

**GET YOUR
ROCKS OFF**
BIFF BOURGUIGNON

THE COMSAT ANGELS: Will You Stay Tonight?, 12", Jive.

With this record, the group has moved from being one that I have, in the past, appreciated to one I truly like. This rich, invigorating effort is one I have difficulty in imagining anyone not liking.

AVENGERS: Avengers, LP, CD.

Alright you skinhead punks, what the fuck are you waiting for? Get out and buy this record and find out what it was really all about in 1977 when garage music was just that and there was really something revolting going on. No more imitations! This is the one.

SHRIEKBACK: Lined Up (Remix), 12", Y.

As remixing goes (and it does go on and on) this isn't a bad one. Worth it, in fact. If you like the group and/or the song don't miss this one.

DUET EMMO: Or So It Seems, LP, Mute.

If you are familiar with what happened to the old group Wire and its split up into the new duet of Gilbert and Lewis on the one hand and Colin Newman on the other, then this record needs no more explanation. It follows in the Gilbert and Lewis "Dome" series tradition. Even the addition of Daniel Miller has not significantly changed the sound which is somewhat of a surprise. The title track "Or So It Seems" is the only cut with a standard melodic line and lyrics, etc. The 12" of this song alone appeared a while ago and is a must-buy. It's still available and since it is an extended dreamy mix you should get it as well as this album. If you're not familiar with this group, then imagine science fiction, dance, industrial, post-melodic, "Eraserhead" music and you might have *half* the idea. This is so hard to explain. It is mood music of a special sort. Reaction to this kind of seemingly structureless music is always varied. It can, on occasion, clear rooms. If your tastes have extended into so-called "New Music," i.e. modern experimental classical music, then you have a head start in liking this kind of post-neo-non-wave music. If you have trouble seeing the beauty and purpose of the repetitive, then this is not for you. Call it Western Industrial Mantra Music. Oh, I give up, have them play it for you at Rough Trade and call it anything you like.

THE CHAMELEONS: Script of the Bridge, LP, Statik.

If you have all these guys' singles, then you probably don't need this album. There are only five new cuts on this album and the remixes of some of the singles are not as good as the singles themselves. In addition, the sound level is so low on this record that you have to crank the sucker to the ceiling to get the full effect. If, however, you had the poor sense to miss all their singles, you better get this because I don't think you can get them all now. In particular, my favorite is "Less Than Human," which if you don't have the 7" is worth the price of the album alone even though the mix isn't as good. The music is sad, haunting, and modern. Serious listening and very good.

NEW ORDER: Confusion, 12", Streetwise.

New Ordeal — sorry, New Order has finally crossed over. Imagine Heaven 17 at their depth of dreck amalgamated with Depeche Mode when they've all come down with the flu with a rhythm section by Michael Jackson and keyboards by Mordor — sorry, Morodor himself. Your worst nightmare has come to life as the last gasp of creativity leaves the corpse with a grinning rictus of vinyl as its legacy. I don't even want to know what they think they're doing. Please, New Order, commit seppuku and do the honorable thing.

KILLING JOKE: Fire Dances, LP, EG.

Certainly there is nothing new here in the creative sense. Sometimes, however, more of the same is preferable to a decline. For the Killing Joke fan, this will be another one to add to the collection and enjoy, but it lacks the excitement the group had in its beginnings with songs like "Requiem" and "Wardance." With the split ups and reformations that this group has gone through it may be amazing enough that they can maintain the consistency that they do.



COMSAT ANGELS: Land, LP, Jive.

A very tight, together album that is pleasant, melodic, professional and just plain good. Both the ballads and the dance tunes are done well, which is a feat many groups cannot perform. Nice package, too. !

HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS: The Fireman's Curse, LP, Virgin.

There was evidence in the first album that the group could appear quite psychotic, but this album takes any doubt away. Very strange and very appealing in the sense that you are compelled to listen to figure out just what they're getting at. Don't try too hard, because I don't think it's possible. The album will have less wide appeal than the first, but it's just as good. This just takes a little more patience and perserverence to get the full benefit. A lot more use of brass and more full use of the lead singer's caustic voice.

X: More Fuln in the New World, LP, Elektra.

Ho, hum. Tinny, shallow, boring, monotonous, etc., AND just like everything they've done.

SHOXSIE AND THE BANSHEES: Dear Prudence, 12", Wonderland.

Everybody wants to be the Beatles "cept for me and my monkey!" Not a bad arrangement — just sort of pointless. The B-side, as usual, is experimental and much better, but still below Siouxsie par.

PLAY DEAD: Shine, 12", Situation.

Lots of potential here. I like both sides. The sound is rich, not too cluttered, and strikes a nice balance between harsh and harmonic.

TRANSLATOR: No Time Like Now, LP, 415.

The first thing that's interesting about the record is that the mix is so superior to the mix Elektra gave X on their latest album. This one was cut right here in town. Sort of makes you wonder how strongly Warner Bros. feels about X if they couldn't do better than the shabby production value mix from New York. As to the music, it's good (like their last album), but lacks the excitement I need to give it an A. They are still a B group.

SKAFISH: Conversation, LP, IRS.

What ever happened to? Well, he obviously was working out the reincarnation of soul/disco/rock music like a lot of people lately. Complete with Yeah-yeah-shebop girls oohing in the background and standard guitar rifs. Seriously, though, it's better nostalgic music than most. Not my bag, man.

JOHN FOX: The Golden Section, LP, Metal Beat.

Is the title supposed to tell us that this is Foxx plays Pythagoras? Largely, this is bland, bland, bland and such a disappointment from the man who gave us such innovation in the last five years. I must have six records with "Endlessly" on them. I guess the song lives up to its title. He doesn't even play the keyboards on a lot of the songs. The words are facile and stupid and the music is like baby food — nothing to sink your teeth into. I won't even say "Nice try, John."

KILLING JOKE: Me or You?, 12", E.G.

The joke died on this A-side. The worst thing ever cut into plastic by the group. But it was the best of cuts; it was the worst of cuts. The B-side cut called "Willful Days" is one of the best things they've ever done and therefore will probably not appear on the next album. Mark my words.

THE MOTELS: Little Robbers, LP, Capitols.

Do you listen to the radio and enjoy what you hear? Yes? Then rush out and buy this album. Sounds like many people, including Men at Work Prince, etc. Highly marketable, and quite disposable.



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BIFF BOURGUIGNON

P.O. Climbing Thieves Vie for Attention, LP, Rough Trade.

Fascinating recording featuring: Bruce Gilbert, Graham Lewis, A. C. Marias, etc., which is unlike and yet like previous Gilbert-Lewis efforts. Very industrial as is the usual genre for them, but a little different. One of the main differences is the use of voice more extensively than on previous recordings. All in all, a very good record for those into the industrial sound.

COCTEAU TWINS: Head Over Heels, LP, 4AD.

Pure, unadulterated bliss, as usual, from one of my favorite groups. Ethereal, hypnotic, trance-like, and generally wonderful. Elizabeth's voice just sends me. Solid guitar work, wonderful production, beautiful package, etc.

*BUY.

PLAYGROUP: Going Overdrawn, 12", Cherry Red.

Rhythm as magic as method. Very exotic sounding. The B-side (Forty Winks) is better than the A-side. Somewhat experimental but yet still quite accessible.

THE CURE: The Love Cats, 12", Fiction.

Robert Smith would find his time better spent in productive collaborations such as The Glove than continuing to press progressively weaker and weaker material as The Cure. That's my prescription.

SPK: Metal Dance, 12", Desire.

