

RECORDS

Desmond Dekker Compass Point Stiff

Desmond Dekker won't be confined. He was around long before roots reggae, and could have easily assimilated the sound. But while he is a deeply religious man, and respects the Rasta beliefs, he's not about to set himself up as one.

The collaboration with Robert Palmer has produced an LP filled with sunshine and joie de vivre. It's a crossover work that embraces many Caribbean origins, while incorporating the modern, urban funk that is Palmer's speciality. Listen to 'Movin' On' or 'Cindy' and you'll see what I mean.

More traditional JA sounds emerge on 'We Can And Shall', 'Hurts So Bad' and 'Isabella', and 'Come Back To Me' manages to blend the old and new rhythms in a way that makes them comfortable with each other.

'I Do Believe/My Destiny' is a song of heartfelt faith and sincerity. Like the whole album, it's a work of affection and care.

Desmond Dekker sounds as fine as he ever did. *Compass Point* is filled with warmth and friendship, and the kind of joy that only comes from a love of making music that makes people happy.

Duncan Campbell

Positive Noise Heart Of Darkness Statik Records

If you didn't know any better, you'd swear that Positive Noise was the blatant creation of eagle-eyed opportunists trying to cash in on the present reverence for bands with literate angles and idiosyncratic music.

But, as it happens, PN are just five Glaswegians (three of them the brothers Middleton) who are part of the natural new crop of British stuff that has been influenced by first (Bowie and Ferry) but more directly by second (Devoto, Curtis, Jobson) generation seventies' rock stylists.

Vocalist Ross Middleton is an extension of Devoto and Jobson in the same way that the

Associates' Billy McKenzie is a descendant of Bowie. Middleton's phrasing, especially in the way he holds his vowels at the end of each line on tracks like 'No More Blood and Soil' and 'Down There', is coyly Devoto-ish, but on most tracks his approach is less decorative, a functional Jobson.

Musically the band are exuberant and colourful. 'Darkness Visible' best displays their elements — thumping tribal percussion, harsh guitar chords, and Middleton's chanting, all held together by a haunting synthesiser line. 'Hypnosis', 'Treachery' and the great sax led '... And Yet Again' are determined and more orthodox but 'Ghosts' unashamedly borrows Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' melody and arrangement. No greater flattery.

Positive Noise make it on their own terms despite burgeoning and obvious influences. But there's no doubt that they are followers and not leaders in rock 'expressionism' that in a year from now could be embarrassingly obsolete. PN are dispensable but, at the moment, enjoyable.

George Kay

The Sound Jeopardy WEA

The correlation between a good name and good music is higher than we would expect from pure chance. Talking Heads and the Screaming Meemees, after all, make better music than Racey and the Knobz. The Sound, conversely, because they also have one of the year's finest debuts. *Jeopardy* is unmistakably a 1980-81 English record with its definite echoes of the Bunnymen and fashionable Jim Morrison/iggy vocals. A distillation of voguish musical tricks, honed into as instantly acceptable a rock album as we are likely to hear between now and Xmas.

"We will wait ... for the night ... we will wait" it says on the black inner sleeve. Hmmm. The band's dabbling in the darker side doesn't really frighten, and any depth here is strictly for dwarves, but for now, this record is bouncing out of my speakers at the



Squeeze

imposing rate of 3½ singles per side.

The accessibility needle occasionally veers dangerously into the red — 'Words Fail Me' is almost Adam and the Ants table-thumping pop — but the credibility is generally retained. 'I Can't Escape Myself', a strong tension-builder with the guitar held back for maximum effect, the older 'Unwritten Law' and 'Night Versus Day' are perhaps the three that will last longest. But play it all.

A confident beginning indeed. The Echo and the Bunnymen sound crew must have worked their butts off keeping these guys sounding mediocre when they supported the Bunnymen on tour earlier this year.

Roy Colbert

Jon Hassell/Brian Eno Possible Musics. Harold Budd/Brian Eno The Plateaux of Mirror. E.G.

Plateaux and Possible Musics break away from the ersatz Afrofunk of Eno's David Byrne collaborations and mark his return to ambient music. Unlike his previous sensurround music, *Music for Airports* and *Music for Films*, both of these new releases are warm and likeable works.

