



CUBAN HEELS



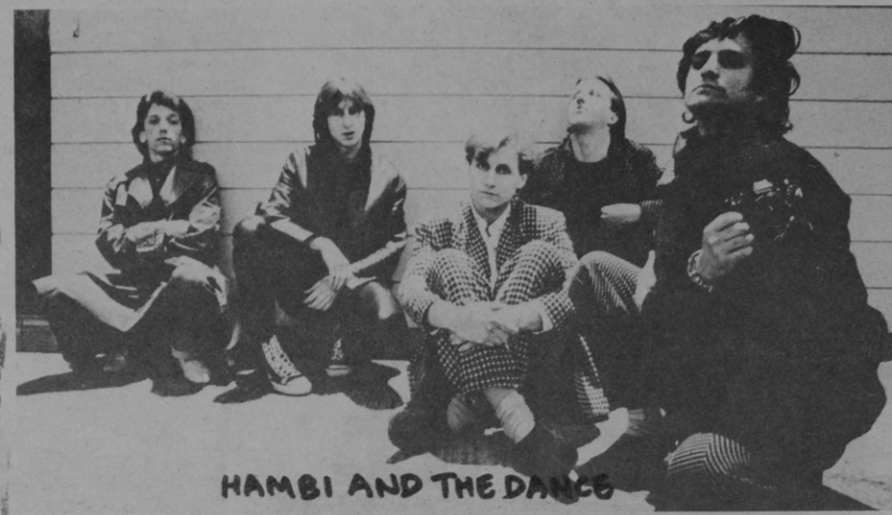
COLIN NEWMAN



MODERN ENGLISH



MODERN EON



HAMBI AND THE DANCE



BAUHAUS

## INDIE FILE



Front Line was a label established by Virgin exclusively for reggae acts. And quite a stable it had too, many of the acts signed during a visit to Jamaica by Richard Branson and John Lydon. But the distance between JA and London meant a lack of quality control, and while Front Line undoubtedly produced some superb rhythms, there was also a lot of dross, and the label finally folded. However, by popular demand, Virgin are releasing a series of compilation albums of the best of the Front Line acts. Each compilation goes under the title of *Vital Selection*. Already in the pipeline are best-of LPs from three almighty vocal trios: *Culture*, the *Mighty Diamonds* and the *Gladiators*. If you didn't catch the original Front Line albums (may your locks fall out), then these will give you a hint of what you missed.

The *Passage* hail from Manchester, and are probably one of Britain's most subversive bands. To quote John Gill of *Sounds*: "Their metaphors are of the mortician's slab, the drug cabinet, the unidentified assailant(s) and the victim's relatives. You are now expected to get up and dance..." A dark band indeed. Their second LP, *For All And None*, is released on the Night And Day label through Virgin.

Mention the *Flying Lizards* and everyone automatically remembers that silly single of 1980, 'Money'. Fractured rhythms, deadpan vocals, outrageously minimal backing, and a most unlikely smash hit. It cost less than \$20 to record. A lesson for all aspiring artistes. Chief Lizard David Cunningham has more surprises in store with his new album *Fourth Wall*. Contributors include Robert Fripp and Patti Palladin.

Cimarons have been going for about 15 years, and have become a byword in British reggae. They worked with Bob Marley and the Wailers when they first arrived in Britain, but have also backed such JA superstars as Ken Boothe, John Holt and Dennis Brown. Now, the Cimarons are stars in their own right, and their new Virgin album *Freedom Street* shows how far they've come.

And who the blazes, you might ask, is Hambi Haram-bolous? Well, he leads a band called *Hambi And The Dance*, one of Virgin's more recent signings. Despite his exotic Greek name, Hambi actually comes from Liverpool. He and the other four Dancers have past associations with the likes of Pauline Murray, Adam and the Ants, and Wah! Heat. Hambi describes the band as "A big sound. Emotion ... big and tender! I really love Phil Spector's stuff. When you hear that big Spector sound, it sends shivers up your spine. I like hitting people in the heart." A romantic soul. Hambi And The Dance have a debut Virgin single, 'Too Late To Fly The Flag'.

Peter Baumann, ex-Tangerine Dream is currently working on his third solo album. Working with him, and possibly singing on a couple of tracks, is Robert Palmer. A strange association, but Palmer went running to Baumann after hearing a track from the rough tapes of the album while at his record company's office in Munich. The results of their collaboration will be out in September. Sounds intriguing.

## DINDISC

Hot Gossip, the ones Kenny Everett takes a cold shower to. Arlene Phillips' raunchy, innovative dance troupe have captivated TV viewers for the last couple of years, and are now branching out to record their first LP. Producer is Kiwi Richard Burgess who has his own hit band, Landscape, and also produced Spandau Ballet.

The album features cover versions of some classic songs, some unrecorded songs from well-known artists, and some original material. Hot Gossip's debut single, 'Criminal World', is out and the album will follow shortly. Bet the video will be something else.

Modern Eon could easily be written off as 'another Liverpool band', at a time when polarisation is popular. But singer Alix maintains they've always deliberately avoided that scene, epitomised by the Bunnymen or Pink Military. Their sound is moody and atmospheric, but also tough and aggressive when the occasion demands. They acknowledge a large debt to ace movie soundtrack writer Ennio Morricone. Their debut LP, *Fiction Tale* is available on Dindisc.