The key word here is "dance." Yes, SPK has gone dance-band. The cover of the record shows the group looking very leather along the lines of Depeche Mode gone DAF. Although I think I prefer their more serious stuff with greater shock value, this is good dance music and not without its serious undercurrent. At times it reminds me of Throbbing Gristle, but the main reminiscence is of DAF. Good stuff.

FRONT 242: Endless Riddance, EP, Himalaya.

Powerful electronics with intelligence and ingenuity. A definite YES.

GENE LOVES JEZEBEL: Promise, LP, Situation.

The only problem Gene Loves Jezebel ever has is sounding too dense in some of their numbers. By that, I mean they sound a little muddy and the good aspects of each song are not shown off to the greatest advantage. It's only a minor problem, though, because I still like them a whole lot. I feel that they will remain something of a B band rather than an A band, though.

CALIFORNIA VOICE, November 18, 1983, Page 26

GET YOUR PROUD

BIFF BOURGUIGNON

DR ALIVE: What I Want, 7", Epic.

Burns must have won the rge look-a-like contest for 1983, told that he's been doing the a lot longer. He prefers a less lip gloss and a baggier, less k with eyes that are much less ic. All this aside, the music is d - better than Culture Club. upid cover doesn't make a record. Profound.

MORTAL COIL: Song to the Siren, 7" and 12", 4AD.

most anything 4AD presses is he money. This group features d singer from Cocteau Twins ne elements of Modern Eng- l colour box for an effect that is ting. The title cut is slow and ate like an Eyeless in Gaza r. The other side is a beautiful at is largely instrumental with complex sound that sounds ke Cocteau Twins. Strong beat int of her wonderful yodel. A nvestment.

IE: This Is The Day, 12", Some Bizarre.

y nice A-side but a little sac- (but less os than his last ef- ut then, that's sort of a trade- ow. The B-side, however, is y, with a much more serious and a rich background com- ting a more focused singing lew album to come soon.

DEUTSCHLAND: Incubus Succubus II, 12", 4AD.

s started as a rather obscure i group on Zick Zack, and ey were good, they were not rners. With the 4AD touch and tion value, the group has suc- in crossing over that barrier now very good indeed. Still rman and very gutsy, but with

a refined mix and production that is the 4AD specialty. If you thought all the Germans could do is whistful electronic background music, this is an excellent introduction to the other side of German rock.

NINA HAGEN: Angstlos, LP, CBS.

Speaking of Germans, here comes Nina again. For me, this doesn't cut it like the last few albums. I like the Berlin cabaret pre-WWII sound on one cut and the Lene Lovich imitation on another, but by and large this album didn't reach out and grab me like the last one did. I have a sick feeling that the fact that Giorgio Morodor co-produced the album might have a lot to do with its lack of punch. There are moments where the inexcusable Morodor sound seeps, like PCB's, into Nina's groundwater. Unless you are rabid for her, this is a thumbs down.

THE UNITS: A Girl Like You, 12", Epic.

The last time I saw The Units live, they stank. The keyboards were weak and dilute, the singing was annoying and the sound lacked an overall depth resulting in a tinny looseness that was less than impressive. This record is the last to be produced by Cotten, which will be no great loss to the group. Maybe it will be the last song with a sexist title, too. The album to follow was recorded in Wales and is produced by Bill Nelson. It will undoubtedly bear his mark. There have been personnel changes, too (all for the good). The new sound on this single is very pop, very commerical, quite pleasant - but not my style. I have heard tapes of the new album and think it far superior to this Cotten farewell. Certainly, there's no doubt that they are miles ahead of where they were, and this single will have good radio and commercial success. So if you like it lightweight, get this one. I'll be waiting for the album in early '84.

THE GLOVE: Blue Sunshine, LP, Wonderland.

Steven Severin of the Banshees and Robert Smith of The Cure are the guiding force behind this group. This is a very important record that is so subtle, it could be overlooked. There is a little psychedelic nostalgia here, a little memory of the Beatles, and excellent playing by all involved. I like it more with every playing. So if the

Blue Meanies of the 80's are after you, relax, and enjoy one of the freshest recordings pressed this year.

LOVE TRACTOR: Around the Bend, LP, DB.

Another Athens, Georgia band with that distinctive sound, but this differs in that it is totally background music suitable for that moody atmosphere you've been trying to create without appearing banal. Try thinking what Pylon's first album might have sounded like if they did an E-Z listening version for the elevators of America.

FREUR: Runaway, 7", CBS.

The B-side is more interesting but both sides are worth it. Fewer special effects and a less romantic sound. Their first album should be interesting.

HUNTERS AND HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS: Hunters and Collectors, LP, OZ.

Three songs stand out: "Talking to a Stranger," "Towtruck," and "Run, Run, Run," which isn't bad considering the length of two of the above. A very strong debut album worth picking up. A little romance, a little dirge, a little serious morbidity, and good overall musicianship.

ERRATUM: The first half of the review of Depeche Mode last issue was tacked to the last half of the review of XTC's Mummer album. The Depeche Mode is a definite yes while the XTC is a qualified no. Sorry.

BAUHAUS: Bauhaus, EP, 4AD.

Early Bauhaus at their best with the 4AD touch adding so much to the sound. Two excellent remixes of "Terror Couple Killed Colonel." Well worth the money for some really nice Bauhaus with better sound quality and production values than the original pressings.

FAD GADGET: I Discovered Love, 12", Mute.

I am rarely in suspended judgment over anything, but I am with this one. It is so different for the group I'm not sure where I am let alone where they are. Fad is even using his real name. They've downplayed the electronics to near extinction and added a lot of brass: much more caustic bass and singing and a throbbing beat. If forced to say one way or the other I think I lean to not liking this very

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The Bookkeeper

DAVID DASHIELL

DULUTH
BY GORE VIDAL
RANDOM HOUSE, NEW YORK 1983

Gore is at it again. Nothing is safe from his rapier wit in his latest book in his continuing attempt to pull down America's pants in the grand tradition of *Myra Breckenridge* and *Myron*. What's different this time is that the English language itself gets a beating, or perhaps I should say the American language, if you are one of those who consider tired academic diatribes and Harlequin romances part of the language. In *Duluth*, Vidal does not poke fun at these writing styles. He

Canyon, a giant swamp, and a large red flying saucer that is sticky to the touch and mahages' to move every time a thumbtack is moved by the police chief. To the north are the icy tundras of Canada; to the east, New Orleans; to the west, Tulsa; and to the south, of course, is Tiajuana. This is Duluth in real life in the novel as opposed to the Duluth, the television series, where characters are reincarnated when they die in the novel, unless they end up in serialized historical romance novels in *Redbook* magazine, where they attempt to give clues to the living in Duluth. That is, *Duluth*, as opposed to Duluth, or "Duluth." Are you still following me?

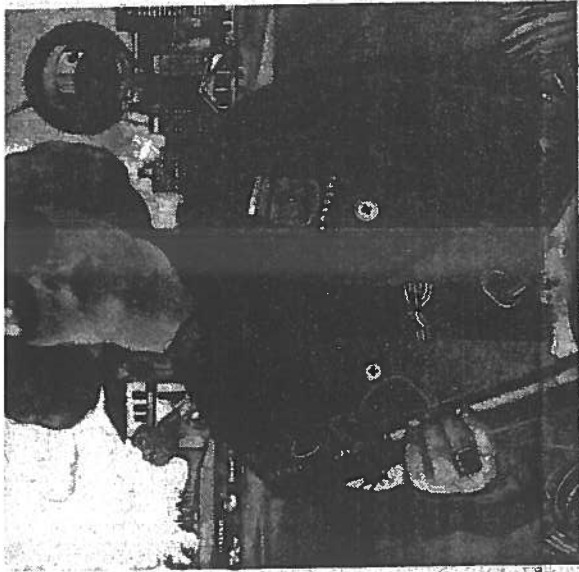
This novel is rife with protagonists and antagonists, who change their status and motive from page to page. If one wishes to keep track of them (why bother? the ride's fun enough as it is) it would take a rather large and cumbersome scorecard. In order to spare you the agony of attempting to follow the various machinations of character development in this strange volume, I will present you with a short portrait of one of the more savory characters, Darlene Ecks (see photo, above), or more properly, Police Lieutenant Darlene Ecks, the future wife of the future mayor of Duluth. That is *Duluth*, as opposed to Duluth, or "Duluth." Are you still following me?

