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Model 450, 8 x 4 x 2 Mixer, features phantom powering for professional condenser mics, in-line monitoring, solo, a dedicated stereo mix buss, stereo effects send and four switchable LED bar graph meters. More routing flexibility and performance gusto than anything in its price category.

This is even greater.

Model 450-16, 16 x 4 x 2, is a 450 with eight more inputs. The perfect 16-track production console with sonic quality you'd expect to cost

three or four times more. Nothing else even comes close.

And these are the sonic equivalent of duct tape.

Model 2050, 8 x 2 Line Mixer, will save your day when you suddenly need: another cue mix; a keyboard sub-mix or drums sub-mix; a separate monitor feed; a quick vocal reference (there's a mic preamp input, front

panel). For just about any conceivable signal routing problem, latch onto a Fostex 2050 or two, and the problem is solved. These little sonic lifesavers are Each. No audio tool kit should be without one.

Fostex

Great mixers at great prices, the best of both.

Distributed by Custom Music Ltd,
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RECORDS

Robbie Robertson
Robbie Robertson
Geffen

More than any other group, the Band deserved to be called the Band. They were group players and singers, listening to each other with an intercommunication that meant they spoke with one voice. Actually, almost all of their material was written by Robbie Robertson, who stood back and let the rest of the group sing his vignettes from American history. His songs were heartland adventures, hillbilly ballads that seemed like contemporary myths, but were as relevant as the next meal.

Robertson was a great songwriter in the traditional mould, and his great strength as a musician was knowing what to leave out. At a time when guitar heroes were proliferating, he could say more with a few delicate stutters. He also knew to keep quiet when he had nothing to say, which is why he abandoned the music treadmill a decade ago, content to make statements through soundtracks for Martin Scorsese.

Now, he's made an re-entry with a profound album of songs that retain their earthiness, but have a sound for the CD age. Robertson enlisted Daniel Lanois as co-producer, and not only is the influence of the man who crafted Peter Gabriel and U2's recent albums crucial, but those two artists make characteristic contributions. It's a difficult, brooding album of songs that are introspective rather than engaging sagas, but it's worth the effort. The melodies are like shifting sands, difficult to grasp hold of, but inevitably seeping into your consciousness.

Among the peaks are 'Fallen Angel,' Robertson's extremely affecting homage to his Band colleague Richard Manuel, the haunted pianist with the huge heart who hanged himself last year. Heartwrenching but subtle, Gabriel assists on vocals to give it a beautiful choral feel. At times you can almost hear the Band singing together, whooping to be heard over each other, particularly on 'Showdown at Big Sky,' with biblical lyrics and stained glass harmonies. The Dylanesque 'Broken Arrow,' would be a perfect vehicle for Levon Helm to bring out the tears.

'Sweet Fire of Love,' the superior of the two U2 collaborations, naturally has an epic quality. It's as large as a



Robbie Robertson

cathedral but as intimate as a tabernacle, with Robertson's spontaneity offsetting Bono's strict vocal. Side two has full-on rockers, the cautionary tale 'American Roulette,' 'Hell's Half Acre' and the chilling 'Sonny Got Caught' — images of bad card games and tattoo parlours, a lowlife neon-lit dream like the Tom Waits-ian recitation 'Somewhere Down the Crazy River.'

Robertson's great creative burst was the first three Band albums, written after an upbringing on the road. Then, the quality deteriorated because really, he'd said his piece. This return is dark and uneasy, beautifully crafted and eloquent. If JD Salinger emerged from reclusion with as strong a work, it would be just as heartening.

Chris Bourke

Squeeze
Babylon and On
A&M

With a fairly basic pun as its title, Squeeze have crept in to announce that they're back with their first album since 1985's *Così Fan Tutti Frutti*. It's getting difficult to type above the choruses of "Who cares?" but 10 years ago Chris Difford and Glen Tilbrook were the Eastender's answer to Elvis Costello with their sassy *Cool For Cats* album.

The consensus is that they peaked with *East Side Story*, and since then Difford and Tilbrook have relied on their craft rather than attacks of spontaneous genius to keep the band going. *Babylon and On*, while not a bad album (few bad albums are made these days, as everything is so con-

trolled and researched to the extent where the words "mediocre" and "bad" should change places) lurches along in the same grooves — namely Tilbrook's lived-in vocals and the tight competent grind of a band headed by Difford with Jools (*The Tube*) Holland once more on keyboards.

The best songs come in the shape of 'Footprints' with its after-party downer creep, 'Tough Love' with an accordion adding to the wife abuse-alcoholic husband broil, and '853-5937,' which cashes in on the irresistible don't-call-her-she'll-call-you lonely hearts club. Elsewhere 'The Prisoner' chugs along valiantly but fails to change gear, and 'Cigarette of a Single Man' almost hits the nerve of the loneliness of the long distance bachelor. The rest is men-at-work, nine-to-five songs, untouched by excitement or inspiration. The Squeeze is hardly resulting in sparks.

