

Records

The Jam Dig The New Breed Polydor

No, not a Jam epitaph but a sadly fortuitous live album that was in the planning stages well before they decided to split up at the end of last year.

So let's look back and shed a few tears for a band who, along with the Sex Pistols and the Clash, were instrumental in leading rock'n'roll out of the academic excesses of the seventies and into the literate energy that characterised the best punk.

This album can't do justice to their career and it wisely doesn't attempt to, but as an indication of the Jam as a live force it succeeds with a collection of great performances. Recorded over a five year period in various venues around Britain, *Dig The New Breed* shows no sign of the lame hesitant display that plagued last year's live Jam video screened on RWP.

Side One and they start confidently with a 1977 version of 'In The City' recorded at the 100 Club and from there things get even



better with the unerring power of 'All Mod Cons', 'To Be Someone' and 'It's Too Bad'. A slight relaxation with 'Start', which I've never liked much and a pretty ordinary new appearance, 'Big Bird', make way for the sheer whack and excitement of 'Set The House Ablaze'. Side Two is even better — 'Ghosts', 'Standards' and 'In The Crowd' get no complaint. 'Going Underground', one of Weller's most important songs, is fine

although it misses the studio precision but amends are made with shuddering accounts of 'Dreams of Children', 'That's Entertainment' and 'Private Hell'.

The irony of *Dig The New Breed* could have been retitled *Dig The Dying Breed* because an era seems to have passed with the demise of the Jam. Sure their last two studio albums haven't exactly been spell-binding but their form on this live album shows that they were far from being clapped-out on stage.

Riveting, and what's needed now is a Jam singles' album (with flips) to get a real perspective on their progress.
George Kay

Orange Juice Rip It Up Polydor

After a series of unsure but intriguing early singles on the crucial Postcard label in 1980-81, Orange Juice produced one of the most satisfying and seductive pop albums of 1982 with *You Can't Hide Your Love for Ever*. Edwyn Collins' bittersweet lyrics delivered with a Bowie-while-being-strangled voice over subtle melodies never failed to bring a smile and I found myself ever so slightly addicted.

But never in a million years did I think they could follow it up. Well, here it is. If Orange Juice

haven't surpassed that first album they have, at the very least, equalled it. The band, as seen here, is radically different to that on the last album with James Kirk (no relation) and Steven Daly out and Zeke Manyika, a native Zimbabwean drummer and Malcolm Ross (ex Josef K) in. Both make a substantial difference, singing at least part of the vocals on two tracks each.

Two things are immediately obvious. The first is the increasingly adventurous attitude towards different instruments and styles. Synths, brass and strings are used and Manyika sings his two tracks in his native tongue.

The second thing to strike home is that the band is moving slowly, but surely, towards that big hit single. The hooks come at you line and sinker. Even the two African tracks are far more Westernly accessible than most of the currently chic (is it still, or did I miss that issue of *The Face*?) africana beat.

This album deserves to be a hit, but won't be until that hit single comes.

Simon Grigg Romeo Void Benefactor CBS

The *Never Say Never* EP was enough to make Romeo Void my new group of last year. This much-awaited second album (*It's A Condition* was tentative and unbefitting) has enough material to still make this a band to be reckoned with.

However their first mistake is the inclusion of 'Never Say Never', which all fans will already have in the EP version. Someone has made clumsy attempts to cut and censor the track and should be shot for it.

Three other original tracks just don't make it, because the tunes are spread too thin, with sometimes only an attractive guitar or sax motif to hold them together.

Of the better songs, 'Chinatown' would make a wonderful single, with its violent cityscape set to a typically vigorous beat. 'Flashflood' wallows in the anguish generated by a demanding and destructive lover, while 'Undercover Kept' is a tale of hooking and hustling, set to a dense disco drive. 'S.O.S.' is a dramatic slow-burner, where Iyall's reveries are evoked brilliantly by Benjamin Bossi's eerie sax. The Isaac Hayes song 'Wrap It Up' gets

an urgent, strident treatment, with Iyall's vocals recalling Patti Smith.

The merits of *Benefactor* are debatable. While it is excellent when it works, it suffers from creative sloppiness and self-indulgence. Ultimately, it must serve as an honest portrait of the strengths and weaknesses of a very promising, but still very young band.

Duncan Campbell

Whitesnake Saints and Sinners Liberty

The latest in a trio of excellent studio albums from the most worthwhile band to emerge from the demise of Deep Purple. Whitesnake continue the fine tradition of a seventies brand of rock initiated by Bad Company. Eschewing the endless guitar solos and obsessions with dark forces so prevalent among their contemporaries, Bad Company instead concentrated on the dynamics and pacing of their songs.

And so, despite boasting a lineup (Coverdale, Marsden, Moody, Lord and Paice) who could solo their way through an album with their eyes closed, Whitesnake play as a unit and present us with 10 new hard driving, hard drinking songs. They're about good old boys lurching from one drunken heartache to the next, with lyrics to make even the most tolerant feminist wince.

This is unpretentious, partying, good time music. It's the last album to feature Bernie Marsden and Ian Paice let's hope the new recruits can continue the high standard set by their predecessors.
Chris Caddick

Squeeze Singles, 45s and Unders A&M

Under-rated's the word for Squeeze. Definitely. Now disbanded, Squeeze made two fine albums (*East Side Story* and *Argybargy*) and several, let's say, patchy ones. In fact the title of this album has been chosen with special care, for few of the collected singles here were hits and, ironically, those that were, 'Cool for Cats' (novelty) and 'Labelled with Love' (country) are the least typical of their style.

That style was defined partly by their use of Chris Difford's bottom harmony against Glen Tilbrook's

high lead vocal, but more particularly in the setting of Difford's kitchen-sink dramas to Tilbrook's post-Beatles melodies, even if it did take Elvis Costello, as producer on *East Side Story*, to draw the most from the partnership.

The good news is that, reportedly, Difford and Tilbrook will continue to work together but, in the meantime, *Singles, 45s and Unders* serves as a solid collection of some of their best work from the past five years. But it's only a sample of their best. So if this whets your appetite, work backward from here.
Alastair Dougal

Vic Godard and the Subway Sect Songs for Sale London

Vic Godard is essentially a stylist. He adopts a feel or piece of imagery and develops it to create something new, but still a little worn around the edges. On the first album the influence was that of the Velvet Underground, via the Beatnik generation. This time round it's predominantly the era of Cole Porter and Nat King Cole treated to an eighties swing feel. Perhaps, many nights at Ronnie Scott's jazz club modified Godard's tastes.

One couldn't begin to tag this album, because of its diversity and its alienation from most modern music. A synthesis of ideas and thoughts both old and new, both musical and lyrical. All but three of the songs are Godard's, the exceptions being 'Just In Time', 'Dilletante' by keyboardist Dave Collard, and Cole Porter's 'Love for Sale'. The last is a difficult song, treated by Godard with the respect it deserves.

Though far from a perfect album, *Songs For Sale* does contain some riveting pieces. The single 'Hey Now (I'm In Love)' for instance, or the unflappable coolness of 'No Style', where he tells his ex-girlfriend that her new beau is a clod.

Behind him, the Subway Sect have adapted admirably to this most unmodern of styles, demonstrating their ability to cope with whatever Godard may dream up. *Songs For Sale*, recorded last year, is likely to bear no resemblance to anything he may release this year.
Mark Phillips

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