



**Russell Morris Band  
Foot In The Door  
Mushroom**

In the early '70s Russell Morris had a string of hit singles in Australia and New Zealand. He specialised in emotive ballads delivered in his distinctively husky voice. But the Russell Morris of 1980 is an entirely different proposition.

This new album with his new band is solidly in the Little Feat funk vein. All the material is medium paced rock with a punchy delivery from the band.

Morris' fans may not welcome the change but the album is a success on its own terms. Though the approach is all too familiar these days, the vocals by Morris give the sound sufficient individuality. Another bonus is the nicely understated guitar of Joe Amenta, heard to best effect on "The Sky is Falling".

I've got to admit to disappointment on finding that there was no "Rachel's Coming Home" or "On The Wings Of An Eagle" on the album. But the only reasonable criterion for a musician's success is proficiency in a chosen style. In that perspective Morris has made a successful return to recording.

**Dominica Free**

**Ellen Shipley  
RCA**

The promo sheet for this new album had such a heavy line in hyperbole that I wondered if the album could live up to the sterling work of RCA's publicity department. Shipley is "unique", "no producer's puppet", "never able to conform" and "makes rock and roll as it was meant to be made, as an expression of anger, dissatisfaction and independent individuality."

Working in much the same area as the recent Ellen Foley album, Ellen Shipley has managed to come up with a strong debut. The songs, within their fairly standard rock format, are intelligent — witness the feminist line in "Man of the World" or the disillusionment of "Heroes of Yesterday". Sometimes images work effectively as in "Catch the Cobra" with its striking harpsichord and percussion colouring, sometimes they are miscalculated as in the trite "Stray Dog".

*Stray Dog, stay away from my home*

*Stray Dog, ain't gonna throw you no bone*

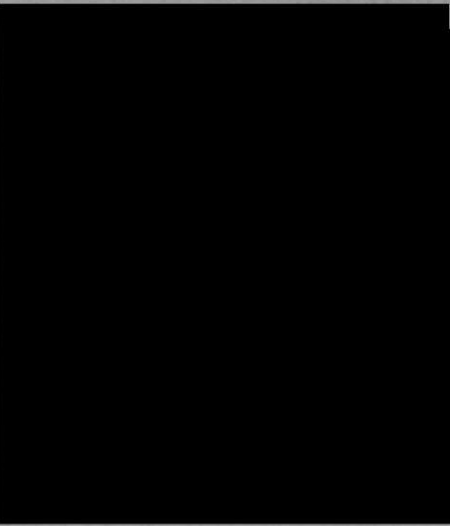
A worthwhile album, although one wonders whether Ms Shipley will ever be more than promising debut in the "cut-throat world of rock'n'roll."

**William Dart**

**Sid Vicious  
Sid Sings  
Virgin**

When an artist dies the business vultures move in. Tracks laid down in impromptu jam sessions, sloppy live performances recorded on pocket cassettes and studio outtakes are all dusted down, souped up and promoted as Never Before Available tidbits.

*Sid Sings* is actually worse than most other posthumous competitors for two reasons — firstly, the sound quality is the pits, even by bootleg standards and secondly, let's be honest, Sid was never a rock performer/entertainer or whatever. He was the spokesman or figurehead of punk, a charismatic guy who insulted the right people and captured the cheap press's hunger for a punk stereotype so they



could blitz the public with sensationalism like "Do You Want YOUR Son To Look Like THAT".

Sid then couldn't play bass and he couldn't sing but it didn't matter then. It matters now because one John Varnom, responsible for *Carri On*, *Some Product* and now *Sid Sings*, commented recently on the *Carri On* fiasco:

"I gave back to the business what I calculate it has given me in just short of a decade — 40 minutes of complete trash."

As the saying goes — would you buy a used car from this man?

**George Kay**

**Village People  
Live and Sleazy  
RCA**

Four sides of good-timey disco from the boys who have put Vaseline Villas on the lips of every teenager in the Western World. It's a fun album, proving that these guys can in fact perform a whole concert with their tongues firmly in their cheeks. "Hot Cop" does not have the same thrill when it is not followed by "My Roommate" and "Ups and Downs". Their three big numbers, "Macho Man", "YMCA" and "In the Navy" have been considerably pepped up in pace from their studio versions. "In Hollywood (Everybody is a Star)" is the boys' version of what Ray Davies was saying rather more elegantly in "Celluloid Heroes". "Fire Island" and "San Francisco (You've Got Me)" show the group eulogising other Stateside funspots.

Obviously the sound of the album is not quite so rich as the studio recordings, but live disco is really something of a paradox anyway. Of course Village People are a commercial product, and could slip down the well lubricated path to oblivion, but they represent only the tip of the gay disco iceberg in the States and their humour is only too welcome in an area where it is not often apparent.

