

**THE ANGELS
DARK ROOM
EPIC**

**COLD CHISEL
EAST
WEA**

It's a little unfair. The Aussies elevate our better rock exports to superstardom with regular monotony yet we choose to ignore those bands successfully flying the Ocker banner. The Angels and Cold Chisel, along with Mi-Sex and Split Enz, form Australasia's Big Four. But, as with comparisons between the two Kiwi bands, the Angels and Cold Chisel have little in common other than the same engineer/producer (Mark Opitz), the same hometown (Adelaide) and the ability to transform four figure crowds into demented zombies.

Cold Chisel have changed considerably from the HM outfit that visited NZ three years back as support act to Rod Stewart. *East*, their third album, displays the band utilising the whole range of contemporary influences, from blues to reggae, jazz to rockabilly. Cold Chisel have a fine precision when it comes to pop sensibilities, particularly on "Choirgirl" and "Cheap Wine", the band's last two hit singles. Throughout, vocalist Jim Barnes' powerful lungs are put to good use with the band raging behind. Not all the tracks impress and, while not all-important, the lyrics are always adequate but hardly inspiring.

Anyone curious as to influences Mi-Sex may have been exposed to during those months prior to their 1979 NZ tour need look no further than the Angels. No, no electronics from this band, just the classic twin-guitar approach with the emphasis on a finely crafted, albeit not contrived, nail-back-the-ears wall-of-sound repertoire guaranteed to get even the most cynical on their feet.

The manic frontman Doc Neeson grits, growls and grunts his way through the Angels sordid world of no illusions and no redemption:

I've got my hands in the water

Dipping in the dirty

There might be a witness

Better keep out of sight

... Dark Room indeed.

This, their fourth album (first for Epic) is no departure from their proven successful formula — straight gut level rock 'n' roll. Along with *Face To Face* and *No Exit*, *Dark Room* provides a fine trilogy of Oz Rock at its best. My advice is check out all three.

John Dix

**PETER GABRIEL
CHARISMA**

In this, his third album, carrying the same title as the previous two, Peter Gabriel continues to expand his own frontiers as a writer, singer and dramatist.

If the new Genesis album finally reveals their limitations without Gabriel, then his latest work shows how restricted he was within their format. There is no way on earth that Genesis could have performed his moving, lyrical treatment to Steve Biko. It shows, more clearly than any other track on the album, just how far he's advanced.

"Biko" opens with a keening African lament, authentically recorded, which dovetails into a loose-skinned funeral drumbeat over a droning guitar, as Gabriel sings in bitter anguish:

You can blow out a candle

But you can't blow out a fire,

Once the flame begins to catch

The wind will blow it higher.

Gabriel has never written orthodox songs, and as always, he makes extreme demands on the listener. The influence of Bowie's *Low* period is apparent, especially in the guitar and keyboard arrangements. Gabriel's obsession with the darker side of the human psyche continues, especially on the chilling "Intruder" and the sonic nightmare of "No Self Control".

"Family Snapshot" is the John Kennedy assassination through the killer's eyes. Maybe. There's a trick ending, and as so often happens, Gabriel leaves you guessing. "Games Without Frontiers" is more fanciful, and closer to the Genesis sound, a la "Battle Of Epping Forest". Gabriel's new sound is less bombastic and more economical. Vocally, he seems to get better all the time.

Stiff Little Fingers



Peter Gabriel doesn't take the easy way. You'll find this album both unsettling and absorbing, and as long as you take the time, very rewarding.

Duncan Campbell

**JACKSON BROWNE
HOLD OUT
ASYLUM**

Somewhere in the mid-seventies, Jackson Browne had his moment.

Combining the least-indulgent of LA musicianship, the exceptional slide-guitar of David Lindley, and some articulate, tuneful songwriting, he demonstrated that California didn't have to mean Linda Ronstadt and the Eagles.

