

# RECORDS

## Various Artists Urgh! A Music War A&M

27 tracks of previously unreleased live material, and a movie soundtrack, which explains why one man recorded twenty-five of them over just thirty-five days in four different countries (England, America, France and, heh, heh, Hollywood). The linking theme is 'new music', and within that very broad chapter heading no-one here sounds too out of place.

Of the bigger names (Police, Pere Ubu, Cramps, Echo & The Bunnymen, Gary Numan, Gang of Four, Orchestral Manoeuvres, Devo, Magazine and XTC) none are riveting, but none are disgraced either, with Gang of Four arguably coming out on top ('He'd Send In The Army').

There is plenty to intrigue about the rest — from the bizarre, bouncing Oingo Boingo to the arresting New York operatics of Klaus Nomi. Be intrigued also on how Gary Numan receives the best audience reaction of all 27 acts, or how Joan Jett's band get a better guitar sound than the Cramps. A recommendation among the lesser-known? Unmistakably, the Fleshtones on side four.

Roy Colbert  
**Culture**  
The Gladiators  
The Mighty Diamonds  
Vital Selection  
Virgin

These three albums are a sort of epitaph for Virgin's Front Line label, created to give JA artists worldwide exposure. A noble gesture, but one which sadly backfired. Virgin looked set to rival Island for breaking reggae, and Front Line undeniably produced some wonderful sounds. But, because Virgin seldom knew what material they'd be getting, they were often forced to release inferior products, which ultimately lead to the label's folding.

The fault is not Virgin's. It just illustrates the rather casual attitude to marketing adopted in Jamaica, where acts release their work on any one of half a dozen labels, most of them subsidiaries of various studios. When you're working on a shoestring, you're generally not fussy about how your stuff is released, and Front

Line received the same treatment as anyone else.

So, as proof that the label did frequently make the grade, Virgin have released these three greatest hits collections from Front Line's three best acts. All are vocal trios, and all are pacesetters.

The Culture album makes the best listening, being mainly derived from *Harder Than The Rest*, their finest Front Line work. The bonus is the 1978 single 'Natty Never Get Weary', a treasured song, plus the dub version tacked on at the end. To hear Joseph Hill sing is to hear a unique mixture of raw emotion and dignity.

The Gladiators and the Diamonds plough a similar furrow — sweet and soothing falsetto harmonies that should make both collections mandatory summer listening. Dig the Diamonds' live 'I Need A Roof' (previously unreleased). Is there more of this lying around?

Duncan Campbell

**Rolling Stones**  
Tattoo You  
Rolling Stones Records

What a patchy affair this is. It kick-starts with 'Start Me Up', falters, catches its breath, puts on a super burst, and peters out on the home run.

I didn't care much for 'Start Me Up' at first, but neither was I mad initially for 'Satisfaction'. It's the sort of thing that worms its way into your spine. Now I'd rank it with the Stones' better, sex-rhythm nonsense, like 'It's Only Rock and Roll'.

The heat goes up with the steamy 'Slave'. The guitars lay down an archetypal Stones crotch rhythm for a very cooking and uncredited sax player.

As is his wont, Keith Richards sings one song. Unlike recent efforts, it's a dog. 'Little T & A' is the sort of unfinished riff he used to give Ronnie Wood for his solo albums.

The boys redeem themselves in grand fashion on 'Black Limousine'. The Stones have always been adept at the throwaway blues and they surpass themselves here.

Side One races to a close with 'Neighbours' — uptempo and solid, but too close in construction to 'Bring It To Me' from *Emotional Rescue*.

Side Two starts promisingly with 'Worried About You', one of Jagger's falsetto ballads. On 'Tops', though, his tongue is so far back in his cheek as to swamp the track in an almost ludicrous send-up of soul music and showbiz promises.

The soft tone of Side Two continues with 'Heaven' — phased vocals, reggae-ish guitar licks and synthesisers. Reminiscent of that other piece of Stones' "atmosphere" filler, 'Winter' from *Goats Head Soup*. Silly.

The final tracks, 'No Use in Crying' and 'Waiting on a Friend', are inconsequential ballads. The

latter has some stunning saxophone.

There it is, track by track. Not a perfect critical method perhaps, but *Tattoo You* seems to call for it, because for each great moment, there is a corresponding vacuum, often back-to-back.  
Ken Williams

Police, Go-Go's, URGH!



Colin Newman  
A-Z  
Beggars Banquet

If you cast your minds back four or five years you may remember an album entitled *The Roxy, London W.C. 2*. It was a very messy and noisy, but seminal, live album that contained tracks of varying quality by many of the early UK punk bands. Some of the bands disappeared almost as soon as they appeared and some went on to make much larger and more lasting impressions.