**William Dart**

**Pink Floyd  
The Wall  
CBS**

It would be difficult to think of a band as insular or complacent as Pink Floyd in the seventies. Since *Dark Side of the Moon* they have become increasingly redundant and removed from what many thought to be the pulsebeat of rock'n'roll. *The Wall* changes all that.

Years in the making, *The Wall* is a modern allegory of how, right from birth, we erect various communication barriers, and interspersed through this theme Waters makes references to the band's own self-imposed isolation.

Sides One and Two carry the concept with ease; flowing from scene to scene with each song linked by spoken sequences courtesy, no doubt, of Bob Ezrin, Floyd have sharpened their previous heads-in-the-sand approach to a keener more concise angle. Sides Three and Four lose momentum in their over melancholic pre-occupations and in the downright clumsiness of "The Trial" but the songs, by and large, remain disciplined and thoughtful.

*The Wall*, like most other double albums, could have been paired to maybe three sides maximum of watertight music, but, as percentages, go, that's still pretty high. What's new is that Waters and his three mates are back in the running as a ROCK band and it would be unwise and unjust to pass up this ambitious if flawed double album on the evidence of their last few records.

**George Kay**

**RARE RECORD**

**Bonnie Raitt, The Glow (Warner Bros)**

Former Beatle-protege Peter Asher handles production chores for Bonnie Raitt's seventh album. Wisely, he hasn't tampered with the Raitt style.

She traverses a wide range of material, the new (including that rarity, a song by Raitt herself) and the near-forgotten (her re-working of Little Richard's "The Girl Can't Help It" is an object lesson in that seldom-heeded truism, less is more). Those who already know her work will be as pleased as those discovering it for the first time. KW

**David Werner, David Werner (Epic)**

Slick New Yorker produces a few surprises in his first run in the albums' race. Ably supported by a strident formative road band that verges on controlled heavy metal, Werner's songs emerge as forceful melodic hybrids of pop/rock romance.

The first side, in particular, rarely steps out of line and on "Melanie Cries" Werner has a love song that screams to be a single. Impressive. GK

**The Jukes, Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes (Mercury)**

Southside joins a new label and severs his connection with producer-songwriter Steve Van Zandt. The result is a very dull set. Van Zandt's songs apparently gave Southside as much as he gave them.

Is Johnny to meet the not uncommon fate of the one-time cult artist — as public acceptance blossoms the creative spark dims? KW

**Johnny Guitar Watson, What the Hell is This? (DJM)**

Who says good music can't be fun? If it's good humour you seek, spiced with witty lyrics and larded with funk, take a listen to Johnny Guitar Watson, a rock and roll veteran now making small masterpieces in an area once the preserve of Leiber and Stoller and the Coasters.

Beneath Watson's street-wise raps, the music bubbles, by turns cool and greasy. Apart from developing one of the truly individual guitar sounds (Frank Zappa cites his influence) Watson plays nearly all the instruments — with consummate ease. KW

**The Dukes, The Dukes (Warner Bros)**

The Dukes line-up reads like a third rate supergroup: the late Jimmy McCulloch (Thunderclap Newman, Stone the Crows, Wings), Ronnie Leah (Stone the Crows), Miller Anderson (Keef Hartley) and Charlie Tumahai (Be Bop DeLuxe).

Anderson shoulders the songwriting chores and inspired he ain't, and to make matters worse neither Leahy nor McCulloch can add fire to the dull ordinariness of the songs.

Not a fitting epitaph for Jimmy McCulloch. GK

**Foreigner, Head Games (Atlantic)**

This stuff is so plainly music by numbers, a carefully crafted synthesis of the most bankable aspects of heavy metal, that it is impossible to take seriously. But worse than the overblown silliness of Foreigner is an ugly streak of misogyny running through the material. Rock has always had songs which dealt less than kindly with women, but it seems to be Foreigner's stock-in-trade. And if they don't believe the message then they're determinedly cynical, and offensive beyond mere stupidity. KW

**Edgar Winter, The Edgar Winter Album (Epic)**

Having tried his hand at virtually every trend from blue-eyed soul to glitter and back again, Edgar Winter now turns to disco. It's a pretty dismal affair.

Cliches can be fun, but Winter's unrelenting seriousness leaves the album devoid of any sense of lift. It's a sad waste, because he displays an improved singing voice and his horn lines are interesting. Perhaps it is the fate of the Winter brothers that when Edgar's up Johnny's down, and vice versa. KW

**Wire, 154 (Harvest)**

Wire is one of the few old punk bands to develop into areas generally considered by most to be commercially unrewarding and musically dangerous.

In 154 Wire have abandoned the toe-in-the-water diffidence of *Chairs Missing* for convincing total commitment to their idea of music as some sort of jarring comment on the harsher aspects of life. They successfully walk the fine edge between sheer pretentiousness and controlled experimentation, but because of its

ascetic character it is even less likely to succeed commercially than their previous two albums.

