



Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers

Gurlz RTC

The Gurlz' debut mini-album places them pretty well in the mainstream of the kiwi-pop style: Three parts of idealised sixties' nostalgia pure pop to one part of punk thrash; basically solid enough at heart but a bit rough around the edges.

All six tracks clock in at under three minutes, all eminently catchy, danceable and more than a touch tongue in cheek. Good old fashioned fun in fact and very appropriate too with summer just behind the next cloud.

'Out of Bounds', as in the snazzy video, stands out as the strongest track, although 'Shark Song' is perhaps the most interesting song but is marred by a somewhat debatable vocal effort for which, I believe, Carol Varney is responsible. 'Ze Boyz' with its wry line of FCP-ism is probably best of the rest. Surprisingly two of their highest impact live songs 'Harry was a Legend' and 'School Boyz are Best' are not included.

The performances are all pretty solid with some nice keyboard touches and Kim Willoughby's voice comes through well, although Shelly Pratt's harmonies, which are so impressive live, seem to have been recorded a bit haphazardly.

Nothing here to change the world or how you look at it, but plenty to liven up your day. Take it to the beach!
Don Mackay

This Sporting Life Show Me To The Bellrope Flying Nun

On this, their first record, This Sporting Life prove that they can sound as good on vinyl as they do

on stage. With a total of 10 tracks, the album runs to about 30 minutes. Their sound is intense and uncompromising, characterised by brooding bass lines, cleverly interspersed with some sharp lead guitar — in the capable hands of Paul Fogarty — not much melody, but plenty of beat.

Unfortunately, the otherwise satisfactory production fails to do justice to Gary Charlton's vocals, with the result that they are all but drowned out by heavy instrumentation on one or two songs.

In the lyrics, kept short and to a minimum, one finds some nice touches of cynical humour:

*Gossip, rumour and fact
Stab your friends in the back,
The hen party's started,
Dry martinis and other drinks.*

There is some excellent material on *Bellrope*, in particular 'Safe House', 'Happy' and 'W.M.T.' ('Wasting My Time').

Though some of the material sounds rather too similar, this is an exciting debut and at a mere \$6.99, who's complaining?
Raymond Russell

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers Long After Dark Backstreet

On his previous album Tom Petty flirted dangerously with LA rock-a-ballad, and even descended to a collaboration with Stevie Nicks. On *Long After Dark* he retreats back to his more familiar 'rock' style and produces a surprisingly engaging record.

Petty may sell a lot of records but he still manages to stand safely to one side of the bland out mainstream of American AOR oriented rock. He's far too much of a fundamentalist for that, adhering defiantly to the 'old-time'

guitar rock legacy of people like the Byrds and Buddy Holly: Rock songs which really are songs and really do rock, guitars used intelligently as musical instruments rather than merely as the props for crass showmanship, lyrics that relate more closely to the traditional concerns of everyday life and morality of country music, rather than the currently prevalent mixture of emotionless histrionics and soft core audio porn.

And appropriately enough it is this same sort of reaffirmation of traditional values and everyday living with which the songs on *Long After Dark* seem chiefly concerned. 'I'm just a working man, I feel each day go by' Petty testifies on 'Finding Out', which would stretch credulity somewhat coming from anybody else in his income bracket but coming from him somehow doesn't seem too outrageous.

Elsewhere he proves himself one of the few people around who can deliver lines like "Real love is a man's salvation", and "Good love is hard to find" and sound as though they really mean it. Strongest tracks are, for my money, the Buddy Holly-ish 'Deliver Me', 'We Stand a Chance' and 'Straight Into Darkness'.

All around an extremely likeable, typically modest album, of intelligently conceived, craftsman-

like, old fashioned rock'n'roll. Worth twenty of anything else that's likely to come out of California this year or next.
Don Mackay

The Exploited Troops of Tomorrow Infra-Riot Still Out of Order Chron Gen Chronic Generation Secret

Worst first. The ludicrous fantasy comic cover says it all about *Troops of Tomorrow*. The boize are out front kitted up for street fightin', sub-human vermin (can they really see their followers like that?) crawl out of the sewers to join them. Cartoon heroics from a cartoon band. The record itself is tragic — poor retreats of ideas the Clash and Sham had six years ago mixed with a new kind of hatred. The songs go nowhere. The lyrics of songs like 'Rapist' are thankfully mostly inaudible. This isn't a silence closely resembling stupidity — this is stupidity loudly exalted.

Chron Gen are an improvement, but that's not saying much. 'Hounds of the Night' and 'Friends Tell Me Lies' are passable and 'LSD' says a thing or two about drugs. There are actually two covers on the album — an

embarrassed-sounding run-through of 'Jet Boy Jet Girl' and a rather good update of 'Living Next Door to Alice' (really!), which is one of a couple of live tracks.

Infra-Riot seem to be the only ones who are anywhere near sorted out. Most of the attacks are pointed and relevant, which makes a change. They display that rare quality, a sense of humour, on tunes like 'Five Minute Fashion'. Most of the songs are about struggling against oppression (as opposed to mere politics of hate) and/or the joys of being a boot boy/punk/whatever (fair enough, if you happen to be one).

The only problem is I can't help this feeling I've heard it all before...

Russell Brown

Iggy Pop Zombie Birdhouse Animal

Rock criticism cliché No.107: This album would have made a great single. There are two songs on this record that gibber away over double beds of noise, sounding messy, self-indulgent and a little weird. Remember back when Iggy (Stooge) was considered a little weird? Before he met safe, sedate old David Bowie, before he even met that chartered accountant among guitar heroes, James Williamson (I hate James William-

son, *Kill City* is a testament to his flabby ineptitude). Back when moronic songs framed his moronic vocals and everything wuz neat. Well, these two songs have a little of that flavour to them. None of the rest have. Which, if you've liked his recent scrabbling up the rope ladder to normalcy, will please you no end.

It's becoming very apparent that Iggy is very much influenced by his producer and sidemen. John Cale and the Asheton Bros did it real good, James Williamson fucked it up something awful and Ig was partially rescued on *Raw Power* by David Bowie.

This one's made possible by the multi-successful American institution, Blondie, or at least Chris Stein on some bass and production and Clem Burke doing his stodgy, out of time, lame-frog-in-a-barrel-of-tar drum thang. So it's an uphill struggle for Iggy to get anything worthwhile done at all. He's also got this Rob Duprey person doing guitars, keyboards, backup vocals and all else', including co-writing 10 of the 12 songs, nine of which are pretty bland.

The good songs are 'Watching The News' and 'Street Crazies', both at the end of Side Two, that good old traditional place for 'adventurous' stuff. Someone send for John Cale.

Chris Knox

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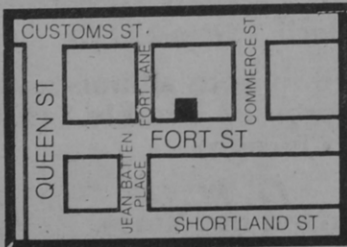
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