture of Sam Cooke and Gene McDaniels, soaring in the upper register, gruff down low. He also acknowledges the influence of the Impressions on JA singers with his cover of Curtis Mayfield's 'Another Dance.'

The *Rock 'n' Groove* tracks which form the basis of this album are edited down from the original dancehall versions (clumsily in one place). The remaining three tracks, 'Collyman,' 'Gamblings' and 'Cry to Me' could well be outtakes or B-sides from the same sessions.

What all this means is that non-cognoscenti can buy with confidence. 'Cool Runnings' and 'Dance Rock' are two of the finest expressions of sheer dance floor pleasure that reggae has produced. It should go without saying, of course, that the playing and production are of the highest calibre.

This album is released by Jayrem through the American Shanachie label. If they have access to the rest of the Solomonic catalogue, might it be too much to ask for the release of *Struggle*, which rates as perhaps the finest achievement of a Rootsman never content to rest on his laurels?

Duncan Campbell

## Dave Edmunds I Hear You Rockin' Arista

Isn't it great to discover insitutions like Dave Edmunds are still alive and well in 1987? And still playing rock 'n' roll as if they just invented it. Well, I'm a sucker for it anyway, ever since Edmunds belonged, along with the "Jesus of Cool" himself, Nick Lowe, to the top late-70s combo Rockpile. Surely one of the alltime great "day off" bands ever, they were fuelled in equal parts by 50s' nostalgia, smart pop songs and vodka.

But with the exception of Edmunds' 1970 remake of 'I Hear You Knocking' (which alone will ensure his place in pop history), he has enjoyed only minor hits, remaining a cult star and sometime producer.

And this offering? Well, more of the same really, but great live renditions of some of his best known work, including 'Crawling from the Wreckage,' the aforementioned 'I Hear You Knocking' and 'Girls Talk,' one of the very few Costello covers to surpass

its maker's original.

The band play with the relentless enthusiasm of those who love their work, and never let up throughout. Though much maligned by hip critics and snobs nowadays, this proves pub rock can still breath and endure. And I'd sooner have "all my rowdy friends" over any day.

Mark Kennedy

## Various Artists La Bamba Soundtrack London

The breakthrough achieved by Los Lobos covering the only Hispanic rock hit ever is the best excuse for marketing I've seen this year. Let's see if 'La Bamba' is more than a novelty for radio though — will they play any singles off the vastly superior *By the Light of the Moon*?

Los Lobos have kept the music of Ritchie Valens alive for years, and three-quarters of this soundtrack album consists of superb Valens covers, from rollicking wedding stompers like 'La Bamba,' 'Charlene,' 'Come On Let's Go' and 'Ooh My Head' to smoochy ballads such as 'Donna' and 'Goodnight My Love' — and always the band gives the songs their own 80s identity.

All but one of the remaining tracks however are revivals by 50s interpreters that, while competent, come off like Elvis soundalikes. Howard Huntsberry probably makes an okay living imitating Jackie Wilson's operatic, tear-inflected wail ('Lonely Tears'), but Stray Cat Brian Setzer and Marshall Crenshaw should know better than to carefully carbon-copy their heroes Eddie Cochran and Buddy Holly. Bo Diddley shows them how on his classic piece of voodoo rockabilly 'Who Do You Love' — those rattlesnake hips still frighten.

The music sits well in the movie, but as good as the eight Los Lobos numbers are, you'd be better off with any of their own albums, plus some real roots music like last year's remastered Buddy Holly collection.

Chris Bourke

## started insects

\*A chemical substance, the release of which into its surroundings by an animal influences the behaviour or development of other individuals of the same species

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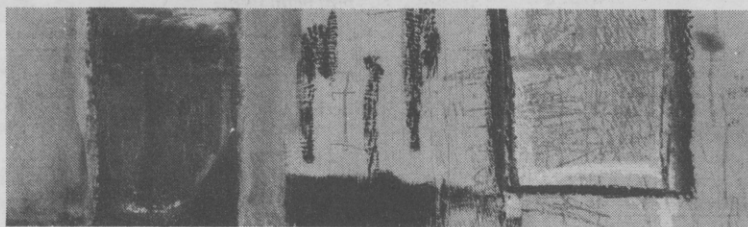
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## AN EXPLORER'S GUIDE TO THE GREATER ANTILLES

... in which we present five reasons to love Antilles/  
New Directions, the new label launched by Island this year:

1. *Antilles is the tradition of the new. Its aim is to innovate, not imitate; to be always at the cutting edge of new music. Tomorrow belongs to the young.*
2. *Antilles is open to all forms of contemporary music. Its roster already encompasses jazz, modern compositional work and Third World music. Future intentions include spoken word long players and the more extreme rock experiments.*
3. *Antilles believes musical excellence should have a proper commercial platform. The label's launch has been promoted by Island's success with Courtney Pine, the first serious jazz musician to reach the British Top 40 LP chart.*
4. *Antilles eschews the old philosophies of marginal music. It sees no contradictions between art and commerce, substance and style. Antilles aims to sound good, look good, sell good and be good.*
5. *Antilles says it's better to be DaDa than g-a-g-a.*



## THE LOUNGE LIZARDS NO PAIN FOR CAKES

The first studio album since 1980 from the band that has staked out territory that lies somewhere west of Charles Mingus. Individual members have appeared in or scored "Stranger Than Paradise," "Down by Law." *NO PAIN FOR CAKES* is both overwhelming and delicate.

## NANA VASCONCELOS

Bush Dance is global music from the Third World. Nana Vasconcelos is one of Brazil's greatest musicians, a master percussionist. Nana's work has distinguished and enhanced recordings by everyone from Gato Barbieri and Pat Metheny to B. B. King and Talking Heads. But Nana Vasconcelos is much more than a studio musician. His contributions to each project go far beyond the usual role allotted a percussionist. Nana Vasconcelos' music is a unique exploration of sounds, an extraordinary synthesis of voices and rhythms. Now Nana Vasconcelos moves centre stage with Bush Dance, his first LP for Antilles Records. Bush Dance. A long player and cassette. Pure undiluted Nana Vasconcelos. In all good record shops.



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