

BRIEFS

Lou Ann Barton
Old Enough (Asylum)

Lou Ann Barton's debut album falls into a now-familiar pattern. Stylish, American, white female singer (but not songwriter) tackles a variety of material in the R&B and soul field. The bonus feature is that the song selection is superb. Regrettably though, veteran Jerry Wexler (here producing with Glenn Frey) kills this inspirational selection with a set of dowdy arrangements and dull performances. In a less polite setting, Barton's strong white-girl-sings-the-blues voice could yet cut some ice. AD

Jimmy Destri
Heart On A Wall (Chrysalis)

Further proof, if you needed it, that the individual members of Blondie need each other to produce something viable. Disappointing, since Destri has written some of Blondie's more interesting material. On his own, he produces very orthodox, leaden hard rock, and thus does himself a great disservice. DC

J.J. Cale
Grasshopper (Mercury)

You hear echoes of J.J. Cale everywhere, in the work of Eric Clapton, in the smokey singing

and languid guitar lines of Mark Knopfler from Dire Straits. Cale himself remains unaffected by his more popular imitators. Since his first solo album 10 years ago his approach has never really changed, he still works with a small ensemble of top country sessionmen. The songs are often just a snatch of melody, a verse, chorus, verse, chorus again and that's a take, at somewhere around two minutes. While his lyrics could sometimes be called only serviceable, his sound has always been more important than what he is saying. Cale on record has always managed to sound like a talented friend who has dropped in for a visit and agreed to play for a while. Grasshopper is another of those welcome visits. PG

The Exploited
Punk's Not Dead (RTC)

The Exploited, a third-rate Sex Pistols copy, are currently the darlings of the 'new punk' in Britain. This album, a mixture of live and studio tracks (though it makes little difference) is liberally sprinkled with four-letter words and contains 15 'songs' about dole queues, anarchy and the police. A monotonous, ill-produced drone, recommended to boot boys only. CC

Van Halen

Diver Down (Warner Bros)

Sub-rate cover versions of such classics as 'Pretty Woman', 'Where

Have All The Good Times Gone' and 'Dancing In The Streets' do not a good album make, even by the awesome VH. Still, I dare say Ray Davies, etc will be chuckling all the way to the bank as this LP grosses double platinum. 'Hang 'Em High' is the only saving grace of what is otherwise a naff album. GC

James Bond Hits (Liberty)

A valuable text for all cultural anthropologists and connoisseurs of trash. This collection spans the 20 year history of a great popular entertainment phenomenon.

Important shifts in mass musical taste are here faithfully recorded via choice of theme songsters — eg. Shirley Bassey, Tom Jones, Nancy Sinatra, Sheena Easton. The changing influence of popular instrumental style is also astutely chronicled for analysis — eg. witness how rhythm guitar was affected by Isaac Hayes' 'Shaft' then, years later, by Nile Rodgers' Chic disco chop.) Overall then, an invaluable case study. PT

Brian Eno
Ambient 4: On Land (EG)

Eno's fourth in his ambient

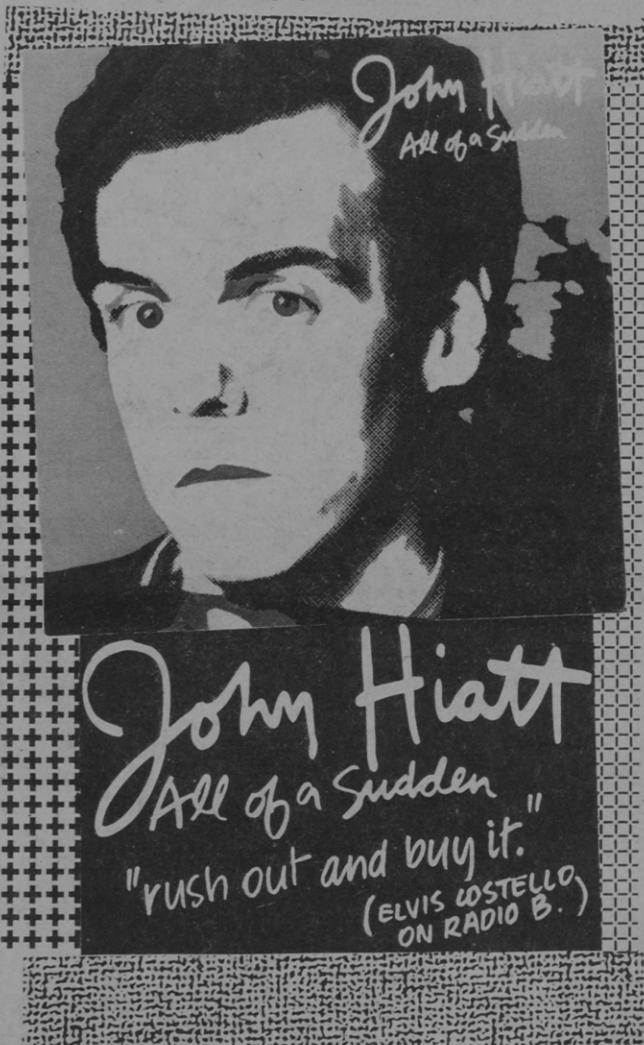
series. A finely crafted offering and one that excels on its own merits and alongside previous albums in this series. Music that is 'absorbed' preferably on your back, relaxing. Definitely not for the hyperactive. SM