One of the latter group was Wire. They made three albums that developed from *Pink Flag*, a series of short sharp fragments of songs with one or two chords, to the lush and accomplished *154* that was one of my albums of 1979. At the end of that year, Wire went into abeyance, after problems with their record company, for a series of solo projects that continue to this day.

Colin Newman was the vocalist and guitarist cum conceptualist with Wire and A-Z, originally released in 1980, was based around what was to be the fourth Wire album.

That, alongside the fact that Wire drummer Robert Gotobed and producer Mike Thorne are also involved, means that this album could easily pass for a Wire album. If you follow the development from the second Wire album, *Chairs Missing*, through to *154*, it's obvious this is a similar

progression from the last album.

That said, if you appreciated Wire as I did, this album is every bit as good as you'd expect. It matches stark minimalism with textured experimental pieces and yet is still oddly accessible.

This album manages to remain totally modern without the wetness of the nouveau-moderne romantics. It has the style but not the sterility that afflicts so much of the music in this field.

Simon Grigg

Young Marble Giants  
Colossal Youth  
Rough Trade/Gap

The appetising one minute-plus of The Young Marble Giants on the Rough Trade sampler earlier this year is largely brought to enjoyable fruition on their album. The trio (Alison Statton, voice, Philip Moxham, bass, Stuart Moxham, guitar and organ) have an affinity of sorts with our own Tall Dwarfs in that their made-in-the-front-lounge music sounds unfinished. Yet it is that very absence of conventional finishing touches that gives the songs their real charm. Holes are left everywhere, and while wizened musos will find them primitive, and audiophiles will grin at the tape hiss, it is technique, and not the technical, that matters most here.

Some of this suggests writer Stuart Moxham has been moved most in his listening life by *Another Green World* period Eno, but there are mainstream rock songs, albeit stripped even beyond demo form, here as well. The title track is a bit like The Ohio Express with half the instruments missing, and 'Searching For Mr Right', 'Music For Evenings' and 'Brand New Life' are all quite memorable.

Maybe not the record to put on in the white-hot part of a hedonistic night, but as one punter remarked to me, just great to wake up to on a Sunday morning.  
Roy Colbert

Debbie Harry  
Koo Koo  
Chrysalis  
Kim Wilde  
RAK

Debbie and Kim. Sigh. The pair that the press are respectively terming the Marilyn Monroe and Brigitte Bardot of rock.

Naturally I got excited to hear that Debs was recording with the Chic organisation. Wow, can't you imagine! 'Heart of Glass' meets 'Spacer' — a sexy disco-moderne apotheosis!

Silly boy. Rodgers and Edwards have not only failed to come up with one decent song but as producers they've allowed Deb's voice to stand exposed in all its weakness. (At least Blondie's producers had the sense to smother her voice in productions as thick as treacle.)

As for the cover by H. R. Giger! It's like his special effects for *Alien*:

stunning and disorienting at first but increasingly banal thereafter.

Ahh ... but the concept of Kim. From elpee cover to seductive video clips, it certainly looks a case of Wilde about Harry. No matter, 'Kids In America' was pretty nifty and — surprise, surprise — the album's not half bad either. Sure it's trashy, and not in the same league as Blondie's debut, but there's a good half-dozen tracks you can turn up real loud and leap around being silly to, and '2-6-5-8-0' is a shamelessly kinky ska rip-off that's catchier than the single.

If Kim Wilde looks set to take the place Suzi Quatro vacated when she went MOR, Debbie Harry is in danger of becoming the Cher of the 80's — all dressed up and nowhere to go.

Peter Thomson

Bob Dylan  
Shot of Love  
CBS

Bob Dylan alienated many of his old fans with his recent, overtly religious albums. For those still prepared to listen, bend an ear to the title track of *Shot Of Love*. What a rocker! One of Dylan's best since things like 'From a Buick 6', a harsh, percussive storm of sound.

Dylan has a hot, hot band (Jim Keltner, Tim Drummond, Danny Kortchmar) and for this track he went back to his roots and brought in Little Richard's old producer, Bumps Blackwell. 'Shot of Love' is ferocious.

There may be nothing else on the album that achieves these heights (although 'Trouble' with its crashing, dirty guitars comes close) but it is very good all the same. This band pushes as hard as the groups of the *Highway 61 Revisited* days.

It's not the gospel that's hard to take on this album, it's a song called 'Lenny Bruce', a dirgy tribute to the iconoclastic American comic, which is even sillier than his tribute to gangster Joey Gall on the *Desire* album. A lapse of sense more than of taste.

There are tracks, 'Watered-down Love' for instance, that could be by Sam and Dave or other Stax/Atlantic R&B folks. Consider something like Chuck Willis' 'What Am I Living For' or Al Green's 'Take Me to the River' as a hymn (and who says they're not?) and I think you're getting to what Dylan is about here. One thing is certain, *Shot of Love* is one of those great leaps forward, just as *Blood on the Tracks* was.  
Ken Williams

Devo  
New Traditionalists  
WEA

Guilty of calling Devo a packaging prank when *Are We Not Men* came out in '78, I have to admit it's time to retract.