Police Lieutenant Darlene Ecks is master of the strip search, constantly on the lookout for illegal aliens. Her strip searches are infamous among the Latino community, and the city of "give me an okra and two prunes" raises an anguished cry from the macho Latino men, who live in anguished fear of her slow strip searches, where she stomps on their corn-infested feet (the result of wearing tight shoes), and pushes their "okra and two prunes" into their naked torsos. Her life changes, of course, when she forces a black cocaine dealer/bartender to rape her at gunpoint. Love has many faces.

In the grand tradition of the dust-cover tease, I won't go into any more detail concerning the sordid details of the wanton lives of those who spend their days and spend their nights, and their evenings and mornings in *Duluth*. Go read it yourself. And as you read it, thank God that Gore Vidal lives in Italy, so that he can't be deported. This novel is not the stuff that Congressional Medals of Honor are made of, but it sure is more American.

GORE VIDAL
DULUTH
A NOVEL





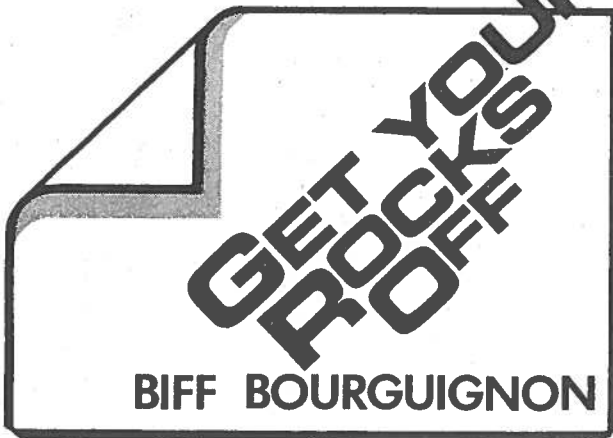
blatantly their to death. Totally. On the dust jackets of most novels are usually found short mini-reviews of the contents, written in glowing praise of the author, and promising unheard-of delights for the reader-to-be. These mini-reviews are also very helpful for lazy book reviewers, allowing them to rearrange and plagiarize, without the muss and fuss of cracking the spine of the tome in question. This novel does not give one the chance to do so. The following is the complete cover blurb for *Duluth*:

Duluth rips the lid off *Dallas*.

This, of course, is a nasty marketing technique, known as a tease. It forced me to read the book in question, to see if *Duluth* does rip the lid off *Dallas*. It does. It also rips the lid off popular geography, popular science, popular novels, socialites, police-women, drug dealers, masculinity, femininity (but not homosexuality — some things are sacred!), blacks, whites, chicanos, architecture, science fiction, apres-post-structuralism, any other ism that happens to be current, and last, but not least, the presidency of the United States (in this novel, there are six current American presidents, but nobody can remember their names).

This is not the *Duluth* that you and I learned of in fifth grade American geography. Gore Vidal's *Duluth* somehow manages to contain the Grand

ENTERTAINMENT



FALCO: *Der Kommissar* - 12" A&M

There are more hooks on this three-song ep than in a fly-fisherman's hat. Currently the hottest thing on more than one continent, *Der Kommissar* is like discoid bilingual rap and contagious. Beware of imitations! The ATF album with their version of *Der Kommissar* bears the same relationship to the original as Velveeta does to real cheese. The other two cuts on this ep are good too. Great party music. Forget buying the album though; it's all here.

KISSING THE PINK: *The Last Film* - 12" Magnet Records

Great existential rock to be had here with exceptionally good lyrics. They reflect the alienation we're all feeling right now. (Aren't we?). Use the headphones with this one and get lost!

OMD: *Dazzle Ships* - LP Telegraph Records

As you may have expected from listening to the recent release of *Genetic Engineering* from this album on single, this is really disappointing. Some interesting effects and a few intriguing lyrics do not of themselves make a good album even if you are OMB! We were not dazzled. Songs like *ABC Auto Industry* are as sappy as a Hanna-Barberra cartoon and the rest of the album is just simply forgettable disposable new wave. They could open a Dispoteque!?

SHRIEKBACK: *Care* - LP Y Records

What are these people up to? What deeper significance am I supposed to be getting from this music? I don't care; I like it. It's intelligent and at times hard to decipher. It's an album that makes you work a little and that's just fine. This is think music.

GABI DELGADO: *Mistress* - LP Virgin Records and
ROBERT GORL: *Mit Dir* EP Mute Records

Well, who was the one with the *real* talent in DAF? The answer now becomes apparent: neither of them, separately. What a lot of great musicianship, Gabi; too bad the songs are like sludge. And you, Robert, did Gabi dissolve the group because he's tired of hearing your hip-thrust vocalizations, like I am? Neither of these guys seem worth the price of admission unless they perform together.

DAVID BOWIE: *Let's Dance* - LP EMI America

Development and departure are the two things that characterize the artistic from the technically competent. When a long-established artist breaks new ground for himself there is always a little unsettling of the "fans." What I'm saying is that you better sit with this record a little while before pronouncing judgment. The re-mixes of *China Girl* and *Cat People* may not at first listen appeal in the same way as the originals. The studio work is more glossy (more Broadway?) than we are used to hearing on a Bowie album. I find myself more interested in the psychology of this album than in the music itself. Anyway, Bowie seems to be ready to fight it out with us over this pastiche of songs that are vaguely reminiscent of something else yet not blatantly ironic or satiric. A hard nut to crack.

COCTEAU TWINS: *Peppermint Pig* - 12" 4AD Records

Lush, dense, ecstatic, trance-like music to transport the serious listener into a frame of reference; a yodel can evoke images of dervish dancing lamentors over the body of the baseline. Got that? Better get this one.

HEAVEN 17: *Temptation* - 12" Virgin Records

The title cut is fit only for your ghetto blaster and crosses that thinning line between new wave electronic and trashy disco. The other two cuts are much more interesting as *We Live So Fast* is a great dance number no matter which side of the line you live on.

FLOCK OF SEAGULLS: *Nightmares* - 12" Jive Records

Such seriousness I haven't heard from these guys in a long time. This will disturb the frothier fans of this group but might well be the first record worth buying for heretofore non-fans. There's a Residents flavor to the two non-title cuts that is very appealing making them a little like tone poems rather than songs; they are structured in a very unstructured almost dissonant fashion. I like this new (old) trend and hope to hear more in this vein.

TRANSPORT

*He took me
while sleeping
imperfect
to places
in darkness
unseeing
my heaven
appeared.*

*I shuddered
awaking
to firmness
of body
and warmth
undertaking
to be my release.*

*We coupled
in daylight
with dew-sweat
abounding
enjoining
our fragile
yet driven
desire.*

*And after
as sitting
in silent
re-entry
with smiles
at our fingers
swore death
to our past.*

— Barry Byford

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BAUHAUS: She's in Parties, 12" Beggars Banquet

So far, this group has done no wrong with the possible exception of the Ziggy Stardust ep. I am less thrilled with this new ep than a lot of other work by Bauhaus but I think it's primarily because it lacks that raw gutsiness that they so often have. It's still a good record and very listenable if a little soft. It ain't no Bela Lugosi!

