

RECORDS

THE ROLLING STONES EMOTIONAL RESCUE ROLLING STONES RECORDS

Heads down for the first Rolling Stones album of the eighties. It is two years since *Some Girls*, the album which proved the old team was still striking sparks. A highpoint for the Stones, *Some Girls* is a hard one to follow, and while *Emotional Rescue* has some stunning moments it cannot match the brilliance and ferocious attack of its predecessor.

Emotional Rescue was recorded in Paris and the Bahamas. As with *Some Girls*, production is by The Glimmer Twins with assistance from engineer Chris Kimsey. According to Jagger, Kimsey was chosen originally because he got a good drum sound. And much more besides.

Musical assistance is from those veterans of Stones' tours and sessions Ian Stewart, Bobby Keys, Nicky Hopkins and Sugar Blue, the brilliant harmonica man who between times plays for commuters on the Paris Metro.

The album gets off to a good start. As with the last two studio albums the opening track is a dance song. Appropriately, it is called "Dance", and Ron Wood shares the writing credit with Mick Jagger and Keith Richards (the 's' is there this time). All other songs are by Jagger and Richards.

Against a wall of chattering, stuttering guitars, a tugging bassline and Charlie Watts' mountainous drumming, Jagger sets in motion an inexorable chorus "...get up, get out, into something new..." Of course, it's really something not at all new. The Stones, hot and heavy.

The reggae singer Max Romeo, best-known for his album *War in a Babylon*, guests on backing vocals. The track is also notable for a percussion interlude featuring "jungle parrot" noises.

"Dance" gives due warning that this is a guitar album, with the Wood-Richards fraternity trading killer licks. Richards has said that to him the importance of guitarists in a rock band is in their interplay and the possibilities this creates. Throughout the album Keith and Ronnie play like one man with four hands.

The next track, "Summer Romance", is something of a letdown after this great start. Aside from some back-and-forth guitar warfare the song is undistinguished. It could easily have been an out-take from *Some Girls*.

"Send It To Me" is the album's reggae song. Jagger's tongue sounds so deep in cheek it's a wonder he can sing at all.

*I can take the mule train
I can take the aeroplane
Send it to me...*

And "She could be Romanian She could be Bavarian

*She could be Albanian She could be Hungarian
She might be Ukrainian She might be Australian
She could be the Alien..."*
The rhythm is irresistible.

"Let Me Go" is unmemorable, a sort of mixture of New Wave-ish rhythm and a languid vocal delivery harking back to something like "Connection" from *Between the Buttons*. The song is lifted by a lyrical guitar solo. I guess it is Wood; it could be Keith.

The closing track on Side One, "Indian Girl," is definitely a qualified success. Richards sets up a mesmerising wash of acoustic guitar that has echoes of "You Can't Always Get What You Want," the other instruments evoke a mood of mock-South American tranquility, and Jagger opens his mouth and makes the whole thing seem ludicrous. Political-social commentary has never been convincing from the Stones, and Jagger's attempt at Spanish dialect is particularly witless. Can he really be serious?

*...little Indian girl, where is your father?
Indian girl, where is your mama?
They are fighting for Mr Castro
In the streets of Angola"*

Side Two kicks off to a jump start. In the wake of the New Wave, Jagger, like Pete Townshend, is using a more consciously 'English' voice (on this track anyway). The guitars are menace itself and Jagger and company chant a relentless chorus of "Where the

Boys Go (Saturday Night)". This track is like an avalanche. Great stuff. Compare with Townshend's "Rough Boys" from *Empty Glass*.

Wailing harp from Sugar Blue opens "Down in the Hole", the closest the Stones get to Da Blooze on *Emotional Rescue*. Charlie shows once again how right he is for the Stones. The song is in the Jagger tradition of woman put-down. He spits out a stream of curses on a woman whose money won't save her from her fate to be

*...down in the gutter, grubbing for cigarettes
Bumming for nylons, in the American Zone
You'll be down in the hole*

The song is an unrelieved image of degradation, but the tension set up by the band and the singer brings it off. Stunning.

The title song, "Emotional Rescue", is another bass-driven dance song with Jagger singing most of it falsetto. Who said anything about the Bee Gees? The song moves on the balls of its feet, and the falsetto really works. In fact, it is only when Jagger reverts to something approaching his normal pitch for a bridge section that the pace slackens. An absurdly tongue-in-cheek talkie bit on the long fade-out. Good honking sax from the golden horn of Bobby Keys.

Dare I say it, but "She's So Cold" puts me in mind of the Knack, both in sound and content. Only the guitar machine of Wood-Richards props up this one-liner ("I'm so hot for her and she's so cold").

Keith sings "All About You", a sort of countrified anti-love song.

*I'm so sick and tired
Hanging around with dogs like you
You're the first to get blamed
Always the last bitch to get pain"*
Is this a lament for Anita Pallenberg?

Keith's husky, fragile tones summon up the weariness of "Memory Motel" from *Black and Blue*. Maybe this is the Stones' "Just Like A Woman". This didn't register too much on first listenings, but I'm inclined to think it is the album's sleeper. The hurt of Richards' voice and Bobby Keys' simmering sax make this a remarkable end piece.

So what does it add up to, this first Stones' album of a new decade? A couple of non-events, a couple of near-misses, and half a dozen songs to do the Stones proud. There are holes here and there, but overall *Emotional Rescue* must be counted a success.

Ken Williams

STREET TALK BATTLEGROUND OF FUN WEA

Street Talk's debut album last year was almost overshadowed by the prestige of Kim Fowley behind the controls; after all, it's not everyday that a world-renowned producer lends his hand in these parts. Nevertheless, despite three truly great tracks and an excellent production, the result was, really, nothing more than Fowley's vision of Street Talk and not that of the unit which had been thrilling Aucklanders since 1974.

This, then, is Street Talk presenting a selection of *their* choice. Producer Bruce Lynch and engineer Dave Hurley may not have actually improved on the first album but they've certainly been more successful in capturing the band in all their live glory. Anyone familiar with recent Street Talk performances will know the bulk of *Battleground Of Fun*; the album kicks off with "Whatever Happened To Lucy?" and one thing becomes instantly apparent: Hammond Gamble is totally comfortable in front of the mike this time around, his gruff vocals having faced up to their limitations. Yup, ole Humming Grumble has developed into one hell of a singer, confident and in control. Other stage faves include "Lonely At The Top", "China Girl" (one of three tracks where Gamble is relieved of vocal duties by Mike Caen's contrasting chords), "Blood Out Of A Stone", "Feminine Minds" (the current single, written by bassist Andy MacDonald), "Queen Of The Party Line" and a fresh version of "Leaving The Country" superior to the Chris Hillman-produced debut single of 1978.

Not so familiar, perhaps, are Andy's "The Lonely One", Mike's "Girl About Town" and from the pen of Hammond: "Catching Up On You" (a lovely little number concerned with the aging process with simple albeit effective lyrics), "Goodbye Good Fortune", the jaunty Beatlish "Without You" and the title track. Thirteen tracks in all, ranging from the good to the

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