Now, after side-trips into the movies, and organising the *No Nukes* extravaganza, he's back to try for the moment again. *Hold Out* has a good deal in common with the best of his previous work — *Late For The Sky*, with the emphasis on a unified, consistent sound, and David Lindley still playing brilliantly, but ultimately, it fails to recognise the passage of time.

In fact, some of the songs veer unpleasantly close to self-parody. "Disco Apocalypse" may not be a laughing matter, but I bet that *National Lampoon* would like to have thought of the title, and "Call It A Loan" is a little too cloying for most tastes.

Still, the old virtues remain. The record is well, yet modestly, produced (even if it took more technicians than the usual New Zealand feature film), the playing is good, and sometimes exceptional, and the songs are not the work of a stupid man, or a tone-deaf one. They just don't seem to fit into my life any more.

Perhaps it just shows that New Zealand isn't heading the way of California after all — not even the acceptable face of California.

Steven McDonald

**STIFF LITTLE FINGERS
NOBODY'S HEROES
CHRYSALIS**

If SLF never record again, they will always be remembered for "Suspect Device", a minor masterpiece.

Fortunately, the Fingers haven't exploded, and they now offer a second album, *Nobody's Heroes*. Although the demonic intensity of their first album, *Inflammable Material* still haunts, the aggressive militance seems somewhat cooled. Maybe the hate and violence has mellowed since their move away from Northern Ireland.

As with their first record, most of the lyrics are written by Manager/Journalist Gordon Ogilvie — a strange arrangement, but one that works. Exceptions to this are the reggae-based instrumental, "Bloody Dub", and the single "At the Edge". There is one cover version, the Specials' "Doesn't Make It Alright". Although it holds water, one wonders about the logic that bought about its inclusion.

"What you see is what you get", says the caption on the cover, and that's about it — no

The Beat



more "Suspect Devices", but still a bloody good rock and roll band.

Mark Phillips

**TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS
JUST LIKE THAT
ISLAND**

Toots Hibbert, possessed of one of the great voices in or out of reggae, has yet to achieve the success of the more charismatic Bob Marley. Nonetheless, Toots remains, of all the Jamaican musicians, the man most likely to match Marley's achievement in reaching an audience beyond the confines of "pure" reggae and a cult audience.

Hibbert has a voice not unlike that of the late Otis Redding, although it is a more flexible, less melodramatic instrument than Redding's. Toots uses a lot of gospel phrasings and in full cry he and the Maytals, Jerry Mathias and Raleigh Gordon, have the spirit-rousing power of a secular choir. Their synthesis of soul and reggae opts for danceability rather than the stoned pulse and heavy politicism of much of "roots" reggae.

For this reason, purists may sniff at Toots' latest, but it should please just about everyone else. *Just Like That* is a joyful noise. The title track, which has Toots crooning seductively in a manner not unlike Marvin Gaye, could be a chart hit. But it may be too good for that.

The musicians are excellent. Most have been with him since *Reggae Got Soul*, and like the leader they play with the impetus of the best soul and the elasticity of the best reggae, while avoiding the worn-out figures, such as the clackety-clack drum intro, that have become reggae cliches.

If Toots and the Maytals get you on the dancefloor rather than at the barricades don't fight it. This is a record for maximum enjoyment.

Ken Williams

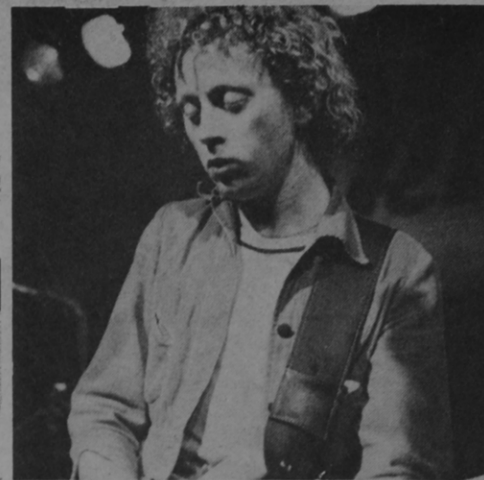
**THE BEAT
I JUST CAN'T STOP IT
ARISTA**

There are currently two bands with the name, the Beat. Forget all about the Americans, because these lads from Birmingham are the soon-to-be-famous owners of the title.

