

BRIEFS

Smokey Robinson
Being With You (Motown)

The good news is that *Being With You* largely maintains the standard set by last year's highly-acclaimed *Warm Thoughts*. Smokey's triumph on that album was to achieve a warm intimate recording of adult romance. On *Being With You* Smokey brings in an outside producer, George Tobin, who introduces a spacious and slightly processed sound that, on the title track, beautifully sets off Smokey's breathy voice. However, Tobin's attempt to make Smokey sound more up-to-date is upset by the fact that a clear half of the material here is either trivial or emulates current heroes like Michael Jackson. Happily, the other half of the songs maintain the high standards of Smokey's best and Tobin's clean arrangements expose the beauty of Robinson's singing. And, if in the end this album is not as delightful and idiosyncratic a work as *Warm Thoughts*, it may well find Smokey more in touch with contemporary tastes. AD

Dolly Parton
9 To 5 And Odd Jobs (RCA)

In which Dolly Parton, an intelligent, gifted woman retains the ground she was losing by playing her public image — the blonde with big boobs and no brain. The title track, from the underrated movie, kicks the album off to a good start and there are other excellent tracks, such as her sincere reading of one of Woody Guthrie's most heartfelt songs, 'Deportee'. PG

James Taylor
Dad Loves His Work (CBS)

Dad Loves His Work is a nice title but it marks a retreat from the harder music and the narrative style Taylor had adopted on 1979's *Flag*. Instead, there's a greater use of traditional melodies and a softer tone. It's well-crafted, of course, but will only confirm the prejudices of his detractors. A disappointment. AD

Stranglers
The Men In Black (Liberty)

The Stranglers' constant jousting with the law, or

something, has resulted in this rather over-emphasised concept album of keyboard-led pieces. A bizarre waltz begins the project on Side One, and things don't really get a lot more clearer after that. The single 'Thrown Away' over on the second side is a more comfortable place to begin. RC

Chris Spedding, I'm Not Like Everybody Else (RAK)

A great record from a man I've admired for years. Spedding's track record as a guitar-player goes back through Bryan Ferry, The Wombles, Sharks, in fact, almost everybody. This album won't bring him the recognition he deserves, but tracks like the Ray Davies penned title song, and his own 'Depravity', along with a great reading of 'The Crying Game' and two great moody cover shots, make a worthwhile record indeed. D.McL

Michael Franks with Crossfire Live (WEA)

Recorded in Sydney and Auckland during Michael Franks' Australasian tour, this album provides a fine introduction to his witty, finely-honed songs. The Australian band Crossfire ensure that Franks' subtle, samba-inflected rhythms flow smoothly, and Franks' pitch, although lacking the pinpoint accuracy of his studio performances, does not disappoint. The funky 'Monkey See, Monkey Do', 'The Lady Wants To Know' and 'Bwana He No Home' are the strongest cuts. GD

Bad Manners
Loonee Tunes (Magnet)

English "Ska'n'B" band who owe more than a passing nod to Madness, with a new album that is definitely fun, definitely loony. The single, 'Lorraine', deserves to be a huge hit, but with a 30s take off in 'Just Pretendin'' and a song title like 'The Undersea Adventures Of Ivor The Engine', this is one album that certainly lives up to it's name. D.McL

Jermaine Jackson
Jermaine (Motown)

On this album Jermaine Jackson follows his label-mate and occasional co-producer Stevie Wonder by making a solo album where the artist provides

the material, plays most of the instruments and produces. The influence of Wonder goes beyond just the concept, as Jackson attempts the same mixture of high-stepping dance tunes and reflective ballads. But unlike Stevie Wonder, a great deal of the result is ordinary (the bulk of Side Two) but most of the first side works just fine, even if it is kinda derivative of you know who. It at least suggests that Jermaine may have at last found, or at least borrowed, a style of his own. AD

Elvis Presley
Guitar Man (RCA)