And that is a cryin' shame. GK

**Jo Jo Zep & The Falcons (Rockburgh)**

Each to their own, but to me there is little more exciting than a good honking rock-and-soul band in full strike. Funkybutt; the Stax artists had it, and Aretha and Wilson Pickett, and once upon a time Mitch Ryder, and the Young Rascals. Far from Muscle Shoals or Memphis, Australia's Jo Jo Zep and the Falcons have it in abundance. In full cry, singer-saxist Joe Camilleri is hard to top.

This compilation album showcases the group downhomecooking on 12 tracks, the best of which is Bobby Womack's "It's All Over Now." KW

**John Cougar, Miami (Warner Bros)**

At one time, not too long ago either, Cougar could have passed for a male model trying to play featureless heavy rock but now he's ditched his wardrobe, roughed himself up a bit and come up with a bunch of damn good songs in a John Fogerty-Gasoline Alley Rod Stewart mould.

In keeping with his new-found unkempt bravado the songs lyrically are self-consciously tough, but his tunes and arrangements are the best he's managed to date. Change of name needed though. GK

**Nicolette Larson, In the Nick of Time (Warner Bros)**

Can a talented back-up singer take centre-stage and find true happiness? Can Nicolette Larson, former vocal accompanist (Neil Young, Commander Cody), turn an ability to handle a variety of song styles (rock ballad, Motown, 1940-ish boogie woogie) into a convincing personal voice? On this showing, she remains a much-touted but minor talent. KW

**Michael Chapman, Life On the Ceiling (Criminal Records)**

Starting innocently enough as a folkie, Chapman has, however, ventured deeper into the realms of rock with each successive album.

Surrounded by the finest sessioneers that money can buy and his old side-kick Rick Kemp on bass, Chapman need have no regrets over the painstaking quality of this album, his first in over eighteen months. Standouts are the seven minute "Babe", a strong moving love song, and "End of the Line" which wouldn't have been out of place on the first Dire Straits album. Where the songs are weak the band's effortless panache and Tom Aptom's immaculate production save the day.

Worth investigation. GK

**Leonard Cohen, Recent Songs (CBS)**

The lugubrious-voiced Canadian returns to a small-group setting for an album that can easily stand with his best work of earlier years.

The unavoidable monotony of Cohen's vocal style is balanced by the vocal support of Jennifer Warnes and the group arrangements, which manage to sound modern without overpowering or detracting from the literate content of Cohen's songs. KW

**The Stranglers, The Raven (United Artists)**

The Stranglers have yet to make a completely satisfactory album. Just when they hit that wide-legged groove (as in their best singles) Hugh Cornwell's codpiece posing as an experimental brain gets in the way.

*The Raven* then is their usual blend of satanic claptrap and chunky rock'n'roll — the title track and "Baroque Boredello" being prime and welcome examples of the latter.

So another patchy piece of posturing but it will do until someone has the sense to release The Stranglers Greatest Hits. GK

**The Charlie Daniels Band, Million Mile Reflections (Epic)**

The corpulent fiddler turns in persuasive country rock music with the emphasis on good-timing. We've all heard "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" more than enough, but it's only the iceberg's tip. This is a very fine album with CDB exploring areas beyond pure country. This may be the influence of producer John Boylan, who has worked with the Little River Band.

It's not a total success — "Rainbow Ride", a lengthy piece in the manner of jazz-fusion, is a muddle — but there are more than adequate compensations in the updated Western Swing of "Jitterbug" and, especially, the wistful "Mississippi" which does for the Deep South what Hoagy Carmichael did for Georgia. KW

**Earl Klugh, Heart String (United Artists)**

This George Benson protege here relinquishes any claim to being a jazz artist. Admittedly, it is Klugh's association with leading jazz players that caused him to be so labelled; erroneously, it would appear from *Heart String* where the little Klugh has to say on his acoustic guitars is often obscured by lush arrangements, meticulous and quite passionless.

Klugh himself calls his music "easy listening pop". At least he isn't as pretentious as most of this sounds. Music for the upwardly mobile elevator. KW

**Michael Nesmith, Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma (Stetson)**

One time exploited pop star, cowboy philosopher and now versatile MOR stylist, Michael Nesmith cooks up a pot pourri of styles and occasional fine songs on his new album ranging from tongue-in-cheek disco ("Capsule"), fifties pop ("Magic") to barroom boogie on "Factions".

Entertaining, but the album is too diverse to succeed as an entity. GK

**Pointer Sisters, Priority (Planet)**

Producer Richard Perry has turned the Pointer Sisters into a tasty rock act, but in so doing he has eroded some of the charm of their earlier incarnation.

Their songs are now culled from the better rock writers (Bruce Springsteen, Robbie Robertson, Bob Seger) rather than the jazz people of yore.

At best — "(She's Got) The Fever", for example — the finely honed harmonies can be genuinely moving. Even in its lesser moments, such as the ill-chosen "Happy", this makes a propulsive partying record. However, there remains a nagging feeling of chances not taken. KW

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