TEARS FOR FEARS: The Hurting, LP Mercury

After having loved these guys' singles a whole lot I was setting myself up for a fall when their album came out. The singles are all here but the rest of the material falls short and is weak by comparison. I would perhaps have been happier to see an album that contained none of the singles I already have on 12". Pleasant, but if you already have all the singles, pass on this one.

THE CREATURES: Miss the Girl, 7" Wonderland

I certainly *have* missed Siouxsie but she's back here with Budsie on this single. This is so enjoyable I'm considering forgiving her for her last dreary album. It's tantalizingly short but has all the earmarks that made Siouxsie the near-goddess she is. Her new influence seems to be Gamelan music. Please, stay on track, Siouxsie.

ROBERT PALMER: Pride, LP Island

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this album is the European production values used in its creation. The sound quality is so crisp and clear it's like an import. The musicianship is flawless and my only quarrel with it is perhaps that I feel cheated that Palmer doesn't expend all this expertise and talent on songs with more significant lyrics. A very clean, sophisticated sound.

JOAN ARMATRADING: The Key, LP A&M

On her last album, I wondered if it weren't the arrangements, some featuring Thomas Dolby, that I liked more than Joan herself. The guest star on this one is Adrian Belew, and I'm afraid he doesn't do for her what Dolby did for her and I'm really disappointed in this record. I found myself wishing that she would set aside all the overworked, at times, back-ups and arrangements and go back to the Joan I once loved, singing with just her acoustic guitar. But you can never go back; so all I can do in the meantime is give this album the thumbs down for overall quality even though I really like "The Dealer" and "I Love it When You Call Me Names," the latter having some of the cleverest lyrics she's ever written.

R.E.M.: Murmur, LP I.R.S.

This is another Athens, GA group. They have, at times, a clean early XTC kind of sound that's nostalgic and yet new at the same time. That's when they're at their best. There are low points in the album that are just plain boring. Cuts, however, like "Radio Free Europe" are evocative of an earlier time and place when rock or pop-rock at least *appeared* less complicated. The sound needs work as does their selection of material but they have the potential to be a really solid pop band.

COLOUR BOX: Tarantula/Breakdown

(Remix), 12" 4AD

Is this an attempt to improve the unimprovable? Yes. I don't think that these remixes, following hotly on the heels of one of the best singles of the last while, add anything to the songs. These mixes feature more effects than a George Pal science fiction movie and if you try to dance to the new version of Breakdown, don't get a hernia in the center part where the world comes to an end several times. The songs are louder, "dance-mix" arranged, drug-induced and slightly altered. I like both versions but I think I'd rather have heard two new numbers than variations on a theme.

NEW ORDER: Power Corruption and Lies,

LP, Rough Trade

This review requires a rather long preface to explain where I am with this group: the residue of Joy Division.

As an aside, you should know that on a lot of records inscribed in the plastic near the label are often little sayings that run from the A to the B side that are like messages to the devotee. "I Buried Paul!"

The first Joy Division record I bought was the 7" of *Love Will Tear Us Apart* (Inscription: "Don't disillusion me, I've only got record shops left") and I became an addict. The B side, *These Days*, is still one of my favorites. Then came *She's Lost Control* and so did I: I became a collector. At about the same time, I began to regard anything that Factory Records designed to record as *ipso facto*, GOLD. And for some time this was true with the Martin Hannett production touch becoming distinctive, recognizable, and collectable. The Factory Record label became synonymous with minimalism, elegant packaging, high production quality, and groups that had something to say in their music.

BODY WORK

*Something in lines
that curve muscular
drives me
to that point
where reference
to the mundane
is lost
and I am ready
to obey
call or whim
that might inflict
itself on me.*

*Lines that define
the words in flesh
hard as consonants
outlining tits
cleaving to ripples
that end in brush
where pride stands erect.*

*Anointed with oil
in slippery sainthood; a bicep-tricep trinity
I beg to be seeded
and in some assumption
pass Mary enroute
to bliss
in care of
your fatal physique.*

Barry Byford

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HEAVEN 17: *The Luxury Gap*, LP, Virgin Records/
B.E.F.

There are only five new songs on this LP and of those, only one is worth the time. Flat, tone-deaf singing, simpleton lyrics, and what's left is still the same OLD Heaven 17. Drive!

PETE SHELLEY: *No One Like You*, EP, Genetic Records

Pete as Tron on cover. Better guitar work than before but the same kind of Shelley singing. The obligatory dub mix on the B side. I'll continue to give my Buzzcocks records more play than the Shelley solo act.

THE B-52'S: *Whammy!*, LP, Warner Brothers

Well, new dresses, new wigs, a Bill Wegman cover with a new dog and a new sound emerging from these Georgians. There's the beginnings of a better, more serious band here that I like. They still manage to retain the irreverence, and the off-base character of the past while injecting some refreshing new sound qualities. In short, they appear to have rested artistically and are moving on.

DANSE SOCIETY: *Seduction*, LP, Society Records

The vocals annoy me more than once on this album. At times, they approach a kind of Eyles in Gaza sound, though maybe a little more ambient. Two cuts stand out: *Danse/Move* and *Ambition*. Their last EP was stronger, but more symphonic. A band to watch but perhaps not yet ripe for the buying.

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS: *Listen*, LP, Jive Records

A Flock of Seagulls has learned what Heaven 17 has not: that a dance tune is more than a baseline and synthedrums, and a ballad is more than singing slowly. This is a solid album well worth the cash. Bill Nelson is the producer of one of the cuts but his influence is heard throughout the album. There has been a lot of growth here with this group. The smooth orchestration and dreamy electronics are romantic while not being saccharin. But holy Pepto Bismol, Batman, there are other colors aside from pink!

XTC: *Great Fire*, EP, Virgin Records

I have needed an XTC fix for so long! . . . No info

on the album but I'm assuming that Barry Andrews is no longer with the group (Being with Shriekback) and that there have been other personnel changes. Whatever the reasons for the sabbatical, I'm glad Andy Partridge is back. Andy has a habit of hiding his experimental, yet most artistically competent material on the B Sides of singles like this so I played the B side first. It's soft, instrumental and quite pleasant following in the series of so-called HomoSafaris hidden on the B sides of other singles. The A side features some new sounds with the band breaking into the classic XTC mode from time to time. I like **Great Fire** but I'm not thrilled. It may take Andy a little while to get back into gear. But I'm not complaining because I was told that the group had dissolved altogether. No band has mastered the Pop-rock sound better than XTC. Few bands have excited me more, than XTC in concert (one of the others is **Wall of Voodoo**). As with Siouxsie, I will continue to buy the records, sound unheard, because there's always something about hearing this group that makes it worthwhile.

SPEAR OF DESTINY: *Grapes of Wrath*, LP, Burning Rome Records

I was sort of a fan of Theatre of Hate and regretted their disbanding. This album makes me recant. The material is more consistently good than T of H with the music a little smoother with more depth while not losing that slightly off-key texture that the vocals lend to the total sound. **Spear of Destiny** seems much stronger musically than T of H was and I'll be looking forward to subsequent albums that develop even further. The excess rawness, like deadwood, has been trimmed and a maturity added without jeopardizing the overall politics of the group. What lends credence to this theory is that the other part of the group that split off to form **The Box** cut an EP not even worth reviewing.

