

## RECORDS

### The Teardrop Explodes Wilderness Mercury

Julian Cope is a fanciful person, a restless eccentric touched by belated psychedelia and surreal whimsy. He's also a good songwriter.

As a start, *Kilimanjaro* was OK, but, as an album per se it was a disappointment. 'Treasure' had instant presence but only 'Poppies in the Field' and perhaps 'Thief of Baghdad', stretched the band as an evocative unit to provide the space and finesse the songs needed.

*Wilderness* is something else. It is an improvement in every respect. It has a continuity of sound supplied by sole producer, Clive Langer, and it has a consistency/unity of direction bestowed by the sole writer (who else but Cope?) and the glowing ability of the band.

The first side concentrates on the more aggressive material. Five songs, among them Cope's answer to 'Reward' — 'Colours Fly Away', and a couple of straight forward shots in 'Bent Out of Shape' and 'Pure Joy', lead to 'The Culture Bunker', a natural and sophisticated climax.

Turn over and 'Passionate Friend' and 'Like Leila Khaled Said' are strong active melodies but the glory belongs to the wistful melancholic airs of 'Tiny Children', 'The Fighting Takes Over' and 'The Great Dominions'. Ballads that will last.

*Wilderness* reinforces my conception of Cope as a British Arthur Lee. Love combined the same acoustic/electric/brass freshness with a sense of the sensitive/ridiculous that Teardrop Explodes have achieved.

Whichever way you look at it, *Wilderness* is a seductive, superb album.

George Kay  
D.D. Smash  
Cool Bananas  
Mushroom

It's nice to be able to hold up an album and say, "This is New Zealand music." Especially when it's a rock album that identifies with this country. A New Zealand



Dave Dobbyn

Sound.

Hello Sailor did it with their first album, Herbs did it last year, and now D.D. Smash make number three. *Cool Bananas* is Kiwi Rock, and proud of it.

It's hard to classify this sound, except that it has a suntan, a big grin, a love for wide open spaces, and a sentimental streak. It's brisk, loud, flashy and holding a can. It has to have a good tune, a sharp tongue and a strong back. The man who understands this is Dave Dobbyn.

Dave writes about human beings, and is a very human one himself. His songs are about people, falling in love, laughing, fighting and suffering.

Listen to Dave singing 'Blue Note':

*The last little letter  
Like the final curtain  
Like the bluest note of all  
I was shattered, broken glass  
was what love became.  
Tore my heart out ...*

'White Water' is another example. A song about canoeing the rapids? The song is genuinely exciting, with a strong tune conveying the feeling.

Good singles, as Dobbyn always provides, with 'Repetition' and 'The Devil You Know', all other songs with a little twist that lifts them above the ordinary, in melody or lyrics, plus Dobbyn's boogie special 'The Gambler', always a live favourite.

To be played at all discerning parties, and raised with the flag every morning.

Duncan Campbell



Julian Cope, Teardrop Explodes

### XTC English Settlement Virgin

After eighteen months of silence, XTC have returned with two reassuring bids for the pop market — the twelve inch 'Senses Working Overtime' which is flanked by the high quality pop company of 'Blame It On the Weather' and 'Tissue Tigers', and now a fifth album, *English Settlement*.

*Black Sea*, pessimistic and industrious, was under-rated and the more acoustic tones of *English Settlement* continues Partridge's gift of giving you the bad news within the framework of uplifting pop.

Using a medieval historical perspective as an analogy for the modern malaise, XTC have carved out a further appearance/reality yarn. 'Senses Working Overtime' is perfect as its musical joviality is deceptive, the icing on a rotten cake, life stinks but "the church bells softly chime." Listen to it. 'Jason and the Argonauts' and 'English Roundabout', fresh-paced musically, are slightly veiled digs at social disorders. And 'Melt the Guns', 'No Thugs In Our House' and 'All Of A Sudden It's Too Late', although too pat lyrically, benefit from Partridge's conviction and melodic sense.