The Church
Of Skins and Heart (Stunn)

A Sydney bred unit, the Church have already aroused interest and suspicion with their Byrds' meets Bowie cool as evidenced on the single 'The Unguarded Moment'. Their first album is more of the same with vocalist/writer Steve

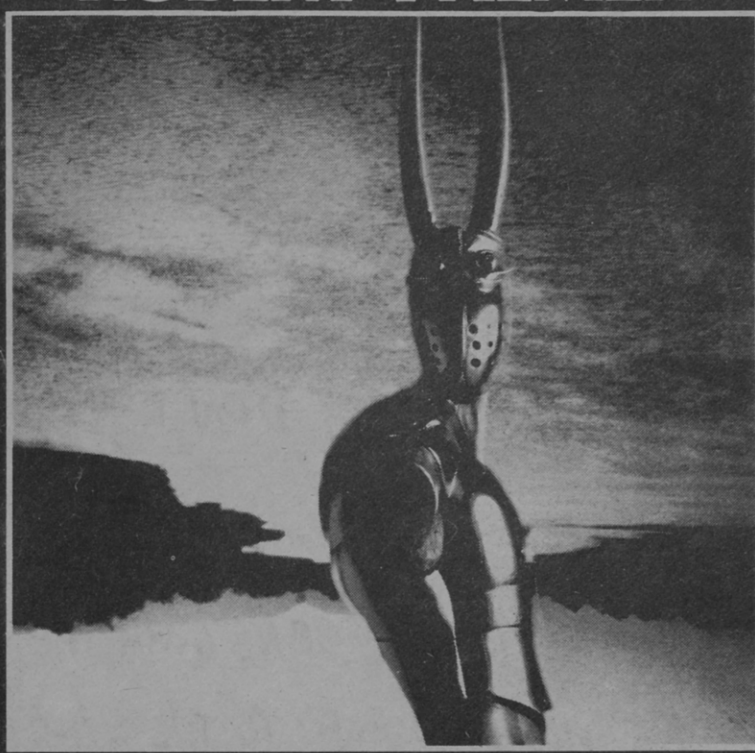
Kilbey's attempts at profundity being reinforced with the 5-D guitar inter-play between Peter Koppes and Marty Willson-Piper. Enticing and palatable but basically shallow and calculated: GK

Jon Stevens (CBS)
Local boy with strong talent and sure voice goes to California and makes album with all sorts of important and influential persons. Should we get excited? Unfortunately not. The first track is sub-Doobies and nothing startling emerges thereafter. Ultimately just another bland from L.A. PT



John Hiatt
All of a Sudden
"rush out and buy it."
(ELVIS COSTELLO ON RADIO B.)

ROBERT PALMER



MAYBE IT'S LIVE

SIDE ONE
SNEAKIN' SALLY THROUGH THE ALLEY
WHAT'S IT TAKE?
BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
EVERY KINDA PEOPLE
BAD CASE OF LOVING YOU

SIDE TWO
SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK
STYLE KILLS
SI CHATOUILLEU
MAYBE IT'S YOU
WHAT DO YOU CARE

AVAILABLE ON ALBUM & CASSETTE *NEW STUDIO TRACKS

THE BEST OF ERIC CLAPTON

'TIME PIECES'

I SHOT THE SHERIFF
AFTER MIDNIGHT
LAYLA
KNOCKIN' ON HEAVEN'S DOOR
WONDERFUL TONIGHT

COCAINE
LAY DOWN SALLY
WILLY & THE HAND JIVE
PROMISES
LET IT GROW
SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT



A COLLECTION THAT DEFIES THE TEST OF TIME ...

polyGram