



Various Artists AK 79

Ripper Records

In one way the title, AK 79, is an unfortunate choice. The quality of the album demands national rather than local attention. Let's hope that misguided parochialism doesn't prevent it getting that attention.

Before checking out the bands featured, a word about the sound quality. No, there's nothing that sounds like it was recorded in a shoe box with a rusty knitting needle. However some of the contributors do live up to their garage band status.

So, that's fair warning for the faint-hearted. Now for the bands — six of them with two tracks apiece.

I'm no Scavengers' fan. Still there's no denying that these lads write a great melody and the "Mysterex" and "True Love" are two of their finest moments. In particular, the first boasts a catchy riff from the guitar of Johnny Volume.

The Terrorways tracks, Sham's "Never Been to Borstal" and Ray Columbus' "She's A Mod" are the only vinyl we will get from the band. Fortunately this recording goes a long way to capturing their live belt. To the last they are rough but invigorating.

Similarly Proud Scum, arguably the only true Punk band we've had, do justice on record to their live kick. "I Am A Rabbit" and "Suicide" may be only for converts but there are enough of those to justify the inclusion.

The surprise of the package is undoubtedly The Primmers. Though lyrically unexceptional, "Funny Stories" has a winner of a melody reinforced by a strong Chris Malloy bass hook. Their reggae-fied "Somebody's Gonna Get Done" is an experiment which pays off abundantly.

Any warning about dodgy sound quality can exclude The Swingers' tracks, "Certain Sound" and "Baby". Good sound quality, snappy lyrics and clever melody all testify to the band's capabilities. Could be a bit more direct in the melody department but that is quibbling.

Rapidly it is becoming obvious that Toy Love on record are radically different from the live band. Little remains to be said on the undoubted merits of either. "Squeeze" deserves all the praise that's been heaped up on it and "Toy Love Song" is just as good.

Some of the bands here may never be heard on record again. At least a couple will eventually get out their own albums. Together on one record they are worthy of anyone's seven dollars.

Dominic Free

Weather Report 8:30

CBS

A colleague of catholic, but jazz-oriented, tastes calls Weather Report "the group of the 80s." That sort of shoot-from-the-lip hyperbole can prove embarrassing (ask Springsteen about the future of rock and roll), but the statement does bear consideration.

First of all, given the diversity of music being produced today it's probably a safe bet that if there is to be a "group of the 80s" it hasn't emerged yet.

It is also probably a safe bet that as Weather Report has dominated and guided jazz in the late 70s so it will continue to do so in the 80s.

The part-live, part-studio double album, 8:30, would appear to be the key to bringing Weather Report to an even wider audience. The album is a showcase for the composing and performing talents of Zawinul (he's dropped the Joe),

Wayne Shorter, and the group's newer members Jaco Pastorius and Peter Erskine.

After many personnel changes Weather Report seems to have found its magic combination, and together the four swing as one, a true case of the sum being greater than the parts.

8:30 shows Weather Report as a band, melodic and muscular, continually exploring the new territory they have sign-posted for others to follow.

Ken Williams

Split Enz Beginning of the Enz Mushroom

This sort of compilation album is generally intended to do one of two things — embarrass and exploit a band who have recently left a label, or make a little extra cash while everybody sits around waiting for the next smasheroo.

Split Enz' assay into the Christmas market definitely falls into the latter category. Although the bulk of the material on the album was recorded under previous management and recording deals, this is very much an official Enz presentation, complete with footnotes from Neil Finn. It contains all the band's early recording, released and unreleased, including material from their 'Studio One' days on the NZBC.

As well as these, there are remixed versions of "For You" and "Home Sweet Home" with plenty of surprises, esoteric and otherwise for the aficionado, and all other pre-Mental Notes sides.

