



Ian Curtis

RECORDS

Joy Division
Closer
'Transmission'
Factory

Apart from the just-released (in the UK) double compilation/live album these two records represent the last two planned releases in the JD schedule. The rampant necrophilia that has surrounded these records has been all a little distasteful and along with the (unwarranted) accusations of chart rigging, has tended to overshadow the music a little. That's unfortunate because these records do deserve a lot of attention, not only because of sheer power and beauty of the music, but also the undeniable influence Joy Division have had on popular music in the last eighteen months.

'Transmission' was the first of the trio of twelve-inch singles to come out in the UK, and is much closer in sound to *Unknown Pleasures* than the second album. In my opinion, the finest JD single, 'Transmission', a song about the last radio broadcast, and its B-side, 'Novelty' have a very raw feel and need to be played at volume to be appreciated.

In contrast, *Closer*, the second album, is a good deal more sombre and in a way is the *Sgt Pepper* of its generation, being indirectly responsible for the scores of doom laden seriousness-than-thou young men currently treading the boards worldwide. Despite this, *Closer* is a magnificent album, taking the experiments begun on *Unknown*

Pleasures one step further. The sound here is denser yet, seemingly more fragile than on the first album, with Curtis making use of his natural voice rather than the forced Morrisonesque of earlier recordings.

It would be easy to search this record for epitaphs, and if you looked hard enough you'd probably find them. But that would be a mistake, this album was not intended as such. Just listen and appreciate ... and beware of imitators.

Simon Grigg

UB40
Present Arms
DEP International

Since last summer's *Signing Off*, UB40 have had a tough time, splitting from their record company, and being unable to gig through legal hassles. They've finally resolved this by founding their own label, but they've been left flat broke in the process.

The good news is that *Present Arms*, with its strength and confidence, proves UB40 have survived their trials and tribulations.

They plunge ever deeper into roots reggae, getting more adventurous with production, and allowing several numbers to stretch out instrumentally. These lead often into dubs that are spare, solid and interesting, with the bass and percussion mixed up good and hard. This makes for smart skanking.

The standouts are 'One In Ten', a savage attack on the statistics of poverty and indifference, and 'Don't Let It Pass You By', featuring a formidable toast from Astro. The title track is anti-war, as the



UB40

name suggests, and 'Lamb's Bread' warns of the dangers of dope dealing.

'Don't Slow Down' and 'Silent Witness' will probably get the most airplay, being the sweetest melodically and the least threatening lyrically.

As a bonus, you get a 12 inch dub 45 featuring two brisk and beefy instrumentals, which make a swell introduction for the uninitiated, to the delights of dub.

The black and white boys from Birmingham have done it again. Let's hope our born-again Rastas will give UB40 some attention when they tour here shortly, to show us what a real reggae band is like.

Duncan Campbell

Pere Ubu
The Modern Dance
Rough Trade
Cabaret Voltaire
The Voice of America
Rough Trade
Stiff Little Fingers
Inflammable Material
Chrysalis

Three uncut Rough Trade diamonds finally available for local scrutiny.

Cleveland's Pere Ubu, inspirationally led by the rotund figure of David Thomas on vocals, first notched up *The Modern Dance* on Mercury in 1978 (the same year as their second album, the magnificent *Dub Housing*) and it remains as a brilliant fusion of punk ideals and Beefheart musical structures and delivery. It scratches, scrapes, twists and drives its way to true innovation. Thomas's nerve-end falsetto dips, dives and quivers and

songs like 'Life Stinks', 'Humour Me', 'Real World' and 'Non-Alignment Pact' remain as some of the most expressive examples of rock-is-life.

The Modern Dance is simply one of the best albums of the last five hectic years.

The same extreme plaudits can't be showered on Sheffield's Cabaret Voltaire, but their *Voice of America*, released last year, is proof enough that they've at last managed to channel their restlessness and impetuosity into a coherent and provocative album.

Their music is fashionably stark, electronic and impressionistic but on the taped segments, repetitive motifs and general moodiness of this album they manage to construct a series of perceptive songs ranging from the building intensity of 'Damage Is Done' to the pathological tones of 'Step Out of It' and 'Obsession'.

This album can be slotted ahead of Byrne and Eno's *Bush of Ghosts*, and that can't be bad.

And so to Stiff Little Fingers, whose *Inflammable Material*, released in 1979 on Rough Trade, was their first and best shot. The first side in particular is an eight round magazine, rapid-fire and no duds. The second side bogs down on a lengthy version of Marley's 'Johnny Was' but is redeemed with 'Alternative Ulster', their most potent and dynamic anthem.

George Kay

Duran Duran
EMI

English quintet Duran Duran came out of Birmingham,

Newcastle and London and took their name from the 'Barbarella' flick. Currently hailed as leaders in the New Romantic movement, the term seemingly referring to their high fashion chic and flashy disco beat. Duran Duran themselves scorn labels, but manage to work the key phrase into their much-liked single 'Planet Earth'. And they certainly dress up.

Keyboardist Nick Rhodes — 'we're just trying to make a more interesting dance music as well as keeping a foot lodged into the more obscure end of things.' Accurate enough. The beat is ever-solid, the bass player is clearly enjoying himself ('Girls On Film') and the keyboards surround everything with an encompassing dry-ice shroud of sound. A band who blend well together, guitar especially, and when the melodies leave the mundane ('Friend Of Mine', 'Careless Memories' and 'Planet Earth') then the formula wins.

