



Adam Ant

mas with the Walker Brothers, to his seminal solo torch singing era of the later 60s, Scott Walker was widely tipped as having the pitch, phrasing and interpretative ability of a budding Sinatra. But Walker was a reclusive, reluctant singer, with a phobia about live performance, and a declining confidence that has left only *Climate of Hunter* as fresh evidence of his artistic existence over the last 10 years or so.

The Walker flame was kept alive by campaigns like Julian Cope's well publicised rantings about the former's god-like genius. Now, 10 years in the making and three years after its anticipated release, *Tilt* has unobtrusively hit the streets. It shares certain similarities with *Climate* — right from Pete Walsh's production to Walker's predilection for sparse, abstract,

and what he calls 'trance-like' songs.

Only on the excellent title track does a guitar squirm in anger or an arrangement threaten to get up tempo. The rest is strained and desolate, and although there's consolation in the beautiful, chilling 'Farmer in the City', and in the strung out melancholy of 'Manhattan' and 'Patriot', *Tilt* is too stark to be totally embraced by non-Scott Walker aficionados.

GEORGE KAY

**ANNIE LENNOX** *Medusa*  
(RCA)

Although one expects any rock-era remake to be viewed in the light of the original version, the first single from Annie Lennox's collection

of covers has virtually escaped such scrutiny. That's because the first 'No More "I Love You"' remains almost unknown outside the UK. Not so, however, the originals of *Medusa*'s other nine tracks.

In almost every case Lennox's version is more complex. Her vocal rendition may be reverent, but it also usually embedded in an arrangement which is considerably busier, and frequently more dramatic than the original.

For instance, the Clash's 'Train In Vain' builds to a call and response finale reminiscent of gospel music. The simple drums and piano plonk that once accompanied Neil Young's 'Don't Let It Bring You Down' have been replaced by huge sweeps of synth and a background chorale of multi-tracked Lennoxs. Even her revisit to the Blue Nile — her reading of 'The Gift' was a highlight on her last album — becomes overblown towards the end.

A few of the song choices seem somewhat curious. At least two received well known remakes in the 1980s. The Pretenders did 'Thin Line Between Love and Hate', although Lennox's treatment has a great new prowling bassline. But then her version of 'Take Me to the River' is redundantly similar to Talking Heads'.

Perhaps a couple of the tracks are deliberately provocative. She's de-ragged 'Waiting In Vain', which will doubtless disgust Marley fans. There's also her inclusion of that chestnut/cliche 'A Whiter Shade of Pale', which, in a relatively low key delivery, will either delight or repel.

Where Lennox and her production team — the same as on *Diva* — have unquestionably succeeded in giving the collection her identity. With its largely synthetic instrumentation and effects in support of her remarkable voice, *Medusa* unquestionably sounds like an Annie Lennox album.

(One afterthought: all these songs were originally recorded by males. Didn't the medusa of mythology turn any man to stone who got within her vision?)

PETER THOMPSON

**DURAN DURAN** *Thank You*  
(EMI)

**ADAM ANT** *Wonderful*  
(EMI)

Well, a bunch of old tossers hoping you'll agree with their album titles. First on the chopping block - Simon Le Bon and his millionaire plaything (No) *Thank You*. Phew. If it was a comedy album it might've been a hit. But if you ever needed evidence that pop has not only eaten itself, it's projectile vomited and sat on its colostomy bag, here it is.

Duran Duran doing '911 is a Joke'. Imagine how bad it *could* be — then multiply by 54,673. Bit of acoustic ('The kids are into some guy called Buck or something, Mr Le Bon' — "Can we rip him off and look cool, Mr Record company adviser?"), Simon down a phone line, putting on an American accent, complaining about the emergency services in black neighbourhoods. Hmnnnn.

But wait, there's more. Ha ha ha. There are Led Zeppelin covers, Iggy Pop, Elvis Costello — ouch. The only thing worth more than a chortle is Bob Dylan's 'Lay Lady Lay', just because Bob covers are always better than Bob originals ('Writes great songs but sounds like constipated orangutan that's been liberally beaten around the head,' it said on his singing teacher's report).

Onwards. Adam Ant — the ultimate sell out punk. Mind you, this album is like the comeback of the century. Not comeback as in everyone's running around in warpaint going: "Our pop hero has returned." *Wonderful* is a comeback in that it's not the biggest, steamiest load of shite you've heard all year (like everything else he's put out since the mid-80s). I'm as surprised with writing that compliment as you are to read it!