As a picture of the origins of the current band it is rather misleading. On three of the tracks, Tim/Brian Finn is the only remaining End, and Philip Judd has full or part compositional credit on all of them. It is as much a guide to the Swingers as the Enz of the 80's. Still, as anybody who saw the old band, or heard these songs originally will tell you, they are well worth preserving. I'd rather own this than a goldplated "Hermitt McDermitt" any day.

Frank Stark

Mark Williams Life After Dark CBS

For a while it looked as if Mark Williams' departure for Australia, while the logical step, was a journey into darkness. In New Zealand he had become a moderately successful fish in a circular bowl of limited dimensions. His best records (such as his remake of Buddy Holly's "It Doesn't Matter Anymore") were very good indeed, but he still seemed "promising", as they like to say when handing out awards. Moving on became inevitable, but was the lengthy silence that followed evidence of time in a cul-de-sac?

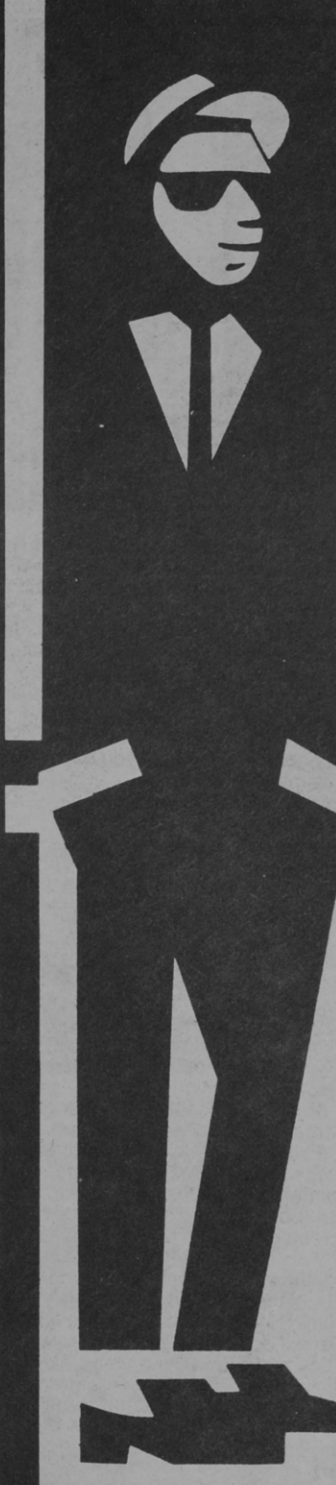
Definitely not, to judge by *Life After Dark*. Produced in Sydney by Alan Galbraith, who also worked with Williams here, the album is evidence of a matured talent.

Mark sings better than ever, and the arrangements give him the sort of support that one associates with the best of American soul music. The singer contributes five of the 10 songs himself, proving himself a more than capable song-writer.

Mark Williams sings with soul, and I would rate this one of the best soul albums I have heard.

If Kim Fowley can't find a New Zealand Abba, here is a New Zealand Stevie Wonder, albeit resident in Sydney.

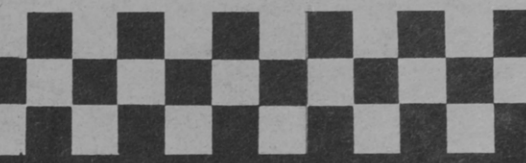

Ken Williams



SPECIALS

THE

ALBUM

A MESSAGE TO YOU
RUBY
DO THE DOG
GANGSTERS
IT'S UP TO YOU
NITE KLUB
DOESN'T MAKE IT
ALRIGHT
CONCRETE JUNGLE
TOO HOT
MONKEY MAN
(DARNING OF A)
NEW ERA
BLANK EXPRESSION
STUPID MARRIAGE
TOO MUCH TOO
YOUNG
LITTLE BITCH
YOU'RE WONDERING
NOW

PRODUCED BY ELVIS COSTELLO

2

Chrysalis TONE

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NAME THE BAND! NAME THE MEMBERS! ANSWERS ON PAGE 14.