Playing around with the songs of the departed usually means screwing them up. Buddy Holly is a prime case of such musical necrophilia. But the saints smiled on Presley when they let long-term producer Felton Jarvis slice off the god-damn Jordannaires, get some hot Nashville pickers to goose up the backing, and remix Presley's voice, mostly from a time when he still had all his vocal chops. If Elvis had recorded this album this year you could say it was his best studio recording since his great comeback LP, *From Elvis In Memphis*. PG

Manfred Mann's Earth Band
Chance (Bronze)

Mann is such a thoughtful and melodic user of synthesisers, and he gets them so well recorded, that a purely instrumental album is surely in order. As it is, this one is the result of numerous sessions over 15 months, employing six different lead vocalists — and that's how it sounds. Springsteen's 'For You' is a bit one-more-time shameless, but a good radio shot nevertheless, and both 'Lies' and 'Stranded' deserve to be heard. RC

The Puppies, Fun Is Right (Hi-Rise)

A six-track 12-inch sent to *RIU* by the lugubrious Kim Fowley as an example of 'what is happening in small-town California'. A five-piece, The Puppies fall somewhere between the Cars and what you might expect America to come up with if they (ever) tried to clone the Colin Moulding side of XTC. Whimsical words, busy bass, promising band. RC



STAFF LITTLE FINGERS - Hamx!

SIDE 1.
NOBODY'S HERO
GOTTA GETTAWAY
WAIT AND SEE
BARBED WIRE LOVE
FLY THE FLAG
ALTERNATIVE ULSTER

SIDE 2.
JOHNNY WAS
AT THE EDGE
WASTED LIFE
TIN SOLDIERS
SUSPECT DEVICE

Chrysalis

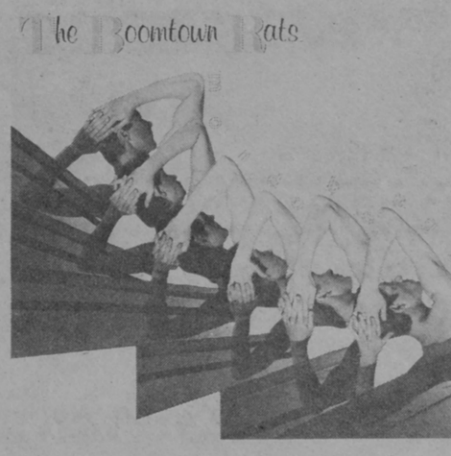
THE BEST OF BRITISH



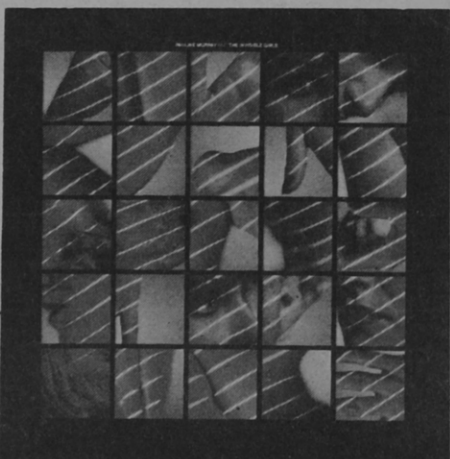
No.2, first week in NZ charts. **SOUND AFFECTS** features 'That's Entertainment'.



VISAGE are Ultravox's Currie & Ure, Magazine's Dave Formula, Rusty Egan, Steve Strange and John McGeoch. Features 'Fade To Grey'.



The 'Banana Republic'/Top 10 UK album from the Boomtown Rats. Known as **MONDO BONGO**.



Pauline Murray (Ms Penetration) returns with **INVISIBLE GIRLS**. The Girls include Martin Hannett and one Buzzcocks drummer.



KILIMANJARO, a remarkable debut from Julian Cope's The Teardrop Explodes. Top 20 album in UK.



KALEIDOSCOPE is Siouxsie's new album. Banshees include John McGeoch (ex-Magazine guitarist).

Watch For: **"TOM ROBINSON 2"**

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