

RECORDS

John Lennon/Yoko Ono Double Fantasy Geffen

"As for Lennon, he was a roughneck ... By the time he got to Art School he'd grown into a professional hard nut, big-mouthed and flash, and he rampaged through Liverpool like some wounded buffalo smashing everything that got in his way ... He was rude to almost everyone, he was loud and brutally funny and his put-downs could kill. A lot of people noticed him."

(A Wop Bop a Loo A Lop Bam Boon, Nik Cohn)

That was the Lennon of the sixties, the personality responsible for the most vicious, hard-nosed rock'n' roll available. His caustic wit and acid tongue continued into his solo career in the seventies until personal confusion forced him into a protracted semi-retirement. Basic parenthood responsibilities and other domestic commitments have also kept him from the studio since his last album of original material, *Walls and Bridges* in 1974 and his back-to-the-roots *Rock'n'Roll* a year later.

But now we have *Double Fantasy*, a fifty-fifty and successful collaboration with Yoko. The album is a positive and important affirmation of the Lennon's current domestic stability and it is also notable for the maturity of much of Yoko's material particularly 'I'm Moving On' and the impressive 'Every Man Has A Woman Who Loves Him'. She has certainly graduated far beyond her initial primal screams.

Lennon himself is more organized and contented than he's ever been and this settled frame of mind is obvious on songs as strong as 'Woman' 'Watching the Wheels' (the album's 'Imagine') and the single '(Just Like) Starting Over'. Of the others only 'I'm Losing You' refers to past insecurities and it runs neatly into Yoko's 'I'm Moving On', her explanation of their bad old days.

Double Fantasy has its low points; Yoko's 'I'm Your Angel' is weak vaudeville and Lennon's 'Dear Yoko' is a touch too precious, but otherwise the album is a cohesive insight into the relationship of John and Yoko, two people who have, it seems, at last found a little peace of their own.

George Kay

Echo & The Bunnymen Crocodiles WEA

A friend who spends two-thirds of his lunch-hours auditioning new albums in record shops told me he gave Echo & The Bunnymen a try, liked the first track, passed on the next two, and left the shop accompanied only by the manager's glower. A shame. Had he hung on just one more song he would have had his ten



dollars on the counter without further thought. That fourth track, 'Monkees', is a fine one, and when you add that to the opener 'Going Up' and the first four on side two, you have a spectacularly good debut.

Echo & The Bunnymen spend some of their time in the darker terrain mined most memorably by Joy Division, but overall they work on an intensity level a lot closer to Magazine. The debauched 'Villiers Terrace', musically the most accessible thing here, is something else again, but basically the writing is more positive than Curtis, and more believable than Devoto.

Occasional Jim Morrison sound-alike Ian McCulloch is a real plus, excelling on 'Monkees', drummer Pete De Freitas attacks each song with carpenteric precision, and the guitars of McCulloch and Will Sergeant surprise you every time. Like all worthwhile guitarists, these two know when *not* to play.

Any band that plays its two strongest hands on the second last cuts of each side has got to be real different. And real good. Five stars.

Roy Colbert

Various

Sausage Records

Recently, the underground bands of Wellington seem to have flourished. Despite an almost total lack of venues, these groups have continued to play. Occasionally, as in the case of Shoes This High, they venture north. The majority, however, choose to remain in the capital, and accept what little work they can get.

**** is the combined effort of these bands: Like in the Fridge Exists!, Wallsockets, Naked Spots Dance, and the Beat Rhythm Fashion. All

have two things in common — a sparse sound and a militant stance.

Opening the first side are Life In The Fridge Exists!. They have three songs, of which 'Have You Checked the Children?' is the best; a medium tempo rocker with good lyrical ideas. 'First Death Take' resembles the worst of Toy Love, while 'Peter the D' is an unnecessary piece of total boredom buried in noise.

Wallsockets (what death threat, Phil?) have some interesting moments in their four songs, but somehow they don't come off as well as might be hoped. 'Snerl' has a great melody, but is let down by the words. 'Euthenasia' and 'Blue Meanie' just need tidying up, but 'H & C' is almost past tidying.