I Just Can't Stop It is loosely defined as ska, but it is far more than that, it's a direct fusion of cultures. The mainstay of the band's sound is provided by fifty-year-old sax player, Saxa, blowing nifty reggae rhythms over an ingenious blend of calypso-punk. The result is something that can almost be split in two. The cheerful ranking reggae of "Hands Off She's Mine", "Rough Rider", and "Jackpot", and the learning, metallic depth of "Mirror In The Bathroom", "Twist And Crawl", and "Noise In The World". Throw in an old Andy Williams tune, in the form of "Can't Get Used To Losing You", and the end result is quite possibly the best album to come out of the whole ska revival.

Multi-culture music for multi-culture people.

Mark Phillips



**TH' DUDES
WHERE ARE THE BOYS?
KEY**

The first thing you've got to ask about this record is where are Th' Dudes?

Th' Dudes used to be a hot little combo on their way to Australia — maybe another Dragon, maybe a Hello Sailor. Now they've just disappeared, and left behind this patchy epitaph. Whether they would have released this record if they had been facing a future is a matter for speculation, because *Where Are The Boys* has a definite taste of the end-of-era sampler it has turned out to be.

While there are still plenty of examples of the glossy, up-tempo pop which made their reputation, there are also oddities like the simple, piano-backed "Lonely Man" and the near-psychedelic "Take It Back". In some ways it is these which are the highlight of the album, revealing a breadth not readily apparent from the more conventional "Bliss" or "On the Rox".

While they may have been butts for the wit of the hipper-than-thou set, Th' Dudes can be quite satisfied with what they did achieve. If nothing else, they produced what was probably the best New Zealand single of last year, and now a decent second album — and that's something that hardly anybody seems able to get right.

I don't imagine that there will be appeals from the United Nations for Th' Dudes to reform, or even that they will be remembered for all that long, but, wherever you are boys, you did O.K.

Stephen McDonald

**ONLY ONES
BABY'S GOT A GUN
CBS**


Peter Perrett must have the unluckiest love life imaginable. His extremely cynical views of human relationships have now dominated three albums. Mind you, if Elvis Costello can do it...

Sometimes, however, Perrett's sentiments just get plain nasty, for example, on "Why Don't You Kill Yourself?" Perrett delivers a mean putdown to an ex-girlfriend who's "had her stomach pumped four times this week", and sounds a complete prat. The other reservation I have is his singing, not unlike Lou Reed on amphetamines. It's beginning to sound just a shade contrived now, and isn't helped by his rather posey appearance.


That having been said, *Baby's Got A Gun* is probably the Only Ones' strongest disc to date. Perrett is at his most melodic here, and could even have a hit single on his hands. I'd pick either "My Way Out Of Here", if you're after an original, or his fine cover of Johnny Duncan's "Fools", where he duets with Pauline Murray, ex-Penetration.

"My Way" is especially noteworthy for Perrett abandoning his Reed drone and showing he can carry a tune. The album's other most noteworthy tracks are "Me And My Shadow" with its throbbing Bo Diddley beat and acres of percussion, and the slow, brooding "The Big


RORY GALLAGHER




Deuce




Calling Card




Top Priority



Tattoo



Blueprint



Against The Grain

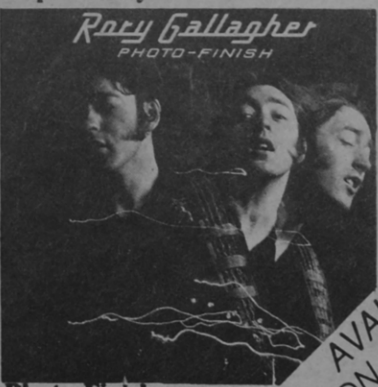


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