

RECORDS

Various Artists

Unauthorised — The Virgin Bootleg Album RTC

Clear front-runners in the sampler market here, RTC have 15 tracks from Virgin on this one, 12 off albums and 3 (Ruts, Revillos and Adrian Munsey) from somewhere else. The album selections are an honestly chosen lot, representing as they do better, but not absolute best moments from the parent albums. Enticing but not illusory.

Side One kicks off with Magazine's loping and thoroughly engaging "Song From Under The Floorboards", and then come the Ruts, the Motors and the Skids, all moving at a similar pace, threshing solidly. The Motors sound overblown on "Slum People" and come in a well-beaten third. The Members ("Romance") are catchy with charm, Sparks contribute a slice of Morodermunichmusisco, sharp and accessible, and Shooting Star close the side with guitar riff anonymity.

Side Two has a little more for the third eye, and also a little more for your speakers (the high frequency bits — Human League and John Foxx). Monochrome Set and Human League provide the side's rhythm and power, Foxx and Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark confirm they swirl synthesisers and communicate more effectively than Gary Numan, the Revillos offer a positive answer to "Leader Of The Pack" in "Motor Bike Beat" (an ironic track lyrically placed after Foxx's potential biggie "No-One Driving"), Martha & the Muffins keep the hooky bop-pop-repeat-rock going with "Echo Beach", Jah Wobble overdubs inimitably on "Betrayal" (a standout on a Quixotic album) and Adrian Munsey takes us back to Munich with a piece of la-la-Eurovision disco called "C'est Sheep" which could easily be a one-off number one everywhere.

Unauthorised does what it sets out to do, and at a discount price.

Roy Colbert

Lovin' Spoonful

Very Best Of...

Buddah

Tommy James & the Shondells

RCA

Summer's here and the time is right...

This Spoonful hits collection, a re-issue of Kama Sutra 2361 002, fits glove-like into the beginning of summer. Exquisitely warm, dreamy little pop meisterwerken, one of which, "Daydream", should be inbuilt into every car stereo system. The progression comes on Side Two with "Six O'Clock" and the vivid "Summer In The City", and here we also get John Sebastian's supreme love song "Darling Be Home Soon" — and its charming little sister "Rain On The Roof".

"Never Going Back" is a good cover too, and it serves to remind us how tasty an inclusion "Nashville Cats" would have been. And I always liked "She's Still A Mystery" a whole lot...

Sebastian may well have actually boasted of performing under acid at Woodstock, but he could write a damn fine song.

Tommy James formed his Shondells at 12, first recorded "Hanky Panky" at 13, and was carried off an Alabama stage in a drugged coma 18 chart singles later at 23 (he lived). All those singles are here, and while squeezing them all into two sides means some mediocrity, and a pretty thin sound, the historical record is at least complete. And the highs sure dwarf the lows. The sublime "Crimson And Clover" in its single form (it's 5min 25sec here) is one of 2,814 candidates for The Best Pop Single Of All Time, and its supporting essentials on this Glenn Baker-notated set would have to include the thunderously regressive "Mony Mony" and "Hanky Panky", the Rascals steal "Crystal Blue Persuasion", "Ball Of Fire", and the delicious "I Think We're Alone Now".

Both the strengths and weaknesses of American 60s pop can be found in the recorded career of this band. Often bubble-gummy, and certainly not averse to rewriting



themselves to keep pretty girls clawing at the tour bus, Tommy James & the Shondells still deserve, indubitably, to be collected.

Two vital hole-fillers then. Can Paul Revere & the Raiders be next?

Roy Colbert

Grace Jones

Warm Leatherette

Island

On the face of it, this album would appear to be a classic hype job. Disco queen, realising the medium has had its time, decides to go new wave, in the hope of keeping pace.

But it works, surprisingly well. Part of the success is due to Grace herself, the former darling of New York's disco scene. Though best known for extravagant costumes, in which she's more undressed than dressed. Her best-known hit to date, "I Need A Man", was one of the finer examples of dance floor sensuality.

For this album, she's had the good sense to pick some of Jamaica's top musicians, including Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare and Michael Chung. As they slip into the relaxed, funky groove of the title track, you start to feel less sceptical. By the time the album's over, you're convinced.

Jones has a voice like treacle, a little bit butch, like Joan Armatrading, but earthier and less inhibited. She deadpans the Pretenders' "Private Life" and pours dark majesty all over Roxy Music's "Love Is The Drug" and Tom Petty's "Breakdown". For those who consider these tracks sacred, I'd advise you to just take a listen. Grace does them credit.

Barry Reynolds, Marianne Faithfull's guitarist, contributes the excellent "Bullshit", which would be a hit single under any other title.

Island Supreme Chris Blackwell and Wailers' engineer Alex Sadkin produce. Say no more. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound...