And then there's Moulding who turns in his usual quota of nicely waited infectious ditties, 'Run-aways', 'Ball and Chain' and 'Yacht Dance', to provide the balance of ideas.

*English Settlement* is a pastoral



Soft Cell

*Black Sea* and although less intense, it maintains Partridge's high standards of a change-is-as-good-as-a-progression. I'm still a fan.

George Kay

### New Order Movement Factory

Rest assured, this is not a let's-bury-lan trip. Face facts: he died nearly two years ago, and Joy Division died with him. The record buyers of this country worshipped a dead idol, because we couldn't buy the damn stuff until after he died. Take your complaints to the Factory.

Right. New Order are another ball game. Curtis was not the creative heart. The songwriters were Bernie Albrecht and Steve Morris. They've refused to give interviews since the trauma, wanting to forget the past and re-establish themselves as a musical entity. Happily, they've done it.

*Movement* is not a consistent album, but any lapses into the old style can certainly be forgiven. Those who bought *Still* will know that the first single, 'Ceremony', was from the old days, while 'Everything's Gone Green' only just progressed.

This album makes a clean break, apart from 'The Him' and 'Doubts Even Here', which recall the ghost of Curtis. What they also serve to show is how one-dimensional he was, as a performer.

Grab the new sound from 'Truth', 'Senses' or 'Chosen Time'. Solid synthesised funk, the sort of



XTC

thing Human League or Heaven 17 are into, but much more basic, deeper and more demanding. 'ICB' continues that feeling, while 'Dreams Never End' has a rhythmic drive that the old JD sound never quite achieved.

Martin Hannett overwhelms with the depth of his production, and New Order establish themselves. Respect the dead, but don't cling to them. Life goes on, and the living are doing pretty well.

Duncan Campbell  
Soft Cell  
Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret  
Mercury

The bright electronic pop invasion of the last year has been spearheaded by bands from the north of England. Human League, from Sheffield, opened the doors, and following them are Soft Cell, from Leeds.

Soft Cell burst on to the scene late last year with 'Tainted Love', a song originally recorded by Gloria Jones, Marc Bolan's girlfriend. Since then, Marc Almond and David Ball have had two more British Top 10 singles with 'Bedsitter' and 'Say Hello, Wave Goodbye'. Both are included, and while the former falls a bit flat, 'Say Hello' sparkles in the same way 'Don't You Want Me' did on *Dare*.

Almond has a strong Newley-period Bowie voice, which he uses to full effect, particularly on the northern soul of 'Seedy Films'. David Ball, responsible for all the electronic and acoustic instruments, plunders and then refurbishes tunes, to make them his own.

Listen to the Motown steal on 'Secret Life'.

Sex, nightclubs, entertainment and frustration sit at the core of *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret*. It's an album that at first disappoints, then thrills. The melodies are accessible and infectious, it flows smoothly and doesn't wear out its welcome.

Perhaps not a great pop record, but at least a bloody good one.

Mark Phillips

### A Certain Ratio The Double Twelve Inch Factory

For a while in 1980 Factory's A Certain Ratio looked like being one of the futures of rock'n'roll. Constantly name-dropped and touted for certain eminence, they have since fallen from grace as a result of a reportedly duff album and a realisation that perhaps they had been overrated.

This double twelve inch contains the songs that raised all the hopes. 'Flight' and 'Blown Away', released in November 1980, remain as blatant Joy Division messages with vocalist Simon Topping being indistinguishable from Ian Curtis. Look at it another way and you could call it the Manchester sound, billowing bass lines and cavernish production. Whatever, it sounds dated, almost ancient.

Ironically ACR's best moves were invariably their earliest. 'Do the Du', 'Shack Up' and 'The Fox' made appearances in late '79 and mid '80 respectively and their amateurish, lop-sided funk anticipated the fad that was to overtake

"TV21, my favourite songwriters of 1981."  
Paul Weller, THE JAM

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a thin red line

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