The *New Traditionalists* sleeve contains a single-size Devo rendition of the old Allen Toussaint song 'Working in a Coal Mine'

which is positively addictive. Side One and Two are identical. There's a limited edition poster reminiscent of the Baba elephant cartoon books, but of course, it's of Devo, a piece of paper telling you what you can buy from Club Devo, and the album.

It's an album of songs about modern plyths with thoroughly modern lyrics. Through with Being Cool' is a great line. Robert Louis Stevenson said "give me the young man with brains enough to make a fool of himself," and here's Devo agreeing.

'Soft Things' is full of funky percussion.

*Her mind seems so chaotic  
Her posture was erotic  
And her voice was so exotic  
I acted so neurotic  
I thought it idiotic  
And her dance was so technotic  
She became hypnotic.*

The sound is simple, the phrasing minimal. It's Devo's fourth album, and they've still got a way of getting under your skin.

AnnLouise Martin

Matt Taylor/Phil Manning  
Band  
Oz Blues  
Full Moon

A very competent album from two legends of the Australian blues, backed up by the precise rhythm section of Roy Daniels on bass and Ric Whittle on drums.

Their credentials are impeccable. Both Taylor and Manning were mainstays of the highly-esteemed Chain a few years back. Taylor was also in Western Flyer and Manning in the John Paul Young All Star Band. However, some of these songs don't quite make it.

All you blues pundits out there would probably disagree, and savour some excellent harp from Taylor and some mighty fine guitar from Manning. It is a good reunion album, which augurs well for the future.

Greg Cobb

Linx  
Intuition  
Chrysalis

British new wave funk they're calling it, and Link are the front runners. Initially, the disappointment is how little is really new. The production values hew pretty closely to those adopted by Quincy Jones for Michael Jackson and the Brothers Johnson, but slowly the distinctive approach of Linx seeps through.

Over the funk base, they place clear pop melodies sung in a style that owes more to classic British pop than American soul, more to Gerry and the Pacemakers than Otis Redding. These influences can give rise to a sappy ballad like 'There's Love', but at times, as on the three British singles, 'You're Lying', 'Intuition' and 'Rise and Shine', there's a liveliness and invention that should see these young Londoners winning out against any of the American competition.  
Alastair Dougal

CAFE ELECTRIQUE  
10 VULCAN LANE  
OPEN 11AM  
TO MIDNIGHT  
MONDAY TO SAT.

new designs every month.  
now shrink-wrapped!

# SNAKE T-SHIRTS & SWEAT SHIRTS

T-SHIRTS \$10.50 (includes postage) & SWEAT-SHIRTS \$23.95 (includes postage)

040 GRACE JONES  
4 colour process on scour

037 EDDY GRANT  
red, blue on grey S/S,  
white T/S

036 ULTRAVOX  
black, green on white  
T/S, scour S/S

041 BLUE OYSTER CULT  
white on black

028 JIMI HENDRIX  
blue on red

024 COLD CHISEL  
white, red on royal blue

029 THE WHO  
white on black

020 ZIG ZAG RICE  
black, red on yellow

007 DEVO  
4 colour on grey

034 MEEMEES  
black on white T/S only

038 BLAMS  
white on black T/S only

003 AC/DC  
red, white on black

010 BOB MARLEY  
3 colour on gold

034 JOY DIVISION  
white, green on black

014 MOTORHEAD  
silver on black

002 SWINGERS  
white, y.-llow on black

040 GRACE JONES  
4 colour process on scour

**ALSO AVAILABLE**

01 MADNESS  
black on white

02 SPECIALS  
black on white

04 MARIANNE  
FAITHFULL  
blue, pink on black

05 DIRE STRAITS  
red on blue

08 CLASH  
3 colour on camel

09 STEVIE WONDER  
4 colour on camel

012 THE BEAT  
red, black on white

015 PINK FLAMINGOS  
green on pink T/S only

018 NORTON  
gold on black

019 TRIUMPH  
silver, white on black

025 BSA  
gold, red on black

027 TOOTS & MAYTALS  
4 colour process on scour

031 TOM PETTY  
4 colour process on white  
T/S and scour S/S

**ORDER FORM**  
POST TO SNAKE MARKETING,  
PO BOX 9698, NEWMARKET, AUCKLAND.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

ENCLOSED \$ .....

STYLE T/S or S/S	TITLE	TITLE NO.	SIZE S(36)M(38) OS(40)XOS(42)	PRICE

THE  
SINGLE

# NO MYSTERY

GRAHAM  
BRAZIER