

SINGLES bar

Stock, Aitken & Waterman 'Roadblock' (Body Beat 7" & 12")

James Brown has had his voice sampled to death and his funky goove applied to over 60 dance and rap thangs in just this year along. Here's one of the best, done in "rare groove" style by the doyens of English production. The dreaded trio leave the Fairlight alone and get down with a James Brown-styled organ with a great bass and drum rhythm. As George Clinton said, "funk is its own reward."

Aerosmith 'Dude (Looks Like a Lady) (WEA 7")

From the other side of the tracks (so to speak) a really great slab of rock, the sort of thing the Stones used to do, nifty hooks and blazing riffs. I haven't a clue what it means, but who cares. The picture sleeve is covered in old-styled tattoo flashes, and looks cool as.

Echo and the Bunnymen 'Lips Like Sugar' (WEA 7" & 12")

I've never liked the band until the new album, and this is the best track. Super fine vocals with a great catchy chorus. Includes the track 'Rollercoaster' not on the album, and here we find the Bunnymen in an excitable mood. The version of 'People are Strange' is hauntingly close to the Doors, but interesting in its own way.

Levert 'Casanova' (Atlantic 7" & 12")

Such a great feel on this that it restores your faith in dance music. The rhythm track bubbles along with just the right balance between repetition and diversity. A major hit in overseas charts, and it's sure to do the same here.

Prince 'U Got the Look' (Paisley Park 7" & 12")

I may be biased but I think every Prince 12" is a work of genius. Here he out does himself, not counting the sexy romp of the A-side, the flip is a powerhouse remix of 'Housequake,' very Chic-like and very smart. "Jam on the one, y'all."

Debbie Gibson 'Only in My Dreams' (Atlantic 7" & 12")

People love this already, and it has an effective pop appeal and a loose funk sound. But there's something about that voice that annoys, as if she could be singing in a waterbed commercial.

Donna Allen 'Serious' (RCA 7" & 12")

Now this is a lot better, a real sleazy feel with a nasty beat. Ms Allen sounds like she means it with that breathy style favoured by soul sirens everywhere. Best heard loud and under medication.

Al Green 'Everything's Going to Be Alright (A&M 7")

Well we all need spiritual guidance sometimes, and the Reverend Green is my main man. In these troubled times a little bit of assurance doesn't go amiss. Simply wonderful song, beautifully sung.

Twisted Sister 'Hot Love' (WEA 7")

Okay, do you want to know what Foreigner, Toto and Chicago do on their days off? Well they put on makeup and pretend to be a heavy metal band, and call themselves Twisted Sister. Here's the proof, a very limp MOR rock ballad that has a little to do with love and nothing to do with hot. Listen to Motley Crue, Guns and Roses and Aerosmith and not this shit.

Kerry Buchanan

SHAKE SUMMATION

The Pterodactyls 'We've Done It Now' (Meltdown 12")

Quite an interesting historical prospect, these Pterodactyls, and not just because their record is one of the few you'll ever come across these days pressed only on one side. Caveat emptor — let the buyer beware when some drunken hoon goes and puts the blank side on at your next party ...

Yeah, right, the Pterodactyls were a genuine three-fourths Dunedin-in-Auckland band, and as such you'd think that they'd have some pretty relevant music to share on *We've Done It Now*, cos, like that's a pretty hip sort of amalgamation — ex-Chills and Stones, too. Do they deliver? Five out of five, unashamedly Velvets-inspired (check out 'Cockroaches') brash pop, which is probably why it all works so well, climaxing with the frantic dumbo-out of Jeff Batts' John Wayne ode 'Born Again.' Yeah right, not too bad, oddball harmonies, clean sound (if a little *weedy* for Harlequin guitars) and quickfire inanities: the Pterodactyls to a pT.

The Moas 'Spazz Out' (Flying Nun 12")

This has been out for a while now, and if it weren't for lost copy and missed deadlines, I'd have told you to buy it months ago. Snap up a copy now, cos Dunedin's Moas, sadly now "extinct" (ugh) take the best of garageband pop and spew it out in four two-minute bursts, three of which I lurve. I'll pass on the shakey opener 'Coming Back for More,' but for the rest, William Field steals a bit of David Pine's thunder (the Sneaky Feelings

man be playin' bass in this combo) with some deft McGuinn-ish jangles on guitar, and the Moas steal my heart. Charming in a modest kind of way, squeezing out in style.

Wreck Small Speakers on Expensive Stereos 'River Falling Love' (Flying Nun 12")

And now for the third defunct Dunedin band of the column. WSSOES claim they have been "hovering on the fringes of our consciousness for more than five years now," and I'll take their word for it, though it seems a pretty lame explanation for the buzz at the base of my skull. I blame the government.

The duo, consisting of Michael Morley and Richard Ram, have released a number of well-received cassettes under the WSSOES moniker, but *River Falling Love*, coming posthumously, is their first vinyl release. It opens with a synthesised fart and proceeds to launch into the two-part opus 'Lots of Hearts' — organ, quiet rhythm guitar and noise, an even quieter human voice emerges somewhere in its midst; the story is strange, so is the effect. I'm interested, but what follows fails to enlarge on that initial impression. A rhythm machine is introduced in 'Three Shots,' maybe a little Young Marble Giants. Similarly 'All of This' — the closest they get to "rock," while 'Tom' simulates minimalist ethnic sounds. Somewhere along the way, the record really needed to go "bang!" or scream. A minor and mildly interesting work. Morley's latest outfit, the Dead C, promise much more, so I'll wait for an explosion on their record.