Naked Spots Dance also get four tracks, two of which are wasted on the dumb 'Banana Baby' and 'Secrets'. Their other two, however, more than make up for them. 'Crescendo/Circle Moon' shows plenty of promise, and 'Subtractions' comes close to being highlight of the album.

That honour goes to Beat Rhythm Fashion. With only two songs, they have to make it count. 'None in the Universe' is excellent with a riff in the Swingers mode. It grabs hold and doesn't let go.

Not Necessary' is slightly messy, but still shows great potential.

Due to economics, only two hundred copies of **** were pressed. All have been snapped up, and hopes are high for a second pressing. My major criticism is the low-budget mix.

There is no way that **** could be deemed a great album, maybe not even a good album, but it does show how a little initiative, and plenty of enthusiasm can overturn any barriers in the way of bands who want to make records.

Mark Phillips

Ry Cooder Borderline Warner Bros

Ry Cooder finally reached a wider audience with the R&B-orientated *Bop Till You Drop*. *Borderline* should gain him new friends.

It treads a similar path to *Bop*, reworking R&B and pop from the past — Wilson Pickett's '634-5789', the Cadillacs', 'Speedo', Billy Joe Royal's 'Down in the Boondocks' — and including originals from Cooder (the instrumental title tune) and guitarist John Hiatt (the ballad 'The Way We Make a Broken Heart'). 'Never Make Your Move Too Soon' from B. B. King's *Midnight Believer* album closes the album — stunning, looser than B. B. but just as rewarding.

Again, the album was recorded digitally. It goes without saying that the playing throughout is superb. The sound and feeling follows the pattern of *Bop*. Cooder continues to improve as a singer and his taste in choice of material is unsurpassed. However, I'm not sure the album cover, a painting of a naked woman matador, is so well-chosen. Still, it's the sound that counts, and the sound is quite wonderful.

Chart success has been a long time coming for Cooder, but *Borderline* should prove the success of *Bop* was no fluke.

Nice picking, Mr Cooder.

Ken Williams

Linton Kwesi Johnson Bass Culture Island

Simply, *Bass Culture*, like its predecessors, *Forces of Victory* and *Dread Beat and Blood* is a very good album.

Over all, it is a stylish continuation from these two, although it is bound to receive criticisms of repetition of their radical lyrical stance. This is a very superficial accusation. This album is a departure in theme, and is altogether both musically and lyrically more adventurous.

With the exception of 'Reggae fi Peach' ('the SPG, dem a murderer, we can't let them go no further, dem kill Blair Peach the teacher'), the material is far less specific in its targets, although it points the finger no less. There is even a tender love song, 'Lorraine'.

'Two Sides of Silence' is a Brixton equivalent to a 1962 Greenwich Village beat poem, with a superb scat trumpet and percussion backing. Once again, Johnson and co-producer Denis Bovell have created an aural treat.

Bovell is one of Britain's top producers (check out the Slits' 'Cut'), and the way he uses dub techniques is hypnotic. Listen to his brass arrangement on 'Reggae fi Peach', or Vivien Weathers' great bass sound throughout.

I find it hard to fault *Bass Culture*. The sounds, the words, the cover, the production, the arrangements and even the pressing (Australian) are super. Now for LKJ in dub.

Simon Grigg

DEEMED CONDUCTIVE TO Good Times

DONNA SUMMER
Includes Cold Love/Looking Up
Who Do You Think You're Foolin'
Running For Cover

Includes the Title Hit Single
The Wanderer

EAGLES LIVE

ROD STEWART
Includes Passion
Oh God, I Wish I Was Home Tonight
Say It Ain't True

FOOLISH BEHAVIOUR

Warren Zevon
AT THE ROXY
Stand In The Fire

CHRISTOPHER CROSS

Includes The Hit Songs
Ride Like The Wind
Sailing

NEIL YOUNG
Includes
Union Man/Stayin' Power/Coastline

Tom Waits
Heartattack And Vine

DEVO
Includes Girl U Want/Gates Of Steel
Whip It/Planet Earth

BETTE MIDLER
in *Divine Madness*

INCLUDES
BOOGIE WOOGIE BUGLE BOY
CHAPEL OF LOVE MY MOTHER'S EYES

CARLY SIMON
Come Upstairs
Includes
Them Less
Like Me X's I Am

Hawks & Doves

Freedom Of Choice