Duncan Campbell

The Searchers

Sire

The Searchers, like The Troggs, are not to be found in the *NME Book of Rock*. They should be there. They had a hatful of hits, and influenced more bands than most would acknowledge. Few made the connection at the time, but the Searchers' essentials of jangling 12-string guitar, layered harmonies and an often doffed hat to what people then called folk-rock, must surely have been noticed by America's Byrds and the many Byrd-like bands that followed. "Needles And Pins", after all, was a hit in early 1964, a full year before the electric dazzle of "Mr Tambourine Man".

This Sire album is a comeback for the Liverpudlians, and was actually released twice in England with slightly different tracks. What we have here is the second one — three (good) new songs in place of one (Dylan) discard, and a better cover. And the group is basically the real thing — originals Pender and McNally plus near-original Frank Allen (he came in 1964) plus a different drummer. So what do the Searchers sound like in 1980 then? Like Will Birch's Records maybe? It's a good guess. The album even starts with a Records' song, the ideally suited "Hearts In Her Eyes", and the closer on



Grace Jones

Side Two, Dave Paul's "Silver", is a blood brother.

In between wings aren't spread too far from those two. There's plenty of 12-string and all the ingredients of first division pop, with a special tick going to whoever chose the songs (just two of which come from the band). The Searchers aren't likely to be on the front page of the music magazines this time around, but if there's one single here, there's nine (tracks 1-2-3-4-5-7-9-10 and 12).

Excellent pub-pop-rock this. If they played a week at my pub, I wouldn't miss a single night.

Roy Colbert

Jeff Beck

Here And Back

Epic

The unpredictable axeman is back. Jeff Beck's new album treads a similar path to his last studio work, *Wired* (1976), perhaps the most successful fusion of rock with jazz (as opposed to the other way around). Track one, "Star Cycle", sets the tone, with Jan Hammer's synthesisers providing a bubbling, gurgling underpinning for Beck's guitar which is grunting, rasping, shrieking and caressing by turns.

There are those who may mourn Beck's decision to continue working in the rock-jazz area, but it cannot be denied that the man's guitar powers have in no measure diminished. Quite the contrary. Throughout, his playing is precise, controlled and, as one might expect of

CBS Jazz Best Of's ...

Mahavishnu Orchestra

Eric Gale Return To Forever

Stan Getz Tom Scott

This is an exciting history of some important forces in jazz-rock in the Seventies. Unlike some "Best of..." compilations, these are intelligently conceived and attractively presented, with informative liner notes by such established jazz critics as Leonard Feather. Warmly recommended as examples of jazz-rock development, they provide shortcuts to the building of a record-collection of leading contemporary jazz artists.

Guitarist John McLaughlin helped pioneer the fusion of jazz and rock with his Mahavishnu Orchestra, exploring new approaches built on the improvisations of Miles Davis' electronic works. Exciting high energy music emerged, characterised by loud, melodic solos from McLaughlin's double barrel guitar, Jan Hammer's creative synthesizer work, and Billy Cobham's driving drum solos, with the interesting addition of compound meters derived from Indian music.

Cobham was later to become a creative artist in his own right, as shown in his compilation in this series. It is an interesting companion to one released last year of his best work on Atlantic.

Like McLaughlin, the Chick Corea and bass player Stanley Clarke (Return to Forever) were fired by religious missions — McLaughlin followed guru Sri Chinmoy and declared music was the language of the spirits while the others

Beck, often surprising in its twists. After all, Clapton and Page may have also played guitar for the Yardbirds but it was Beck's flights of electronic near-anarchy which gave that band a lasting reputation for innovation.

Beck plays in a variety of moods, but if you positively insist on some hard rock (but with brains) try "El Becko", where his scorching guitar mops the floor with the pretenders to the throne.

Principal collaborators on *There and Back* are Jan Hammer, who is on three tracks, and another keyboards player, Tony Hymas, a considerably less showy player than Hammer but who perhaps contributes more in the long run.

Even without the competition of Hammer's duelling synthesisers, Beck's rein doesn't slacken. Listen to the album's closer, "The Final Peace", the guitarist's only writing credit. Against Hymas's synthesiser background, he plays a breath-taking solo in which he combines passion and lyricism.

Don't ask Jeff Beck to live in his past; he is still on the move.

Ken Williams.

The Hollywood Brats

Cherry Red

Let's take a raincheck. Back in '73 glam rock and heavy metal were the Kings of Trash and "progressive" rock (King Crimson, Yes, Genesis etc) cornered the serious market. Rock'n'roll was out to lunch.

