



this, his first dub album, in 1976. Yabby was responsible for the rhythms, including some used previously by the Prophets, and King Tubby added his studio mastery.

Like Keith Hudson in the same era, the drums and bass are turned right up and the rhyhm takes control. Horns and Hammond organ add punctuation, and tracks like the haunting 'Conquering Dub' take off. *King Tubby's Prophecy of Dub* was previously only available on a limited circulation vinyl pressing, and more power to the new labels like Blood and Fire for these reissues.

MARK REVINGTON

THE WHO Live at Leeds
(Polydor)

When the Who played Auckland in the 60s, Keith Moon's drumkit was nailed to the Town Hall floor. Even then, he and Townshend managed to kick bits of it loose for the instrument samshing finale.

By the time the band recorded this set at Leeds University in 1970, such shenanigans were (almost) behind them. They were a unit that had established itself as pretty well the most exciting live act on the planet.

At 14 minutes-plus, 'My Generation' may go on too long for today's ears, but back then it was cited as proof that Entwistle and Moon were the premier rhythm section in rock. Their empathy and interplay still sound awesome, as do most of the tracks. *Live at Leeds* stands as the best hard-rocking live album of its era.

The original vinyl issue contained just six tracks and clocked in at 39 minutes. Here you get 14 tracks totalling 77 minutes. (Though even that's not the full set. They also performed the complete Tommy at an hour and a quarter.)

This re-issue could well induce disgraceful behaviour among fans of Townshend's generation. Practice that full-arm guitar swing, crank up the amp to 11, and drive the household away.

PETER THOMPSON

THE BOO RADLEYS Wake Up!
(Creation/Sony)

Lou Reed once sang: 'My life was saved by rock 'n' roll,' and for the Boo Radleys' Martin Carr, salvation has likewise been provided by guitars and a backbeat. As an alternative to the suburban hell of Wallesey in England's North-West, Carr's rock 'n' roll fantasies were lived out in all their sprawling, eclectic, psychedelic splendour on 1993's *Giant Steps*. Strewn with references to Carr's own favourite albums, *Giant Steps* was almost too clever for its own good, but remained streets ahead of the chasing Brit-pack of 93.

Carr's vision for *Giant Steps*' successor was a pop album with 12 songs. So, rather than wilfully introducing the rogue elements that made *Giant Steps* such a treat, Carr and band have gone for the big, obvious verse/chorus formula, and in so doing have sold themselves short. Sure, the Boo Radleys' brilliance means they probably do 'pop songs' better than most, but the edge of greatness that permeated *Giant Steps* is lacking from the album as a whole. The signposts to classic albums past are still there, making comparisons with the likes of the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds* obvious, if rather generous. For while the best of *Wake Up!* does soar to lofty heights, it doesn't operate in the rarefied air of *Pet Sounds* and *Revolver* et al. The glam 'n' glockenspiel (yes, glockenspiel!) swagger of 'Find the Answer Within', the climactic finale of 'Stuck on Amber' and the brooding closer 'Wilder' are mightily impressive. Yet, equally, there are moments when the psychedelia sounds contrived rather than inspired, and the arrangements overwrought.

For all that it has to commend it, *Wake Up!* ends up sounding strangely shallow in comparison to what has gone before. It's as if *Wake Up!* was the sketch-pad for *Giant Steps*, rather than the other way around. Ultimately *Wake Up!* hints at more than it can deliver.

MARTIN BELL

VARIOUS ARTISTS Original Motion Picture
Soundtrack: Faraway, So Close!
(Electrola)

Nick Cave majestically sums up an entire movie within the first lines of this soundtrack. 'Empty out your pockets / Toss the lot upon the floor / All those treasures, my friend / You don't need them anymore...' he sings on the title track, instantly conjuring up visions of the film's angels. His heavenly (or should that be heaven bound?) 'Cassiel's Song' is also present.

Lou Reed's nightclub spot, 'Why Can't I Be Good?', recalls the film's coolest cameo. The single version of U2's 'Stay (Faraway, So Close!)' (minus Bono singing the guitar breaks) would have been preferable to the alternate verison here, but the desolation befitting the film remains intact. U2 also contribute 'The Wanderer', with lead vocals by Johnny Cash.

On the more ethereal side of things, Jane Siberry rejoins the Wenders roll call with the delicate 'Slow Tango'. Laurie Anderson delivers the highly evocative 'Tightrope' and the tender 'Speak My Language'. The final third of the album consists of Laurent Pettigand's sublime orchestral score.

It's a curiously mixed bag. Some of the padding not mentioned above will have you scampering for the CD player's skip button (German singer Herbert Grönemeyer's bile inducing 'Chaos' in particular). Nevertheless, Cave, Anderson and Pettigand's contributions are more than enough reason to cherish this album.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

SLEEPER Smart
(Indolent/BMG)

Smart is a bold name for a debut album, for if it's anything less than that you're gonna end up with egg all over your face. Luckily Sleeper have a trump card in the sexy, sassy and forthright Louise Wener, whose lyrics are not afraid to send up the prevalent right-on-ness and pseudo-liberalism of much of her generation. Louise, it seems, is a woman who enjoys nothing more than a good, hard shag — but on her own terms, mind you. 'We should both go to bed, till we make each other sore,' she sings on 'Delicious', while 'Swallow' contains the charming couplet: 'There / He comes / She swallows'.

Smart's coup de grace is 'Inbetweenier' — the sort of opening track which has you reach-

ing for the repeat button the moment it finishes. Its audacious brilliance begs another listen — were your ears lying, or was it really that good? The answers are 'no, they weren't' and 'yes, it is'. 'Inbetweenier's sublime melodies, urgent guitar lines and the evocative imagery of the lyrics all mesh in three minutes of perfection — which has the unfortunate side-effect of whetting the appetite to a degree the rest of the album has difficulty in sating. After a caviar and Chateau de Rothschild entrée like that, boiled potatoes and cordial for the main course tends to stick in your throat.

Actually, that's rather an unkind analogy, for 'Twisted', with its sing-along, bull horn chorus, is only a small notch below 'Inbetweenier' and there's nary a duff track amongst the remaining 10. Mostly, though, they are solid rather than spectacular, betraying their influences (Pixies in particular) a little too readily. In all, there's no disguising the fact *Smart* is a hugely encouraging debut, and a sure fire statement that Sleeper are unlikely to slumber in obscurity for much longer.

MARTIN BELL

ROKY ERIKSON All That May Do My Rhyme
(Trance Sydicate/Flying In)

There are times when it seems like the legacy of the 60s has been reduced to well moneyed hippy burnouts pumping out bland MOR rock. Then an album like this comes along and everything is well again.

Erikson has had his troubles (being tossed in an asylum by the State of Texas doesn't exactly help the rock career) but, despite everything, he's remained a powerful songwriter and an evocative performer. Roky is backed by some local Austin types here, including Charlie Sexton, and although this album was recorded in bits and pieces over a nine year period, they sound just fine. The voice is a little creaky and fragile at times, but fundamentally the songs are so damn good it doesn't matter, and when Roky's pipes do what they should, the album just soars.

There's a folky feel to this, with flashes of the old Thirteenth Floor Elevators vibe turning up and keeping things from the straight and narrow. Considering how small and poorly represented Erikson's musical output has been over the last decade, *All That May Do My Rhyme* becomes not only a very fine album, but a pretty essential document of a great mans work.

KIRK GEE