KINDERGARTEN: *Kindergarten*, EP, Blind Beat Records (Domestic)

If you disco-maniacs won't give it up, then at least make some mature and intelligent choices. This is one such choice. This record is ecumenical in crossing so many boundaries. This is music to: take drugs to, go psychotic to, straighten your hair with, have heavy sex to (if you still do), and be proud of. Watch out, Cabaret Voltaire, this may well be the REAL Voice of America!

THE MARCH VIOLETS: *Crow Baby*, 7", Rebirth Records

Early wire meets late Bauhaus. A second good single from this group.

PYLON: *Chomp*, LP, DB Records

If Martha Ladly went to USMC boot camp she might sound like Vanessa Briscoe. If you ever have a chance to see her as punk incarnate, bouncing across a stage, do it! This second album shows off their recent diversification into slower rhythms and more bizarre sounds quite well. If you can keep from dancing to some of these cuts you've taken too much.

Joy Division's premier album, *Unknown Pleasures*, with its black cover, almost no writing, no list of cuts, nor any pictures of the illusive Ian Curtis or his band, set the stage for stark, brooding themes we now identify with the group. Their name, by the way, is in reference to the fact that Nazis kept the most desirable Jewish women in the concentration camps in what they called their "joy division." Deliciously grim. The material is good but the group had not yet matured into their finest (short-lived) hour. There is a minimalism here soon to be seen in groups such as The Cure, maturity of lyric rarely seen in rock, glimpses of superb writing and musicianship, and the beginnings of the career of a man obsessed. No one's life is complete without obsession. Art is obsession on one level and this music was to approach art, later on. Inscription: "I've been looking for a guide." On the 7 and 12 inch versions of *Transmission* respectively are written: "And how I'll never know just why and understand" and "I've seen the real atrocities buried in the sand." Shades of things to come.

What can be said about the album *Closer*? Not enough. It is one of the top ten albums pressed within my lifetime. (I was born in 1950). This album and this group were to influence and inspire more groups than I have time to list. This is serious material being cut here. This is not just depression, despair, or world-weariness, but an engulfing, trance-inducing sound, with more loaded lyrics than any album I can think of. The Music!!!! These guys were so ON it's chilling. Dirge-like, the material on this record takes you places you never knew existed. No one will ever be able to create an atmosphere quite like Curtis did here. This is a tortured man, a poet, exposing himself and the world as they can be: bleak, barren, and devoid of relief. The alienation this man felt is most vivid in *Atrocity Exhibition* and *Colony*. They are brutal jewels.

When I learned of Curtis' death (he hanged himself ostensibly over a woman) my regret at never having seen the man perform stayed with me for a long while.

That brought us to the inception of New Order sans Ian Curtis. Their first 12 and 7 inch: *Ceremony b/w In a Lonely Place* was imitative of Curtis' style and while being very good in its own way left us still with the need for that voice. The Inscription: "How I wish we were here with you now/ watching love grow - forever." Kind of complex syntax isn't it? Is this a message to us or to Ian or...?

Perhaps they knew that any first record after his death and the deluge of collector's commemorative albums would not be appreciated to its fullest since the album (*Movement*) at times is like a revenant of the old Joy Division. The bliss with which I first listened to *Senses* from this album cannot be described. In that cut in particular was the essence of the old group with a newness as well. What struck me about the New Order sound was how the electronics were so evident; something I didn't recall hearing in JD. On re-listening to JD, I realized that the electronics were just as sophisticated in JD but I had been so entranced with Curtis' voice and lyrics that they faded into the background. The New Order sound definitely brings the electronic to the forefront.

With the release of *Everything's Gone Green* on 12 and 7 inch, we have a turning point. This is an amalgam of the old JD serious sound and the driving danceable New Order sound. So this was, as a result, serious dance music. You could dance without comprising ideals. With all of these early New Order records, the Factory austere, patrician art-covers, and design, were still part of the whole package.

So we came to *Blue Monday* which, at first listen, we regarded as no less than sacrilege to the Curtis-JD legacy. But on calming down and forcing another listen, it didn't seem so much like disco after all, even though we knew every disco DJ would be playing it. This record, aside from being eminently danceable, is a carefully laid down series of themes that converge at the end in an almost symphonic collision. Much of New Order's work often strikes me as familiar at first hearing because of this signature of rhythm and *leitmotif* that they have made their sound. The cover of this 12" is like a large floppy disc and is sinfully colorful in comparison to the greys, blacks and whites we're used to seeing. So, I said, here's another fork in the road. Wonder what the album will be like?

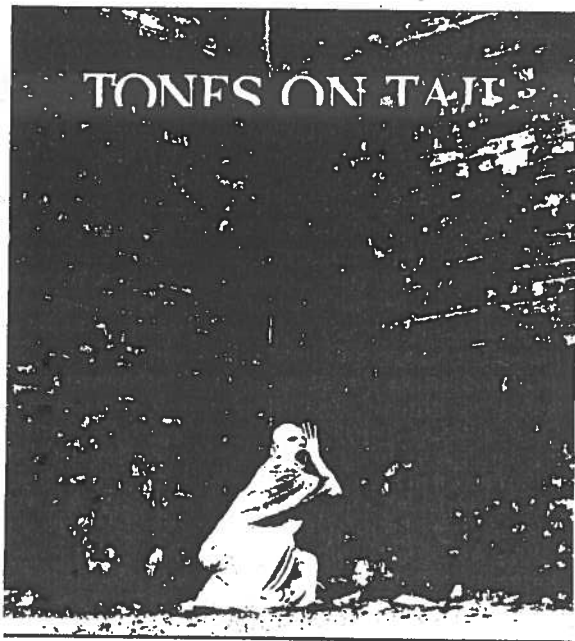
At long last we've arrived at the purpose of this dissertation. What do we have? A cover that is on one side a large floppy disc and on the other bears a reproduction of *Roses* by Fantin-Latour (1836-1904). Pretty divergent! But what about the music. Some of the songs are positively peppy and all have that distinctive New Order sounds-similar sound. The vocals on some cuts are thin. I find it difficult to bear the overall lightheartedness of the album. Like art, it is impossible to see any new release out of context, both historically and in comparison to its contemporaries. I like the album but I ache for one good Ian Curtis song to keep me in touch with life's grim reality. Still, this is not frivolous dance music; this is no Heaven 17 or Human League. But, I question, is the same thing that happened to Ultravox when John Foxx left also happening here, because cuts like *Ultraviolence* on this album, despite the title, strike me as pretty pacific and ball-less. Some of the cutting edge is gone as is the spirit. Ian seemed to ready me for Armageddon whereas New Order seems to want me to dance through it, replete with Morodoresque electronics. So I leave it to you. Buy the record. Live with it for a while and let me know. c o The California Voice, if I'm letting nostalgia obscure my seeing something great and developmental happening with New Order.

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BIFF BOURGUIGNON

TONES ON TAIL: EP, Situation

Four songs with two vocals and two instrumentals. Sad; plaintive; diverse vocals; steely guitars; solid, morose baseline; and a wonderful cover. "Burning Skies" reminds me of Modern Eon, while "You, the Night and the Music" is surreal in the best sense of the word. A great little package.



BILL NELSON: *Chimera*, mini-LP, Mercury.

I always like what Bill Nelson puts out at first, but I find that I tire very quickly. I fear this may be the same case. It's good, but is it durable? I don't think so. But certainly there's nothing very new presented here, so the rule is: if you liked his other stuff, this is for you.

YAZOO: *Nobody's Diary*, 12", Polydor.