As far as pop goes, Ant is like a walking museum piece that knows his history. Genius steals etc. The album opens with 'Won't Take That Talk', pinches the intro from Floyd's 'Brain Damage', the strum from Bowie's 'Starman' at a slower pace and, wait, was that guitar jingle the edge from 'Where the Streets Have No Name'? They're all blended to make something originally Adam Ant of course, and it's not that bad either, with Boz Boorer's guitars brightening things up. It's followed by the toe curling awfulness of 'Beautiful Dream', which sounds like the Thompson Twins. But before too long '1969 Again' pops up, all Blur meets PIL with amusing lyrics ('God makes us pay for our sins — that's why he gave us the bingly bongly children').

Adam Ant has become the Elton John of the

90s. Both of their careers moved from outrage to MOR as they grew old with their audience, and meant nothing to the kids.

JOHN TAITE

#### BANSHEE REEL

An Orchestrated Litany Of Lies  
(Loaded Records)

Banshee Reel have released an album at a time when, for a band to call themselves Celtic, is the immediate kiss of death.

Celtic groups have taken over the mantle of the Top 40 covers band as something that gets the philistines jumping, and leaves the serious music fan heading for the nearest exit. But Celtic, or Celtic influenced music, like everything, has its good and bad exponents. With *An Orchestrated Litany of Lies*, Banshee Reel have proved themselves nearer the former than the latter.

While tending away from the good-time stomp of their live performances, the band makes up for it with well written songs, intelligent arranging and skillful playing.

When Allan Clark sings, one first thinks of Spider Stacy, and there are other similarities to the second generation Pogues — the frequent forays into pop and the experiments into other folk styles. The Alan Norman written 'In Yer Dreams' is a fast country hoe-down track which should be on the juke box of every provincial diner, and should be leapt around to by every farmboy who ever fancied himself as Billy the Kid.

'Blood On Your Hands' has a slavic rhythm, and lyrically expresses what appear to be the Banshee's favourite topics: love, romance, blood and death. These themes reoccur in 'Never Can Tell' and '40 Miles Of Pain'. '40 Miles' bombards the listener with a seamless array of images linked together over a solid Celtic beat. Julia Deans sings on 'Honest to God', a great pop track, enhanced by Gavin Duncan's fiddle playing. It is unfortunate the band don't use her more on lead vocals.

Perhaps the album would have been more complete without the reggae-flavoured 'Burn Me' or the reprise of 'Lament', which doesn't seem to add much to the overall package. But with the inclusion of the dreamy 'Horses', everything else is forgiven. If there is one track on the album that should be listened to repeatedly, it's this. It may not rock the foundations of popular culture. We may have heard it before. It may have been done a thousand times over. But then again, what hasn't?

DONALD REID

#### VARIOUS Tank Girl,

Music From the Motion Picture Soundtrack  
(Elektra)

Executive music co-ordinator Courtney Love-Cobain has pulled together a diverse collection of tracks to blast and cajole Tank Girl through her adventures in the upcoming movie. Bjork's 'Army of Me', Devo's 'Girl You Want', L7's 'Shove' and Ice T's 'Big Gun' strike me as inspired choices for the apocalypse's coolest heroine to listen to. But I bet she wouldn't listen to the kind of lame Belly track ('Thief') that's included. As for the Joan Jett and Paul Westerberg duet of 'Let's Do It', I don't think anyone listened to it before it was released. It sounds like two hoary old rockers revisiting the kind of singing rounds you get taught in primary school. Nasty.

If you want to hear Bjork, buy *Post*. If you want to hear Portishead, buy *Dummy*. If you want to hear the Magnificent Bastards (who feature Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots on vocals) more than once, you probably don't deserve to be let loose in a record store. What I mean to say is, this is not one of those soundtracks that makes good continuous listening, although there are some great songs on it.

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

**SHAMPOO** *We Are Shampoo*  
(EMI)

**SALAD** *Drink Me*  
(Island)

Well I loved 'Trouble'; 'Better get home, quick march on the double,' and all that. Never thought they'd come up with an album though. Shampoo, who sound like a teenage cross between the vocals of Bananarama and the punk pop guitar feel of Carter USM, are Carrie and Jacqui, the plastic fantastic. They live in some Never Never Land of pints and sweets, boys and toys, girly whirly cuteness and arrogant bitchiness. Songs like 'Game Boy', 'Skinny White Thing' and 'Viva La Megababes'. Anthems like 'Trouble' and 'Saddo' (with its pissed in a disco chorus of: 'You're a loser,



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