

it'll stop you
in its tracks ...

Freeze Frame

the new album from
The J. Geils Band
featuring
'Centrefold'

produced & arranged
by Seth Justman

on album & cassette



RECORDS

Midnight Oil
Place Without A Postcard
CBS

The Oilers are a real Jekyll-and-Hyde of a band. Their stage show is blistering live-wire rock, dominated by vocalist Peter Garrett. On vinyl, however, they are more contrived. Although still Garrett-dominated, the quirky arrangements and awkward lyrics make for a more strained listening experience.

Apparently to forge a closer link between the two faces of the band, Midnight Oil travelled to England to record this LP under the guidance of top producer-engineer Glyn Jones (Rolling Stones, The Who). The result is only partially successful, and the faults lie in composition rather than performance. *Place Without A Postcard* lacks the flow of great hard rock albums, due to the band's penchant for irregular verses and choruses, and constant time changes within individual songs.

The album opens in classic style with 'I Don't Wanna Be The One', and it's with simple, driving rockers like this that Midnight Oil really score. The next three tracks suffer from the aforementioned 'fussy' approach, and the slower numbers are a little laborious.

Side Two is a stronger proposition, being harder and faster. The lyrics present the band's somewhat sarcastic view of life in Oz.

An enjoyable album, nonetheless. But I fear fans won't be entirely satisfied with this package.
Chris Caddick

Sharon O'Neill
Smash Palace
CBS

This 12 inch EP contains the five songs O'Neill wrote and recorded for *Smash Palace* well over a year ago, before her move to Australia and before the film was even shot. She was the ideal choice for the soundtrack: a writer-performer, local but known across the Tasman and, like the movie, aims to reach a very broad audience without compromising on standards or integrity.

The title track, for example, evokes the film's opening sequences in its brooding keyboard intro yet is a strong MOR ballad, quite appealing and memorable enough to become a hit. Unfortunately 'Jaqui's Theme' which follows it, while similar in mood, is not nearly as strong.

For the other three songs

O'Neill's adopted a musical approach reflecting the predominant musical taste of the *Smash Palace* setting. 'Don't Say I'm Crazy' and 'White Lines' are pure hick town country-rock, although the latter is at least a tolerable example thereof.

But it is with the film's final theme that she plays her best stroke. 'If It Was Love' is simply beautiful. In three quarter time, complete with Floyd Cramerish piano, plaintive slide guitar and even a couple of wistfully spoken lines, it is no condescending rip-off but a glowing contribution to the style. And along with the title track it also represents Sharon O'Neill at her best.

Peter Thomson

Steve Miller Band
Circle of Love
Mercury

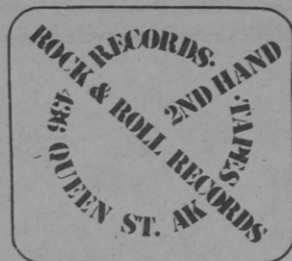
It's all of five years since Steve Miller put out a record of new material (*Book of Love*). After such a gap, one might have hoped for something more substantial than this confection.

With his band cut back to a four-piece, Miller kicks off in fine form — trademark slashing rhythm guitar, a bit of wry plagiarism (Eddie Cochran's favourite bass line, Linda Ronstadt's favourite title) and we have 'Heart Like A Wheel'. Typical Miller — airy, lots of tricky guitar fills and a throw-away, good-neighbour sort of vocal.

The rest of Side One continues in similar vein — a revamped folk tune ('Get On Home') and a couple of variations of old Miller themes, 'Baby Wanna Dance' and 'Circle of Love', which features some exquisite electric guitar courtesy of *The Joker* himself. Pretty good fun stuff.

Side Two, however, is such a disaster as to be grotesque. For an interminable 18 minutes against an unrelenting funk beat, Miller goes into a bizarre diatribe called 'Macho City', apparently his protest at disco music and depersonalised society. His point of view isn't clear and there's none of the old humour. Basically, it's a bore.

Five years is a long time to wait for half a record. Disappointing.
Ken Williams



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