George Kay

Stevie Wonder
Characters
Motown

Stevie Wonder's been making good records for about 25 years now. So it figures that his latest album *Characters* is yet another solid achievement in a long career marked by them.

If 1985's *In Square Circle* was a well-crafted but somewhat uninspired work, *Characters* rights the balance. It may contain only a couple of additions to his considerable canon of masterpieces, but there are few fillers and a lot of plain excellence.

The gems include the first single, 'Skeletons,' a funky drama about the perils of keeping things hid that demonstrates yet again what a sophisticated lyricist Wonder has become since those unsteady beginnings last decade. *Characters* also includes probably the best of the current crop of duets with Michael Jackson; a high-spirited paean to Friday night with 'In Your Corner,' and in 'One of a Kind,' a certifiable addition to his long list of classic love songs.

Even the songs here that fall back on to familiar ideas are re-invented with sufficient freshness and arranging skill to rescue them from dullness. So I guess any sense of disappointment springs from that very familiarity: there's nothing completely new here. But it disappoints only against the high standards he's achieved in the past. So that if, like me, you've ever enjoyed one Stevie Wonder album, you'll embrace *Characters*.

Alastair Dougal

new vinyl and tape report

wea



LINDA RONSTADT
Canciones de mi Padre

A collection of 13 songs from Linda's grandfather's homeland in Sonora, Mexico. "Many of the songs on this record were passed through my father to me, and others I have heard through my continuing interest in the great vocal traditions of Mexico. They are a living memory of heartfelt experience." (Linda Ronstadt 1987).



GONDWANALAND
Gondwanaland

This Aussie band's third LP, their much sought after early indie LPs will be reissued by WEA early 1988. This LP contains vocals and unlike their first two, the new LP was recorded in state of the art studios — the sound is consequently powerful and full — capturing their voices, Charlie McMahon's didgeridoo and unique percussive feel drawn from their tours of the outbacks.



LOVE & ROCKETS
Earth Sun Moon

This awesome three-piece, two years after it grew from the ashes of darkly-hued English bands Bauhaus, Jazz Butcher etc, bring their third LP into the light. They explore hard pop, psychedelia, tough textures — 12 tracks of power and beauty. Their most affecting album yet!



COLD CHISEL
Razor Songs

A compilation of rare and in demand Cold Chisel tracks including 3 from the long deleted mini-LP 'You're 13 You're Beautiful & You're Mine,' including live faves 'Wild Thing,' 'Merry Go Round,' 'Rising Sun.' Jimmy Barnes at his best! These songs are sharp!



PRETENDERS
The Singles (Best Of)

At last, the 16 classic Pretenders singles on one album from 'Stop Your Sobbing,' Brass in Pocket' to 'Back on the Chain Gang' and the collaboration with UB40, 'I Got You Babe'. The ultimate Chrissie Hynde collection spanning 8 years of hitmaking.



TAJA SEVELLE
Taja Sevelle

A new signing to Prince's Paisley Park label — cool in style with Prince lending his willing hand on two tracks, his own composition 'Wouldn't You Love to Love Me' and his co-written 'If I Could Get Your Attention.' Taja writes most of the songs, Bennet plays and produces — this lady sure deserves your attention.



DOKKEN
Back for the Attack

60 minutes of Dokken mayhem here, from the torrid single 'Burning Like a Flame' to 'Kiss of Death' (the first metal song about Aids) and Mr Scary (instrumental that shows why Don Dokken has been voted in to the Guitar hall of fame like Page, Hendrix, et al.)



PAUL SIMON
There Goes Rhymin' Simon
Live Rhymin'

These are part of the continuing release of digitally remastered albums from Simon's back catalogue. Rhymin' Simon is his classic solo LP with 'Kodachrome,' 'Live Rhymin' could be described as a live best of, with The



RY COODER
Get Rhythm

This is Ry's first LP for several years that hasn't been connected to a film project. For this album he's stretching out as he sees fit on Elvis classic 'All Shook Up' with vocal by Cameo's Larry Blackmon, 'Across the Borderline' with vocal by cult actor Harry Dean Stanton. Other players include Van Dyke Parks and Jim Keltner.

FOREIGNER

The buzz is out on forthcoming Foreigner LP — it's called 'Inside Information.' First single is 'Say You Will.' It's hot!

PATEA MAORI CLUB

The long-awaited debut album is out on cassette for Xmas with vinyl format available in January.

LED ZEPPELIN VIDEO

The classic Zep film is available on VHS — Rock & Roll, Stairway to Heaven, Whole Lotta Love — all the classics!