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The Clean
Boodle (Flying Nun)

Almost unbelievably well-recorded, this is more than just the Clean on a very good night — it's the best I've ever heard them. A bloody brilliant EP of some of their finest songs, including most hearteningly, the stage killer 'Point That Thing'. Who said only Lou Reed can play guitar like that? And 'Thumbs Off', already an anthem, and the superb 'Billy' — this is more than even us fans hoped for. 'Tally Ho' was for the already-converted: *Boodle* is for everyone.

The Pin Group
Colombia/Ambivalence
Coat/Jim

The Christchurch band's models are obvious, and if nothing else, these two singles serve to remind us how important Martin Hannett was to Joy Division. Dark mood pieces all four, the packaging is suitably sombre. Like the songs, love the bass lines.

Roy Colbert

The Valentinos
Mad Mary (RTC)

The Valentinos represent a certain glamour and flash that doesn't do a lot for me. This record is all mannered vocals and a fat drum sound — the Australasian style I guess, the ultimate refinement of Hello Sailor into a sure-fire pub success. The Valentinos have all the skills necessary to play like this night after night at your local, and if you like it there you'll probably like it at your next party.

Riot 111

This record has no A or B-sides, and no titles (maybe). It displays technical minimalism which would make the Damned blanch. What it does do is deal with something important in a direct, unambiguous way. It uses some of the strongest verbal memories of being on the wrong side of the batons to make a rallying cry. This has so little in common with the Valentinos, there seems no way they can both be right.

Geoff Chunn

The Man's A Wonder (XSF)

Somehow I can never quite reconcile Geoff Chunn's obvious skills, with the dirty-ass rock and roll he seems so determined to play. The things I like about 'Wonder' and 'Modern Music' on the back are the things which should make them pop gems, especially the melodies, while the things which disappoint me are the drama and flourish of the rock and roll trimmings. This could be the sound of the (Sydney) suburbs.

Network
Alone (Bunk)

With its mechanical drumming and acoustic guitar, topped with McCullochish voice, this record has enough connections with early Echo and the Bunnymen to be modish without being simply derivative. Not the next big thing, but that's almost a relief. Has anybody else noticed how much better New Zealand singers are getting?

Androids
Getting Jumpy (Ripper)

An amazingly tight performance from a band which always seems to have more guitarists than parts for them to play. I still can't remember much about the song, apart from the speed it went by at, but 'Getting Jumpy' seems like a fair deal — the band has fun and so should you. Flip, 'Auckland Tonight', reminds me of the Garage Crawlers, and I can't think why.

Daggy And The Dickheads
'Sometimes Nothing' (Dickhead)

These guys are begging to be misunderstood — a band from Taihape with a name like that ... The fact is 'Sometimes Nothing' is good enough to resist any cheap shots, with genuinely danceable bottom and a better radio tune than anything else this month. Unchic but funky.

Francis Stark

The Human League
Hard Times/Love Action 12" (Virgin)

The first NZ release for the new Human League, which now features two female go-go dancers/singers, whom Phil Oakey picked up in a Sheffield disco. Each side includes different versions of the two songs, and the overall playing time is 21 minutes. As for the music, it's exciting synth-disco-pop that is pure aural stimulation. Expect to hear it everywhere you go.

Simple Minds
Love Song 12" (Virgin)

Love is back in vogue, and nobody is saying it better than Simple Minds. By far their most commercial release to date, 'Love Song' thumps along to a stupendous bass line that oozes danceability. An absolute killer. The flip is 'The Earth That You Walk Upon', a tasteful synthesiser instrumental.

John Foxx
Europe After The Rain 12" (Metal Beat)

Ultravox may have the success, but their ex-vocalist has the talent. John Foxx's distinctive vocals glide through this smooth, romantic piano-synth piece with sheer beauty. On the other side we have 'This Jungle' and 'You Were There', both upbeat and

equally memorable. Anticipation builds for *The Garden LP*.

Heaven 17

Play To Win 12" (Virgin)

The other half of the Human League serve up a cut from their *Penthouse And Pavements LP*. After 'Fascist Groove Thang', anything they did would be a step down. Still, this is an infectious disco-pop song with some neat brass sounds that are probably synthesisers. The other side is the same song with a straighter funk feel, and if anything, it's better.

Depeche Mode
Dreaming Of Me 7"

New Life 7"

Just Can't Get Enough 12" (Mute)

Depeche Mode are all under 20, and consist of synthesisers, a drum machine and an effervescent singer. Their recorded history consists of only the three singles above, all of which have done very well on the British charts.

Although there is a disco influence, they owe more to sixties' pop than anything. Clean, sharp production on what are basically teen love songs. It would be hard to dislike Depeche Mode; they're making music to have fun to. Dance, dance, dance!

Bow Wow Wow
Prince Of Darkness (RCA)

Malcolm McLaren's new proteges finally surface down-under. A powerful piece of tribalism, thumping toms and screeching chants over jangling guitar. You either love it or hate it, no inbetweens. The flip is 'Orangutang', a sub-Shadows' piece of dementism.

Stray Cats

You Don't Believe Me (Arista)

Taken from their *Gonna Ball* album. A slight change in style, heaps of slide guitar on what is basically an R&B tune. Well delivered as usual, but somehow not quite as memorable as the previous single releases. B-side is 'Cross That Bridge', it sounds like a reworked 'Maybelline' to me.

Altered Images

Happy Birthday (Epic)

A quaint little pop unit from the north end of Britain. The singer is female and sounds like she's only 10 years old. This is the title



The Clean

Altered Images

song from their debut album. The other side is 'So We Go Whispering', a little more dense, and comparable with the previous single 'A Day's Wait'. Look forward to the album.

Dynamic Hepnotics
Hepnotic (Missing Link)

This is a strange one, soul,

R&B, a splash of Caribbean, it's all there. Honking saxes, dancing, yelling. Full-on enjoyment. On the strength of this single, the band has been signed to a three-album deal on UK's Statik records. Not bad for a bunch of Ockers.

Mark Phillips

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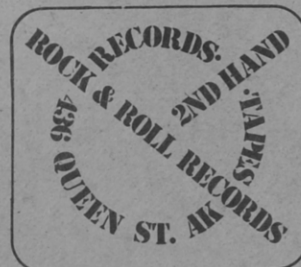
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