Whatever cured the Thompson Twins of talent has gotten to Yazoo too! Yuck. Quasi-electropop-fagmusic!

CLOCK DVA: *Resistance*, 12", Polydor.

Wow, what a disappointment. That wonderful caustic voice relegated to the background when I thought it was one of the strongest things they had going for themselves. This is good, but ranks near the bottom in relation to what DVA has done in the past. The only disc I ranked lower was "HighHolyDisco-Mass."

SepPuKu: *Dekompositiones*, 12", Side Effects

Rekords.

The spoken word accompanied by drums and percussion can be its own music. Add the oriental flavor of gongs and nose-flutes, Minny-Pops-style vocals, and a great base guitar and you have something that surpasses some of the best of P.I.L. Heavy-duty, industrial strength, Throbbing-Gristley pieces with more structure than is apparent at first listen. I am crazy for this record, but it's for those with the taste for something more and for something less. Definitely rhythm and noise but of the highest calibre. A good article on SPK appears in the recent issue of RE-SEARCH. P.S. for the faint of heart: Don't give up on this record after the first listen.

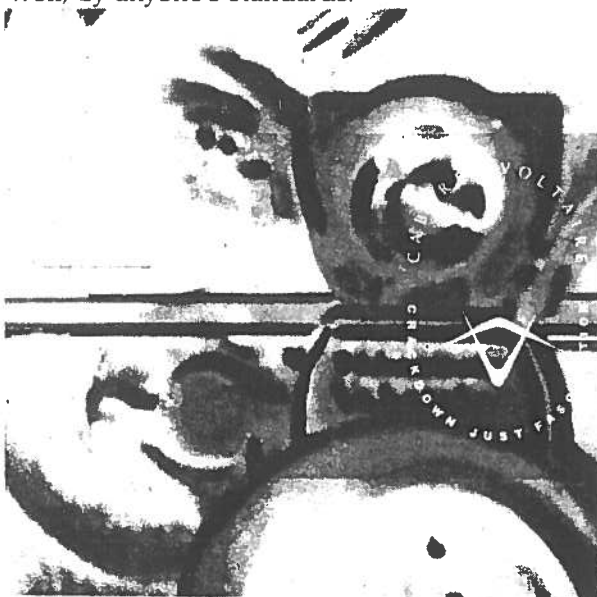
ENTERTAINMENT

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BIFF BOURGUIGNON

CABARET VOLTAIRE: Crackdown, 12", Some Bizarre

This is the first record cut with Virgin for the group and also the first CV record that does not have many distorted and/or taped voices. This record is incredible. It has the earmarks of being a bid for the commercial marketplace but it is done with such taste it is still artistry. I think it would be a mistake to label this record a sell-out to commercialism. It has the basic style popularized by Shriekback but has a depth and a genius they have yet to achieve. This is a landmark recording for the group and a departure for them from their accustomed style but inscribed in the vinyl is: "Stand by the innovators. Reject the parasites that are inspired/Western works dunnit." I guess we don't have to be hit over the head to tell us who the innovators are, do we? This record is danceable, as well, by anyone's standards.



CABARET VOLTAIRE: Yashar, 12", Factory, N.Y.

This John Robie re-mix from the recent double 12" package (2X45) is destined to be more popular than the original version but to my ears is less satisfying artistically. I do not like the seven-minute version much at all but can almost enjoy the five minute version. This enjoyment is a measure of the indestructibility of a good song even after re-mixing. I have a feeling that this will go against the grain of common opinion. I am tired of

dance re-mixes of perfectly good songs that I thought were danceable to begin with as long as you don't have clubbed feet.

JOHN FOXX: Endlessly, 12", Metal Beat

This year-old song is not improved by dance re-mixing. Quit marking time, John!

EYELESS IN GAZA: New Risen, 12", Cherry Red

Should anyone wish to start a new religion, *Eyeless in Gaza* is rapidly compiling a wonderful hymnal for you. An Eyeless song is always approached by the lead singer ceremoniously and delivered like Plainsong or chant. I like this group very much but you will want to listen first before buying since many have told me they find his voice abrasive. There is a richness in their simplicity you should investigate.

BUNNYDRUMS: Feathers WEB, EP, Funk Dungeon Music

This premiere EP, dedicated to Philip K. Dick, is a very good start for them. It's a little germinal, but has some good solid basework and electronics with strong vocals.

FREUR: Matters of the Heart, 12", CBS (UK)

I don't think that this one has the punch or the appeal of "Doot Doot." It's good, but I would recommend they cut some of the special effects and get down to some strong electrowhiatsit or go right out there into experimentland.

THE CHAMELEONS: A Person Isn't Safe Anywhere These Days, 12", Statik

First-rate singles just keep coming from these guys. Buy it. The next album may be a disappointment like their first and you'll regret not having the singles that comprise it.

MUSIC FOR PLEASURE: Dark Crash, 12", Polydor

I was devastated by their first album. A gem. This single is a little different but just as good. It shows development and experimentation without any lessening of quality.

KILLING JOKE: Let's All Go, 12", EG

Another single that is a must for the hard-core *Killing Joke* fan. This single is not their best by any means which may be due, in part to the loss of group member Youth.

ALAN VEGA: Saturn Strip, LP, Electra

Alan Vega meets Ric Ocasek and the result does Vega a world of good. I still find some of the songs Vega-boring but there are at least two excellent long cuts worth the price of the album in themselves.

THE DANSE SOCIETY: We're So Happy, 12", Bent

Good, but again, and as before, there's something missing with this band. I keep waiting to be amazed and satiated.

MICHAEL LAKE AND THE SHAVERS: Light (X5), 12", Bent

An interesting novelty record from Australia where they refer to AIDS on nation TV as the Homo Disease. The song is about AIDS and oppression and the group is all-gay. There's potential here but politics has never succeeded in making a mediocre song a good one.

P.I.L. This is Not a Love Song, EP, Nippon
Columbia

This Japanese pressing goes for almost ten bucks at Rough Trade but is worth every penny. This was not supposed to ever be released at all so this may well become a rarity. Saying "This is not a love song" is very Magritte of Lydon. "*Ce n'est pas une pipe*," eh Johnny? If for nothing else but this one for the flawless sound quality of "Public Image" on the B-side. It's always been one of my favorites. The version presented here of "Blue Water" is considerably watered down from the version we heard on tape at last year's concert, but it's better than nothing.

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ENTERTAINMENT

GET YOUR
P.O.

BIFF BOURGUIGNON

THE CREATURES: Feast, LP, Polydor.

On August 18, 1978 a record called *Hong Kong Garden* by Siouxsie and the Banshees was released. The distance between this release and the latest Creatures release can be measured in time and taste. Siouxsie Sioux is a remarkable woman and her music is no less remarkable.

Readers of this column will recall my placing "Closer" by Joy Division in the top ten albums pressed within my lifetime. "Join Hands" by Siouxsie and the Banshees is right there with it.

From the beginning, there has been a complexity and depth to the group's work. Specializing in distorted and dislocated realities that are still truthful, the words to a Siouxsie song are never totally accessible but always fascinating. Example from "Carcass": "Be a dead pork/be limblessly in love" — it gets better. This is pretty raw punk in flavor but the music that accompanies these lyrics is far from the simplistic crash-bash music of its time. This first album, *Scream*, is a gem.

