

RECORDS

Midge Marsden Band 12 Bars From Mars Peak Records

At the bottom, or top, of every rock culture you strike a few who continue to adhere to the initial precepts of R&B. Midge Marsden, along with Hammond Gamble, are New Zealand's conscience, the bedrock of fashion where lack of hype and entertainment through instinctive emotion are the only true goals. In another language it's goodtime music and, although it takes few risks, on a good night it hits the spot.

That said it has to be noted that the Marsden Band's 12 Bars From Mars isn't narrow in perspective. The original material therein touches on a number of other artists' variations of the R&B idiom with a dexterity and suppleness hard to ignore. 'I Wanna Be With You' is Dr Feel-good in delivery, 'Someone Else's Car' has that easy slide wallop associated with Little Feat and 'Blue Murder' is acoustic blues

courtesy of Ry Cooder. If a criticism had to be levelled at the band it would be that they haven't unearthed their own particular identity.

Leaving the blues and the 12 bars we arrive at another term, rock'n'roll — and the best is a deft Wayne Mason song 'Shooting In The Dark', the badass 'Hard Town' and the album's best/most ambitious arrangement, 'Don't Stand In Corners/Ask That Mountain'.

So, on 12 Bars From Mars Midge Marsden continues to do his job and that little bit more. George Kay

Dire Straits Love Over Gold Vertigo

Dire Straits' debut album established Mark Knopfler as a songwriter of considerable power, mixing up a concoction of bitter-sweet lyrics, carried by sparkling guitar playing and a clipped rhythm section. All those ingredients are present on *Love Over Gold*, but they appear in a more complex and extended form.

Side One opens with the 14-minute 'Telegraph Road', a kind of epitaph for man's folly.

Knopfler's acerbic observations are complimented by a dazzling array of guitar solos. Whereas in the past the band seemed merely a vehicle for Knopfler's visions, they knit together on this track and feed off each other in a smoking cauldron of sound.

'Private Investigations', an ambitious choice for a single, completes the side. Here Knopfler narrates the lyrics about a squalid occupation over a changing pattern of moods.

Side Two opens with 'Industrial Disease', and finds Knopfler in a light-hearted and witty mood. The title track is largely a continuation of the 'Romeo and Juliet' saga. Far more embellished, but not at the expense of subtlety. The ironical 'It Never Rains' completes the album — shades of Dylan's *Highway 61* period.

Love Over Gold is Dire Straits' most satisfying album to date. Knopfler has concentrated on beefing up the sound, adding Hal Lindes on guitar and Alan Clark on keyboards. Playing with absolute confidence, Dire Straits have created a masterpiece, with the most stunning side of popular music released this year. David Perkins



Positive Noise



Dire Straits' John Illsley and Mark Knopfler.

Positive Noise Change of Heart Statik

When self-confessed deep thinker Ross Middleton left Glasgow's Positive Noise last July to form Leisure Process, he took his literary pretensions and Joy Division/Magazine artiness with him. Now a four piece, with guitarist Russell Blackstock also doing the vocals, the two remaining Middleton brothers, Graham (keyboards) and Fraser (bass) and drummer Les Gaff, the band have evolved into a convincing song and dance unit.

So *Change of Heart* is a clever riposte to their debut *Heart of Darkness* in more than just the title. As a singer Blackstock is fresh out of the Martin Fry Academy of making the best of a limited vocal range and tight, polished songs the likes of 'Feel the Fear', 'Get Up and Go', 'Waiting For the 7th Man', 'Out of Reach' and 'Tension' are a far cry from the affected pessimism of *Heart of Darkness*.

The emphatic 'Positive Negative' did big business in the *Billboard* Disco Charts last year (don't let that put you off) and originally Ross Middleton was scheduled to do the vocals but as his brother Graham reminisces:

"He was so drunk we had to bodily carry him into the studio and then all he did was make chimpanzee noises."

The new-look, new-sound Positive Noise sure don't lose any sleep worrying over brother Ross. Finally they've found what they're good at and a good *Change of Heart* is worth checking out. George Kay

Hunters & Collectors White Label

Patience is a virtue, so they say, and in this case I'm not one to argue.

I was first introduced to Melbourne's Hunters and Collectors via a 12-inch EP I brought back from Australia six months ago. The lady from Mushroom (who own the White Label) said this band was going to be big, but record company people often say things like that. However, I have to admit I was fairly easily seduced by its nagging, insistent, almost funky — but slightly too slow for that — rhythms.

Here's where patience comes in. When the album arrived, I was pretty damn disappointed. On first and even second listening, it sound repetitious and self-indulgent to an extreme and I duly filed it away. But the fact

that I was asked to review it, coupled with so many people extolling its virtues, meant that I pulled it out and listened again. About three playings on, something clicked. A great record!

It's got to the stage where nine minutes of 'Run, Run, Run' on the 12-inch included with the album, is not enough. Every track on this album is essential.

Rock music may now change the world, but certain records can change my world and this could well be one. This band should be huge, but maybe they're just too good for that. Simon Grigg.

Bow Wow Wow Original Recordings EMI

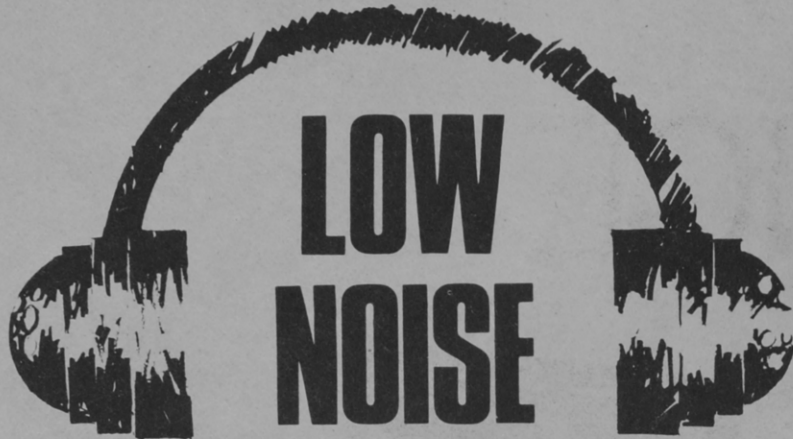
When Bow Wow Wow first appeared on the scene, under the watchful eye of Malcolm McLaren, they were signed to EMI and created much ballyhoo by saying their music would be released on cassettes only. The coupling with EMI didn't last long and neither did the 'tape only' claim. Bow Wow Wow moved on to RCA, vinyl and, in England anyway, chart action.

So EMI decided to put out all the group's 'tape only' music (never before available in this country) and their one foray into vinyl, on to one album. A worthwhile compilation.

What do you get? The infamous debut cassingle 'C30, C60, C90, Go', an energy-filled little ditty about the record buyers' revenge, extolling the virtues of home taping and its B-side, 'Sun, Sea and Piracy'. There are all eight songs off *Your Cassette Pet*, and the one vinyl release, 'W.O.R.K. (Demolition Of The Work Ethic)', plus its B-side, a Spanish version of 'C30'.


Bow Wow Wow only released 12 songs on EMI, so the remaining four are heard for the first time. Three instrumentals, 'Theme A', 'Bow Wow Wow' and 'Sex', all showcase the excellent musicianship of the band, but really need McLaren's witty lyrics to make them more than filler.

So listen to the *Original Recordings*, it's worth it. 'C30, C60', 'The Mile High Club' (produced by Colin Thurston of Duran Duran fame), 'Louis Quatorze' and 'W.O.R.K.' are all prime Bow Wow Wow. Barry Morris



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