Paul McKessar

Ardijah 'Time Makes a Wine' (WEA 7")

At last Ardijah's finest song is out. Soft cruisey funk, with Betty's seduc-

tive vocal and an unstoppable chorus. Always the standout live, if radio ignores this it will be a cultural crime. 'Jammin' is also from the album, Betty's great once again, but I get tired by the guitar solo. But time makes a wine — and a song — grow stronger.

The Warratahs 'Hands of My Heart' (Pagan 7")

Wellington country favourites enter the studio and cut live an immediately appealing singalong. An excellent warm and believable Merle Haggard vocal from Barry Saunders, hit home by the plaintive fiddle and subtle piano; Wayne Mason's the finest honky tonker in the country. 'Walk On By' is the standard done with sincerity, particularly the vocals. If you've got the song and the chops, who needs fancy production?

Three Days from Cairo 'I'm Gonna Find Her' (CBS 7")

Ignore the dodgy name, this is a creditable piece of white R&B, with a flowing melody and swinging Stax horns. Promising opening, and an excellent female vocalist at the bridge. Only the choral chorus lets it down. 'Hard Man' starts with a Stevie Wonder harp, and indeed the vocalist shows more than a little influence. I prefer this side, though it needs development. But this is a fine debut from what is probably a good club band.

Damien Kearns 'The Magic in Me' (Reaction 7")

Aspiring to US FM hard rock, with strong production and vocal sound, but the song stops and starts, never flowing. The chorus takes you down, not up. With a different song, there are possibilities here. The B-side 'Merlin mix' adds 70s production effects: phased keyboards, clavinet, etc. Great voice.

The Spaghetthis 'Scones' (Que 12")

From four seasoned Southlanders comes a charming four-track EP with

a warm swamp rock feel, good songs only held back by the raw sound. 'All Your Life' is my fave, an endearing acoustic blues with lovely guitars, bassoon and harmonica; it appeared on the Rational compilation. 'Bus Song' chuggs along well, good rhythm and melody, strongly sung, it coulda been a beefy rocker but for the thin sound. 'Scones' is spare and catchy, with earnest vocal but stop-start rhythm. 'Be Warm' continues the earthy feel. Many good ideas here, plus good singing, let's hope some more time is taken with the next recording.

Joe 90 'Walls Surrounding Me' (EMI 7")

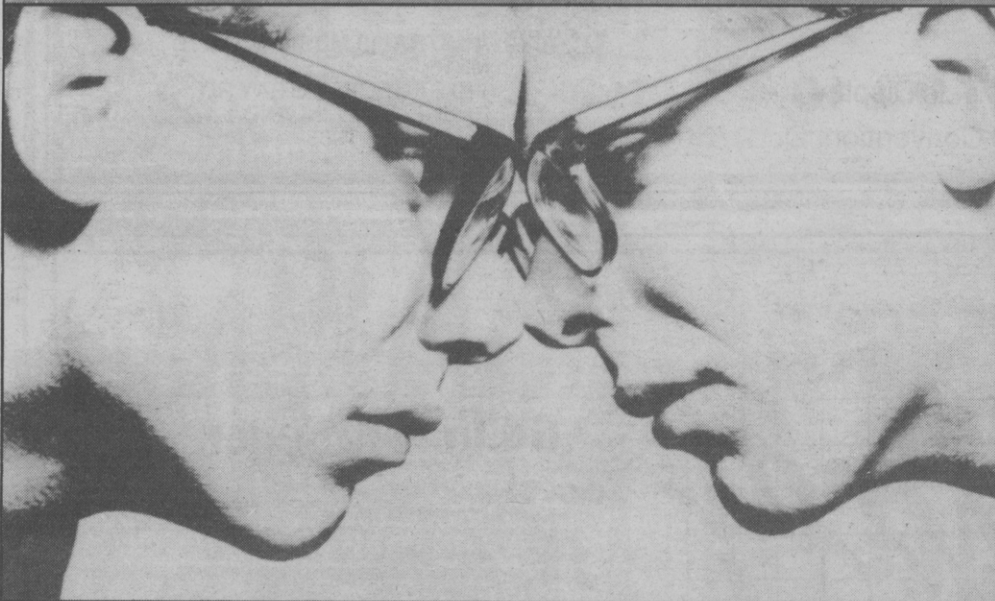
What happened to Joe's nerdy pop songs? 'Walls' has a good melody, but the simple synth and guitar riff (who mentioned Mi-Sex?) builds and speeds up disconcertingly till it's going too fast to be a singalong. Daryl Monteith's warm vocal is the best feature: here's a lower register NZ singer without a morose monotone. 'Imperial Measures' has another frenetic amphetamine riff beneath a dark vocal; it's over very quickly. Cut some of those live standouts, Joes.

Doubling Thomases 'It's Just a Dream' (Ode 12")

The ringing guitar hits you like a U2 epic, the stuffed-full sound grabbing hold but obscuring the dark vocal. Very busy, not attractive or particularly tuneful, like controlled white noise, building and speeding up: growing intensity does not a song make. On the throwaway B-side they have fun with riffs and tape snippets, producer Terry Moore managing a thick sound from simple ingredients, but without a vocal line, they're not going anywhere. Studio time is expensive: it helps to have finished writing the songs.

Chris Bourke

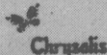
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