Join Hands, the second album, must be regarded as a landmark in rock. What makes it great? It is an album poised at the pivot point of a creativity about to strike out into new territory. It has some of the driving guitar and drum work that typified the earlier Siouxsie sound but it travels to realms both rarified and topical at the same time. Shock value is a difficult and self-vindictive thing to shoot for and no one obtains shock value better than Siouxsie. But it never backfires on her because she is never seen as trying for the shocking. Our shock is often at seeing ourselves and our world in blunt but literate clarity, and what could be more of a shock? Songs like "Icon" and "The Lord's Prayer" are subtly suggestive of the fall of traditionalism and require careful listening. They are sly and playful. While others were painting their song-poems in blood, guts, and four-letter words, Siouxsie was using pastels that were as silent an indictment as rouge on a corpse.

"Kaleidoscope" adds a few more items to Siouxsie's list or targets. Plastic surgery, voyeurism, suburban banality, fashion models, and mental illness are all covered. Words from "Paradise Place": "Look at the hills — now look at my face/Do you notice my eyes — are they in the right place?/There's a Mantovani backdrop — to pucker-up a tummy tuck/A voice as soft as lint-mashed up with shades of pink/You can hide your genetics under drastic cosmetics/But this chameleon magic is renowned to be tragic." What needs to be pointed out is that while the words are outstanding, so is the music that accompanies them. This album also marks the group's venturing into electronics and musical motifs reminiscent of other lands.

So just when we thought we had her pegged, there comes the release of "Wild Things," a double single, by The Creatures. The Creatures are Siouxsie Sioux and Budgie (drummer for the Banshees). As might be expected, the songs are highly percussive with the voice of Siouxsie very much in the foreground. More experimental, more industrial, but every bit as wonderful as the Banshees' material; just different. At about the same time Siouxsie and the Banshees *Juju* album appeared. It is perhaps an attempt to show us how, from cradle to grave, we are governed by fetishes, compulsions, and programming. Another phenomenal album. So one by now is given the impression that while Siouxsie and the Banshees seemed to be continuing on on a definite path that had its own logic and creative progression, there were other things on Siouxsie's mind that did not fit her conception of the Banshees' style.

I've seen the Banshees twice in person. Once at the "Kaleidoscope" stage and once at the "Juju" stage. What a temper she has! — justifiably. The first concert was a mis-match with COA and a crowd that is yelling "Fuck new wave" at Siouxsie's appearance, revealing their total lack of understanding. Siouxsie has never been new wave, post wave, third wave, or permanent



wave. This city was the only one on the tour not to receive an encore. In fact, the lead guitarist walked off the stage after the third or fourth beer bottle nearly hit him. The song they walked off during: "Helter Skelter." The next time was at the I-Beam and while much better in terms of audience receptivity, there was something about the lights that she was not happy with which became a distraction to both her and the audience. Again, no encore. Times such as these are hard for the devotee.

When the singles "Slow Dive" and "Fireworks" came out so did the news that Siouxsie would have to have nodes removed from her larynx and would not be able to sing for a year afterward. It turned out to be an exaggeration or a lie, but when the album "A Kiss in the Dreamhouse" came out we wondered if radical surgery were not in order. It led a very dear friend to dismantle his Siouxsie altar, picture and all. With great reluctance, I listened to this album three more times before writing in order to ascertain what was going on. There's something a little too passive, too disjointed, perhaps scattered about the album. It's too casual and careless as well. From anyone else it would be acceptable, but from Siouxsie? Either her heart or her larynx wasn't in this one.

So what do you do when your guitarist goes nuts on stage on a tour and is committed? You resurrect The Creatures, of course. This album is good and represents a progression in the artistic development of The Creature's sound, which is distinct from that of Siouxsie and the Banshees. But to me this album is marking time until she decides what to do, if anything, about the loss of the group member. What makes it strange and disappointing is that I know she is capable of truly great experimental pieces that far surpass anything on this *Feast* album. "Snap, Dash, Slap" from the B-side of an earlier single by the Banshees is perhaps the best example of a song that, like The Creatures' sound, relies primarily on percussion and voice to give it musicality. It is genius. Where is that spark in The Creatures? I don't see it yet. If there is never to be another "Carcass" or "Red Light," then so be it. Siouxsie and the Banshees have given us a comprehensive and enduring catalog of material in which to take solace.

Now say, "Siouxsie Sioux sings Sisyphian symphonies" six sobbing times slowly sans slipping.

P.S. I did *NOT* endorse Conan last issue.

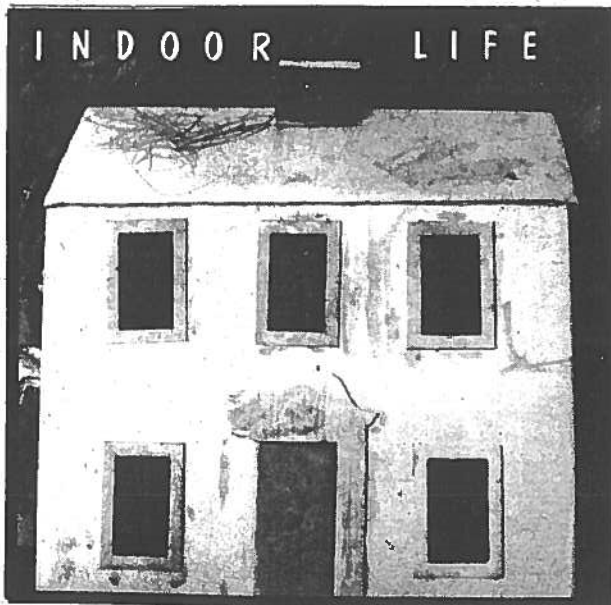


**GET YOUR
ROCKS
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BIFF BOURGUIGNON

INDOOR LIFE: Indoor Life, LP, Relativity.

A very professional album cut with great care and love. These guys are on their way and they deserve your help. Diverse, interesting rhythms and Jorge Socarras's versatile voice make this more than just another synthband. In enjoy any music that challenges me to dance with as much creativity as is evident in the music. Pray hard that they don't get too artistic like Tuxedomoon and go tangential on us.



PETE SHELLEY: XL1, LP, Arista.

Four of the ten songs come from that last two singles. The rest of the material is a vapid mixture of the usual Shelley filler material.

ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN: Never Stop, EP, Korova.

"Never Stop" is not worth the cost of this EP. The other two cuts are from the album "Porcupine," one being the "original" version of "Cutter" which I do not like nearly as well as either the LP or 12" versions. So, the answer is: buy "Porcupine" if you haven't already and leave this one alone. **MIDGE URE- MICK KARN:** After a Fashion, EP, Crysalis.

Mick Karn is one of the best fretless bass players alive and it is a shame that his work should be associated with a hack. This song could have been wonderful if Ure had not insisted on injecting his stupid Ultravoxian vocal breaks into it. When the songs sound like Mick they are good, when they begin to sound like just another pathetic Ultravox lament regurgitated from past albums, well...

DAVID SYLVIAN PLUS SAKAMOTO: Forbidden Colours, EP, Virgin.

Film music, pure and very simple. Is this New Wave's answer to Nino Rota?

CONAN: Conan III: A Sure Thing, LP, Earthchild.

What will be popular in San Francisco is always quite predictable. The longevity of The Grateful Dead, Grace Slick, and the deification of Jimi Hendrix all bears witness to the fact. This town has so many time warps people get trapped in that we have every decade represented, not only in the mentality of the people still caught in them, but right down to the way they dress, talk and behave. So, if you had the most fun in The Summer of Love then this kind of music will be nostalgic. But even on those terms, this is a poor substitute for the real thing. On other grounds, it is a waste of OPEC oil to press such a record. Adjectives? How about gutless, mamby-pamby, tinnny, featherweight rock. Rock? Like wow, man, I mean, like, this record really bummed me out, like, I mean, it's so easy, it's not there, like. Fer sure!