## Beggars Banquet

A widely divergent label, with an unnerving ability to get its acts into the charts. The label's biggest success has been Gary Numan (through WEA in NZ). Now he's retired from live performing, the spotlight shifts to BB's lesser-known but even more interesting acts.

Bauhaus are a four-piece from Northampton who have built up a remarkable following through some stunning live performances and a string of ground-breaking releases on the 4AD label, prior to signing with BB. The name is that of a German school of art, founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius. The only thing the band claims in common is an approach that is modern and void of excess. But it also boasts a gothic romantic element which is contradictory to the Bauhaus movement. The Bauhaus version of the T Rex classic 'Telegram Sam' spent two months in the British Indies chart. Their BB releases include 'Kick In The Eye' and 'Bela Lugosi's Dead' and the LP *In A Flat Field*.

Also on 4AD, which is distributed by BB, is *Modern English*, five men originally from Colchester, but who

moved to London in the middle of last year. Comparisons have been drawn with Joy Division and Wire, which the group find both flattering and confusing. They've released three singles, including the highly-praised 'Gathering Dust', and have just released their debut LP, *Mesh and Lace*.

The *Carpettes* formed in Newcastle in 1977, recording two singles for Small Wonder and did several John Peel sessions before joining BB, for which they've done three more singles and two albums. Melodic three-piece pop, currently under the direction of Only Ones and Magazine producer Colin Thurston.

Colin Newman was until recently the guitarist, songwriter and vocalist with Wire, whose name needs no further explanation. Wire is currently suspended rather than split, to allow various solo projects. One of these is Colin's album *A-Z*, which has had rave reviews, but like most of Wire's product, little commercial success. A pity, because the time taken to appreciate Newman is time well spent. An uncompromising experimenter, he's recently assembled a live band that includes Wire drummer Robert Gotobed, and has been touring the USA and Canada. Newman's new single, 'Inventory', is also available on BB.

Spirit have been going, on and off, for longer than even they care to remember. They started out back in the days of psychedelia, and have split and reformed numerous times since. Devotees tend to be fanatical. The band has been in abeyance recently, but has re-emerged after Beggars Banquet picked up the tapes of the legendary but until now unreleased *Potatoland*. Renewed interest led to Spirit reforming with original members Randy California and Ed Cassidy, plus Liberty on bass and George Valuck on keyboards. Just goes to show that you can't keep a good band down.

Also in the BB portfolio are the likes of the Lurkers, still punking with all their might,

Ivor Biggun, whose best-known hit is too filthy to name, and New York instrumental combo the Raybeats, who bring back a little of the spirit of the Shadows and the Tornados. Truly a wealth of talent here.

## RALPH

San Francisco's Ralph Records has had a firm cult following in this country for a couple of years since people started to drop the name of the *Residents*, the world's most faceless band. Nobody knows who they are, and they continue to keep us guessing, never sounding quite the same. They're a prolific band with a string of albums to their name, any one of which is as good an introduction as another. An acquired taste, certainly, but rather savoury all the same. Impossible to describe adequately in words, and just as impossible to classify, but if you take early Frank Zappa as a starting point and work your way through the obscure psychedelic bands of the *Nuggets* era, you might get the drift.

Philip Lithman, aka *Snakefinger*, was born in London in 1949, and was formerly best known for his role in the very-influential Chilli Willi and the Red Hot Peppers. He got his name while sitting in on violin at one of the rare *Residents* gigs in San Francisco in 1971. He's played numerous times on *Residents* albums, and has now lifted off on his own, gaining substantial attention with his *Greener Pastures* LP. Sadly, a planned New Zealand tour earlier this year was cancelled after Snakefinger suffered a heart attack in Australia. He did survive, however, and more is expected from someone who is certainly not yer average electric guitarist.

Tuxedomoon are Peter Principle, Steve Brown and Blaine Reininger, making up the hard core on reeds, keyboards, violin, bass and guitar at various stages. They're augmented by singer-composer

Winston Tong, film and light man Bruce Gedulig, graphic designer Patrick Roques, sound mixer Gerry Hesse, and anyone else who happens to be around at the time. They've been going since 1977, with their aim being "to synthesise a new art form from the seemingly disparate disciplines in the human quest to know." Can't add much to that. The curious could investigate their second LP, *Desire*.



Ice is the label owned and operated by one-time Equal, Eddy Grant. He operates his own studios, and gives cheap facilities to black musicians, especially those from Africa and the Caribbean. The label thrives, and provides a valuable outlet for many types of ethnic music. Best-known releases here, of course, are Grant's singles, 'Do You Feel My Love', 'Can't Get Enough', and 'I Love You Yes, I Love You'.

## SAFARI

Basically, Toyah Willcox is Safari Records, and little wonder, with the impact she's made on Britain in the last couple of years. Now 23, Toyah gained an O Level in music at school and later attended a drama school in Birmingham. She later spent nine months with the National Theatre. She became noticed in 1977 when she played a part in Derek Jarman's punk film *Jubilee*. The same year, she formed her own band and started gigging, interspersing music with various film roles, including *Corn Is Green* and *Quadrophenia*, and later reuniting with Jarman, to play Miranda in his film version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Her recording career has progressed just as well, with several chart singles, four LPs, and two EPs.

Toyah's new album *Anthem* (UK No.1) features 'It's A Mystery' and new single 'I Want To Be Free'.