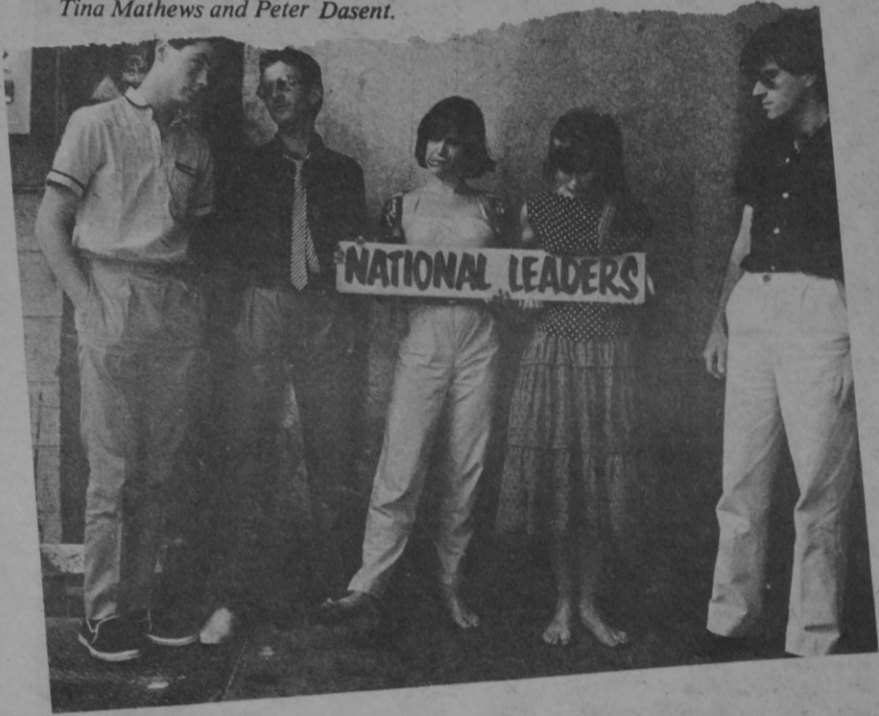


Crocodiles (L-R) Ian Gilroy, Tony Backhouse, Jenny Morris, Tina Mathews and Peter Dasent.



The Revillos

Mark Knopfler, Dire Straits

RECORDS

The Specials More Specials 2-Tone

The Specials produced one of 1979's great singles, 'Gangsters', and followed it with an album which seemed mediocre at first, but to which I took rather a strong liking later. Still, it left me wondering what they could do next.

It seems the Specials were also wondering that. On the evidence of *More Specials*, a very confused band is tangling itself up, trying to equal the debut album, but without repeating itself. It's a strange mishmash of material. Side One is more like the older material, but apart from 'Do Nothing' and the marvellous 'Rich Girl' it's pure filler.

Side Two is more adventurous, but is confusing in its range of styles. I assume this side is the result of Jerry Dammers' infatuation with muzak. However, it does contain the second classic Specials' single, 'Stereotype', an ironic song about your average bloke, based around a hypnotic drum machine beat. Here, it is presented in extended form and is the high-point of the side, along with 'I Can't Stand It', which sounds like a Phil Spector and Lee Perry co-production of the Four Seasons.

Unfortunately, 'Holiday Fortnight', 'International Jet-Set' and 'Enjoy Yourself (Reprise)',

which complete the side, fill up the grooves, and no more.

This record would have made a great EP, but even on an album, the good tracks are outstanding, and that in itself is a good enough reason not to write the Specials off.

Simon Grigg

The Revillos Rev Up Dindisc

The Revillos are a super new pop group from Edinburgh, swinging Scotland, where else fans? Those of you who are in touch and switched on will remember the Rezillos, a really neat group who had big hits with songs like 'Top of the Pops' and thousands of others.

Anyway popsters, the Rezillos broke up and the fab Fay Fife and Eugene Reynolds, who both sing, have formed the Revillos and they look even more snazzy than the Rezillos. The group are really into gear and Fay looks every inch A Star in her gorgeous thigh length silver boots and blue mini-skirt. Rocky Rhythm, who's the drummer, is so cute in his red space suit, and guitar player, Kid Krupa and Eugene look so racey too!

With a group looking so *now* it comes as no surprise, readers, that their music is terrific. Love songs like 'Bobby Come Back To Me' (please do Bobby) and 'Hungry For Love' make

me think of the Shangrilas, and 'Rev Up' and 'Motorbike Beat' are so rocky.

There's so much more fantastic pop music on this Revillos LP that I just can't stop playing it. And neither will you.

Signing off until next month.