Work to be done still, but a good debut.

Roy Colbert

Iggy Pop
Party
Arista

Iggy's importance in rock'n'roll lay in his outrageousness and associated mystique. He went through wars and wore the scars and his bravado inspired many a young stunt man. His tough living, drug problems and machismo were the things rock'n'roll legends lived on and he wasn't slow at picking up on passing trends and helping hands (Bowie) that cruised by in his showbiz career.

That was then. Now Mr Pop is beginning to look and sound like any other entertainer who has lost the ability to ignite the old spark. Last year, on the day, *Soldier* impressed, now it's weak, the first in a series of seemingly faltering steps of which *Party* is the second.

His new album is good-time American indulgence from the horn-packed 'Pleasure' to the conventional chunky raunch of 'Pumpin' For Jill'. Songs like 'Bang Bang' and 'Rock and Roll Party' deceptively twitch the old cheek muscles into that knowing smile of 'That's Iggy,

that's my boy', the world's most goddamned in fact.

But the whole deal-reeks of stale, myth-perpetuating egoism. Iggy is now in Jagger's leathers: to keep going means certain self-parody but to stop means defeat. Whatever, only Iggy sycophants need apply.

George Kay
Rupert Hine
Immunity
A & M

So who is Rupert Hine? Even his record company don't seem to know. On the evidence at hand he's obviously very bright, very talented and almost certainly British.

So what's his music like? A friend who heard the album (and consequently bought his own copy) quipped, 'Pink Floyd with brains' but that's hardly accurate. While Hine is certainly working within a conceptual framework, his disciplined intelligence and superior ideas recall Peter Gabriel or even David Byrne more than they do Roger Waters.

Yet Hine's work is tangential to all of the above. For example he continually avoids orthodox instrumentation. Rhythm tracks, for instance, may be processed from such 'found' sounds as traffic noise, water dripping or a human scream. Yeah, I know it sounds pretentious but it works to fascinating effect.

What's more the music is extraordinarily varied in mood: from expansive warmth to jagged and quirky humour, to almost frightening tension. It is also fairly readily accessible due to both its considerable rhythmic force and captivating melodies.

Hine's post-Bowie vocals are well suited to the surreal lyrics although the tantalizingly brief vignette from Marianne Faithfull makes me wish he'd used her more. (Maybe he'll produce her next album.)

Immunity has been packaged for the robot-rock market and so can easily be overlooked in the glut. Rather, it is synthesized, conceptualist rock of such high quality as to win over those who normally shudder at the very implications of the term.

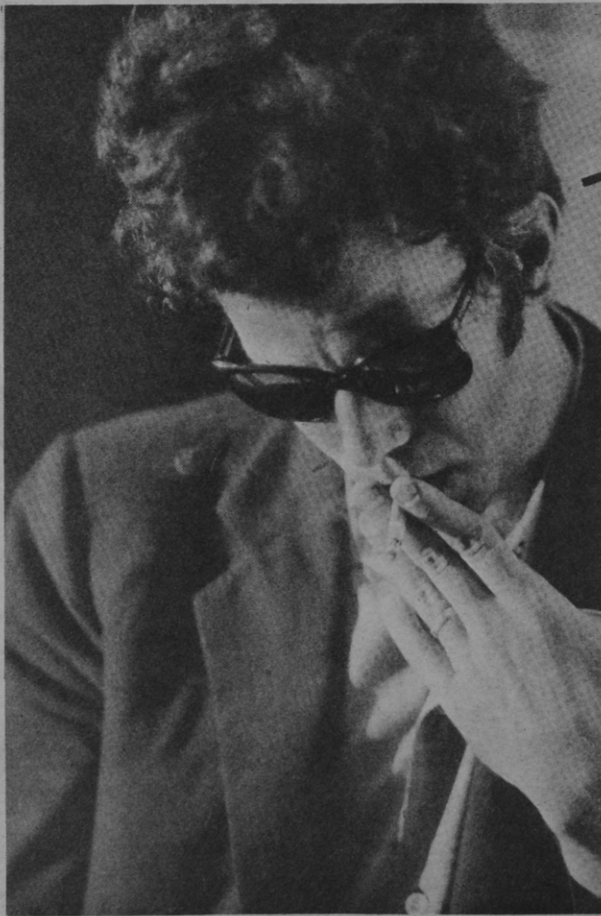
Peter Thomson

TOM WAITS

BOUNCED CHECKS

A compilation released only in Germany, Australia and New Zealand.

HEART ATTACK AND VINE
JERSEY GIRL
(alternate master)
EGGS AND SAUSAGES
I NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS
THE PIANO HAS BEEN DRINKING
(live)
WHISTLIN' PAST THE GRAVEYARD
(alternate master)
MR. HENRY
(previously unreleased)
DIAMONDS ON MY WINDSHIELD
BURMA-SHAVE
TOM TRAUBERT'S BLUES



NZ TOUR

Sept 26
Auckland
Town Hall
Sept 27
Christchurch
Town Hall
Sept 28
Wellington
Town Hall



wea



Heartattack And Vine



Nighthawks At The Diner



Foreign Affairs



Small Change



Blue Valentine



The Heart Of Saturday Night