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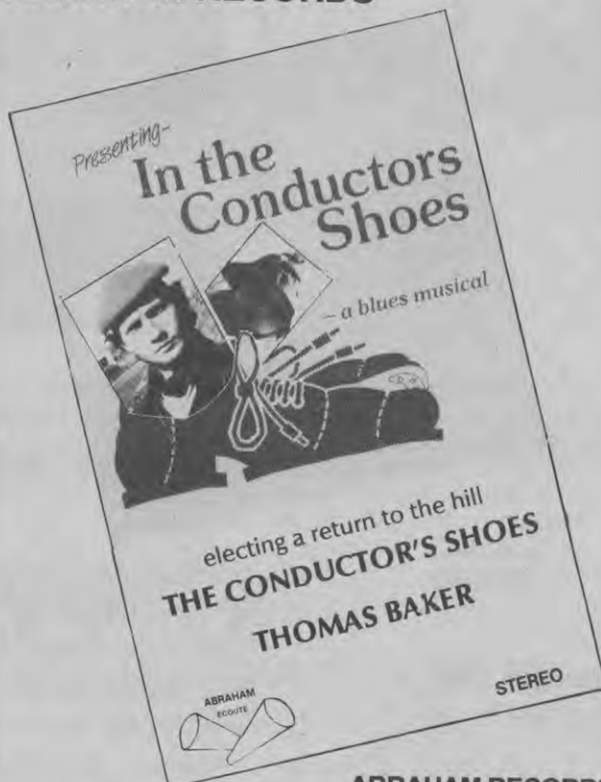
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Nona Hendryx Female Trouble EMI

It's four years now since Nona Hendryx's first RCA solo LP, *Nona*, with such classic tracks as 'Keep it Confidential', 'Living on the Border' and 'B-Boys'. At the time, she described this excellent album as a "compromise" and followed it with two hard-edged rock-funk albums *The Art of Defence* and *The Heat*. The former LP contained the groundbreaking 'I Sweat (Going Through the Motions)'.

As rock has met funk on more than one front of late — Prince's *Purple Rain*, Run DMC's 'Walk This Way' — it is surprising that Nona Hendryx, who is New York based, hasn't collaborated with artists from the hip-hop scene. Somehow her explorations remain left-of-centre and isolated from the mainstreams of black music. Though she is a significant innovator, achievements such as 'I Sweat' have never really inspired imitators or followers or recognition.

With *Female Trouble*, Nona has done an album more akin to that first RCA solo LP, mixing the strident power of 'Rhythm of Change' with more melodic tracks such as 'Why Should I Cry' or 'Winds of Change'. The latter track is a moving tribute to the loving commitment of civil rights activists Winnie and Nelson Mandela, a chilling ballad where Nona is joined by Peter Gabriel for a great performance that rekindles the majesty of Gabriel's modern masterpiece 'Biko'.

My fave track is 'Baby Go Go', a de-Principled workout on a Prince-penned song with Nona assisted by Mavis Staples and George Clinton. I'm really hangin' out to get the 12" version of this stompin' funky thang.

Female Trouble is a great album, but worlds apart from an LP like Janet Jackson's *Control*. Here the onus is on energy and emotion rather than finely crafted and polished songs.

One might think that Nona's battle for recognition is against chauvinism or racism, but really the enemy may be within — "soulism." A doctrine that

says thou can flirt (even wallow) in the middle of the road, but thou shalt not get rocky. This creed is perpetuated by the record producing style council, music media and soul fans worldwide.

While others get wimpy, Nona gets tuff. Timely, yet somehow out of step with the contemporary milieu due to the independence of her vision. Check it out.

Murray Cammick

Aztec Camera Love WEA

Roddy Frame has always regarded himself as a student of rock 'n' roll. In the early 80s he emerged from a Scottish scene besotted by Velvet Underground influences. No bad thing, and certainly one of the best places to start, as he proved with the innocent *High Land, Hard Rain*. But with three years separating Aztec Camera's last album, *Knife*, and the current *Love*, Frame has tried to sneak back into contention with what he sees is the acceptable coinage of the day — smooth, unruffled white cabaret soul not unlike the type crooned on the last Style Council album.

The gap between *Knife* and *Love* isn't one of sentiment but of style, and Frame's mistaken perception of what it takes to adapt, make a comeback and survive. I'm sure he can rationalise the funky tedium of 'Deep and Wide and Tall' and 'Everybody is a Number One', and the sluggish balladeering of 'How Men Are' and 'Paradise' as attempts at contemporary adult nightlife, but Alexander O'Neal he ain't. Like Weller, Frame mistakes sleepiness for seduction and the night time might be the right time for the right lover, but it's a trap for white boys. Only the sumptuous atmosphere and tune of 'Working in a Goldmine', the comparatively frontal funk attack of 'One and One' and the more familiar Aztec Camera ring of the delicate 'Killermont St.' escape this thing called *Love* unscathed.

As an album this is an over-marketed attempt at re-entry and re-adjustment. If Frame only realised that what we could have used now was another *Knife*.

George Kay