The Hassell/Eno disc is the more pleasing of the two albums. Born in Memphis, and schooled in the contemporary classical and jazz idioms, Hassell blends hand drums with his eerie, long-lined synthesiser and trumpet improvis-



Flying Lizards

ations. In his own words, a primitive-futuristic blend results.

His admiration for trance music and Indian ragas is reflected in his trumpet-playing which incorporates so many special effects it sounds more like a full choir or orchestra than a single brass instrument.

The *Plateaux of Mirror* features the classical piano stylings of Harold Budd, whose compositions recall the ECM school of chamber jazz. With titles like 'The Chill Air', 'Among Fields of Crystal' and 'Wind In Lonely Fences', one can tell Budd's music is not aimed at the dance floor. Cool, simmering, gossamer textures are the order of the day.

On both albums, Eno takes more of a back seat role than usual, confining himself to co-compositions, electronic doctoring and production, which, as ever, is the last word in clarity.

Squeeze East Side Story A&M

If glamour and musical pretension were prerequisites for the rock'n'roll big time, then UK Squeeze would still be busking for pennies in a seedy street down the East End or writing scripts for *Coronation Street*.

East Side Story, their fourth album (but third good album as the first is dispensable), is a concept of sorts with most of the songs again centered around the Difford-Tilbrook grimy reality. Producers Roger Bechirian and Elvis Costello

have moved the band's sound from past dryness to present crispness and eminent keyboards' player Paul Carrack (Ace, Roxy Music) has easily taken over Jools Holland's berth.

The first side boasts the best moment, 'In Quintessence', 'Someone Else's Heart', 'Woman's World' and 'Tempted' and a weaker second side reaches those standards with 'Is That Love' ('You've left my ring by the soap, now is that love?') and 'Mumbo Jumbo'.

All in all, another fine unassuming UK Squeeze album. Not a diamond in the rough but as in *Cool For Cats* and *Argy Bargy* there's something precious not too far beneath the surface.

George Kay

Yoko Ono Season Of Glass Geffen

Almost immediately after Lennon's death, late last year, Yoko Ono entered the studio to record her own album. It was her first solo project since 1974, using Phil Spector as a producer, whom she had not worked with since the early seventies but who had collaborated with her and John on their finest works.

Taking this, and the magnificent 'Walking on Thin Ice' single into consideration along with the strength of much of the Ono material on *Double Fantasy* I held high hopes for this album.

However, on initial hearing, I was more than a little disappointed in an album which I thought lacked substance and was too MOR-ish. But as we all know, first impressions can be deceptive. Yoko's voice could never be described as middle of the road, and there are too many signs that this album was thought about and heartfelt. *Season of Glass* is an album of hidden strengths. It is a sombre record, but that was to be expected. Songs like 'Extension 33' and 'No, No, No' are the equal of anything that she's done before and stand easily beside contemporary material from the likes of the Slits, Au Pairs and Raincoats (all of whom, incidentally, owe more than a little to early seventies' Yoko Ono).

Yoko has never been totally

fashionable, but those amongst us who suffer from fashion fickleness would probably miss the point with much of her work anyway, and it's their loss.

Simon Grigg

The Flying Lizards Fourth Wall Virgin

I didn't expect to like this album, but I do. So much for expectations.

Fourth Wall does not feature that monotone lady whose name escapes me. She has been replaced by Patti Palladin of Snatch, and David Cunningham on some tracks, with the remainder being instrumentals. The home-made instrumental sounds of the first two singles have been replaced by more familiar instruments variously treated, and lots of tape effects and loops. The result is a more human and accessible version of the stuff that Ralph Records thrives on.

Despite the presence of such esoteric, musicians as Robert Fripp, technique does not become a major issue. Sounds and noises assembled in almost random fashion seem to be the basis of several tracks, while others use the tried and tested tape loop to provide a shifting background.

Best tracks are 'In My Life Time', which grinds along electronically with one line of growled vocals over the top, 'Hands Two Take', 'An Age' — a 'Tomorrow Never Knows' loop construction without a song — and 'Steam Away', with mutant machine gun noises and Dr Who vocals.

Sometimes a little ordinary, never very dangerous, but mostly interesting.

Chris Knox



THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS



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