George Kay

The Crocodiles Looking At Ourselves Foolish/RCA

A more unified album than the debut with stylistic direction now seemingly sorted out. There's still the feeling with the Crocs of older people making music for younger people while trying to retain credibility with older people (*hien?*) but the tunes are eminently catchable, snappy, and always direct without ever becoming Joe-90-simple.

'Telephone Lover' is the obvious single, a good song, it looks great on TV. Side One even has a namecheck for the Librettos, while Side Two hangs together with special resilience, from the single on through the hooky 'Learnt It From An Expert', the rock'n'roll ballad 'First Date' (I expected a nick from Floyd Cramer's 'Last Date' to be sneaked in here after hearing a snatch of 'The Lonely Bull' on album one) and Peter Dasent's tale of the faceless Mister Big's 'Gangland'.

Musically, the Crocodiles' bottom is a light one still, but instrumentally they're thoughtful, skilled and well arranged. Their ultimate strength is Jenny Morris, who, as live viewing will attest, is as visually vital as she is aurally valuable.

Roy Colbert

Van Morrison Common One Mercury

Common One may create more division among Van Morrison's followers than any previous album, except perhaps the generally derided and, in my opinion, generally misunderstood *Period of Transition*. That view may indicate where I stand on the issue.

Some will find *Common One* inflated and self-indulgent (two songs clock in at over 15 minutes), too samey in its music, and its literary name-dropping ("Did you ever hear about Wordsworth and Coleridge? They were smokin' up in Kendal by the lakeside") positively squirmy.

However, I'm prepared to grant the very talented the occasional lapse — I didn't like the Brando-Steiger-Rembrandt name-drops on *Hard Nose the Highway*, either — and to my ears *Common One* is one of Morrison's very best albums.

This is where *Wavelength* and *Into the Music* were heading. The storming *Wavelength* meets the introspection of *Into the Music* to fuse into a stunning portrait of the artist.

Here is Van in all his shadings, from Them

through *Astral Weeks* (David Hayes' bass playing smacks of Richard Davis's magnificent contribution to that early album), the Caledonia Soul Orchestra and the Irish roots of *Veedon Fleece*.

If there is a masterpiece here it is the gospelly 'Satisfied' which matches Van's inspired vocals to pulsing horn riffs. No white singer has used horns better than Morrison, and here he has as collaborator jazzman Pee Wee Ellis. Throughout, the horns are superb, and Peter Van Hooke on drums and David Hayes lay down a muscular but flexible rhythm groove. The album was recorded in the South of France and the production has marvellous presence.

The mood of the album is pastoral — but not in a dippy-hippie sense. The serenity here is the peace that comes of turmoil and struggle. Not that it should be assumed that the often turbulent Morrison is finally at peace. In the final song, the meandering 'When the Heart is Open', Morrison's wordless groan rises to a howl that would stir a graveyard.

If there is a companion piece to *Common One* in the Morrison catalogue it may be the live double album *It's Too Late to Stop Now*. *Common One* is Van Morrison rocking and introspective. Highly recommended.

Ken Williams

Dire Straits Making Movies Vertigo

Jeez, talk about snatched from the jaws of defeat! Another album like *Communiqué*, and Mark Knopfler may have had to drag out the typewriter and start working for a newspaper again.

Knopfler, producer Jerry Wexler and the boys in the band had got so *tasteful* with the songs on *Communiqué* the album had the sting of an Andy Williams' greatest hits collection.

Making Movies brings in a new producer, Jimmy Iovine, who was at the panel for Tom Petty's *Damn The Torpedoes*, and Roy Bittan, Bruce Springsteen's piano player. Both make life-saving contributions. Iovine provides a rough, interesting mix, which washes away the instrumental predictability that had become so boring. Bittan's beautiful rock and roll keyboards virtually become the lead instrument, giving Knopfler the freedom, which he seizes, to get away from all those recycled J. J. Cale licks.

To top it all, Knopfler has got some bite into his singing, and written songs that avoid cleverness in favour of plain feelings. The tired edge of disgust he brings to Juliet's quote in 'Romeo and Juliet' — "Aw, Romeo, yeah, I used to have a scene with him" — packs more emotional punch than all the songs on the first two albums.

Listen to any track on *Making Movies* and prepare to be startled and delighted.

Phil Gifford

ULTRAVOX



MIDGE URE



WARREN CANN



CHRIS CROSS



BILLY CURRIE

Side 1

1. ASTRADYNE
2. NEW EUROPEANS
3. PRIVATE LIVES
4. PASSING STRANGERS
5. SLEEPWALK

Side 2

1. MR. X
2. WESTERN PROMISE
3. VIENNA
4. ALL STOOD STILL

VIENNA

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