The Hollywood Brats (starring the Boys' Casino Steel on piano) were part glam posturing and part Stones' rock'n'roll, and in '73 they made an album, *Grown Up Wrong*, that along with the first New York Dolls' classic debut, anticipated the spark of '77. The album was only released in Scandinavia as no UK company would handle it and it was deleted soon after release. It has been resurrected by Cherry Red Records and it has worn well.

The Brats take Dolls'-inspired titles like "Chez Maximes", "Courtesan" and "Southern Belles" to front songs that pout and strut in Jagger/Johansen threads. But it's "Sick On You" with its punk dynamics and sentiments that is the album's most surprising slap, a good three years before nihilism drew record contracts and acclaim.

Well-known entrepreneur Malcolm McLaren was at one time interested in the band but that came to nothing and the band went their separate ways leaving this as proof of their existence. Not legends in their own time but certainly interesting curios in ours.

George Kay

sought higher plains through Scientology. Cor-ea spoke of trying to reach as many people as possible while retaining a musical integrity.

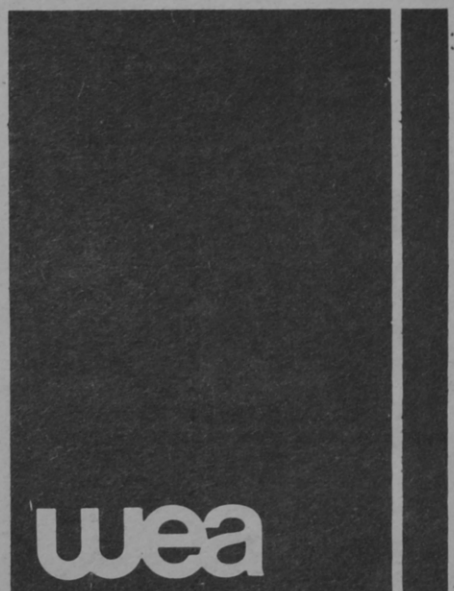
Both groups suffered personnel changes — the first of the three Return to Forever groups is not included on the compilation concerned, but both the RTF and Mahavishnu records flow well, despite the difficulty imposed by trying to represent various stages of a group's development on one album.

The mission of saxophonist Tom Scott is more straightforward — to derive the "maximum emotion" from his music. His compilation is easily accessible. He along with Bob James, Joe Sample and Larry Carlton who back some of the tracks, graduated from being a session musician and helped open the jazz door to those of the seventies generation not satisfied with disco and current pop.

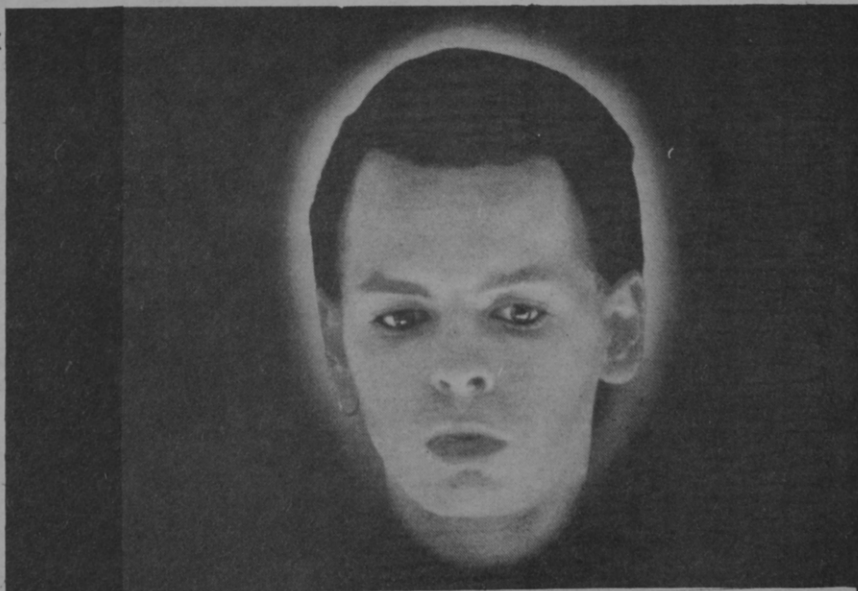
Another sought-after session musician was guitarist Eric Gale another member of the unofficial gentlemen's club — Bob James produces most of his tracks. His influences were gospel (hear the powerful "Oh Mary Don't You Weep"), early rhythm and blues and great sax players like Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins.

Tenorman Stan Getz didn't like all that was going on in the 70's. He fought against the jazz artists he saw replacing musicianship with volume, substance with fashion and electronic gimmickry to capture easy attention. His collection reflects the cool but subtle approach which made him a legend without the bad taste he saw in others.

Nigel Horrocks



wea



GARY NUMAN

TELEKON

THE NEW ALBUM

Donna Summer

THE NEW ALBUM

The Wanderer

Produced by Giorgio Moroder and Pete Dinklage