YELLO: You Gotta Say Yes To Another Excess, LP, Stiff.

Basically a bore, there are a few cuts that are very fresh and alive. There is a monotony to the album which makes it difficult for me to listen to the whole thing at one sitting. Certainly, if you like one song, you may like the whole album. It's not badly done, it's just not varied enough for me. "I Love You" and "Swing" stand out.



EURHYTHMICS: Who's That Girl, 12", RCA

The title track is very smooth, very clean, and very insipid. The other two cuts on the B-side I find more interesting. If you're a rabid fan, buy it.

MEN WITHOUT HATS: Living in China, 12", Statik

Men Without Hats have proceeded from "Modern Dancing" to progressively less-modern dance music that verges precariously close to smarmy disco. I didn't like "Safety Dance" and like this one only a little more. You Heaven 17 fans out there might like this one, though.

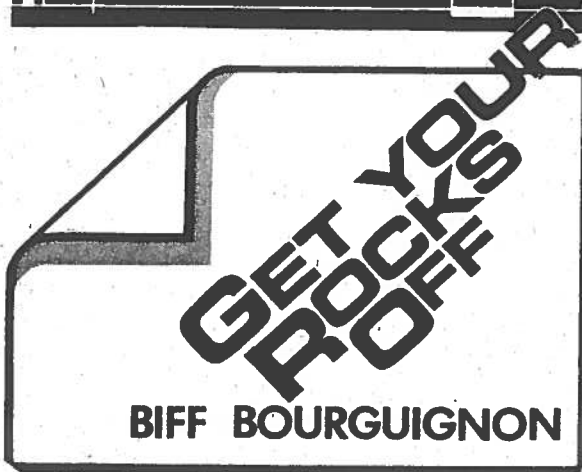
KINETIC IDEALS: A Personal View, EP.

Mannequin Records.

These Canadians have brought me the first breath of Joy Division since the group's demise. At times, the vocals remind me of the lead singer in March Violets, which isn't bad either. Their records are even packed with Factory-like austerity. The only problem is that no one in this town distributes them. I feel strongly enough about them to recommend that anyone who trusts me write to Mannequin at 98 Concord Ave., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6H 2P3 and get a price list of all Kinetic Ideals' recordings. They have, so far, pressed three 12" EP's and one 7" single. Get them all. Failing this, but the bejeebers out of your local record dealer to handle what should be one of the hottest groups ever to emerge from the north. Better than Martha and the Muffins and more interesting than Nash the Slash, these guys get the five star award. Now you can forget everything you've heard about the blandness of Canadians. Mannequin also distributes Ceramic Hello which will appeal a great deal to those hooked on electronics. They're sort of Kraftwerk meets D.A.F. meets The Normal.

MARTHA: Light Years From Love, 7", Island

On her first single without the Muffins, Martha Ladly took us to "Tasmania" and "Finlandia." On this single, she takes us to Gilligan's Island where she does an unforgettable impression of Tina Louise singing a medley of Marianne Faithful tunes before her voice changed. The Surgeon General of the United States has determined that listening to this record could be fatal to diabetics.



XTC: Wonderland, 7", Virgin.

No, Paul McCartney has not joined the group, it just sounds like that, with Colin Moulding trying his hand at impressions. I'm half-hearted about this record, primarily because it seems too half-hearted itself. The flip-side, "Jump," by its title promised to be an up tune but is limp. I'm still waiting, Andy.

THE CREATURES: Right Now, 7", Wonderland.

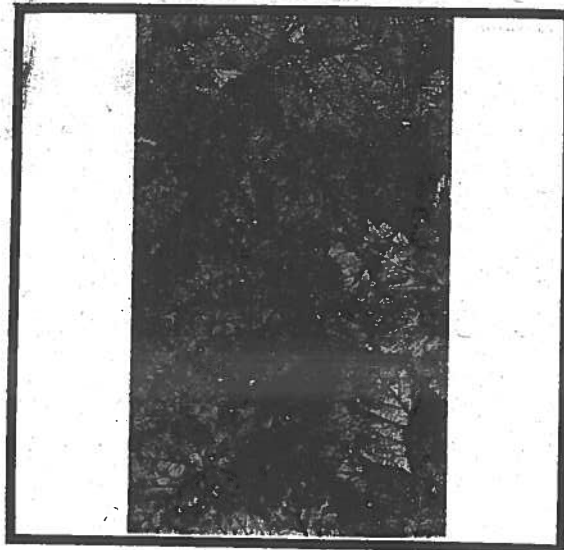
Siouxsie does Herbie Mann — yes, that's right! In a novelty fashion, I like the title song but I really like the B-side since it has definite shades of the old Siouxsie and the real reason why you should get this one.

LOTUS EATERS: The First Picture of You, 12", Sylvan.

Neil Young meets Eyeless in Gaza with Carlos Montoya jamming along. The sum is less than any of the parts. The title cut is tolerable but the other two cuts are inaccessible to anyone; even fans of any of the above.

VIOLENT FEMMES: Violent Femmes, LP, Slash.

If you are a Lou Reed fan from way back, you will find the lead singer reminiscent of early Reed. Frankly, I'm not sure what all the fuss has been surrounding this band. I find the album to be too young, too green, and having the overall effect of making me want to put on a *real* Lou Reed album instead.



EYELESS IN GAZA: Rust Red September, LP, Cherry Red.

Quick, get out and buy this right now. Rough Trade is open late. My word for this latest Eyeless album has to be "enchanting." Two songs ("Only Whispers" and "Bright Play of Eyes") are just heart-rending. There is a new depth of feeling and maturity to the vocals that is just beautiful. Their best album to date, and simply hypnotic, it is sometimes like Fusion jazz, while at other times following in the sacred footsteps of earlier "hymns" of the group. Please investigate this group, they have a uniqueness and a freshness and a real warmth that should be heard.

KRAFTWERK: Tour de France, 12", EMI.

The boys ripped off Falco's heavy breathing number for this effort. JUNK!

GABI DELGADO: Amor, 12", Virgin.

This is much superior to his first solo effort. So much so that I could listen to it again. The beat is refreshingly irregular, non-disco, jazzy, and interesting. It's maybe Calypso jazz.



BAUHAUS: Burning From the Inside, LP,
Beggars Banquet.

Having crossed the line from art to the artful, Bauhaus has succeeded in pressing the quint-essential pretentious, artsy-fartsy record where the packaging seems to have received more attention than the music. It is replete with dropped names of the artistically "in" and songs that are spoken instead of being sung so that we won't miss the fact that they consider them poetic in the extreme. So, go soak your heads until the swelling comes down, Bauhaus!

SAVAGE REPUBLIC Film Noir, 7", Independent.

Rules are to be broken. One of mine has always been to stay away from "Limited Edition," hand painted, signed and numbered art covers on records. It usually means that since the music is so dreadful you should have a reason for never ever playing the record, so you keep it in near mint condition for collector purposes. Well, I got #272 of 1000 and I have to say that the songs are excellent. Serious dirge-like orchestral music that reminds me of many people and influences. With a little work on the vocals, this group could become something very special. Then, of course, my #272 will be priceless!

17 PYGMIES Hatikva, Mini-LP, Resistance.


#770 of 1000 (if you're going to break a rule, go all the way) in a limited hand colored set is mine. The A-side takes us around the world in various rhythms and tribal/folk idioms. The whole album is basically instrumental and is very well done. The B-side is written by the group and is both quiet and haunting yet alive. Very promising.

STRAWBERRY SWITCHBLADE: Trees and
Flowers, 12", Warner.

Strawberry creampuffs would be more appropriate. The flashy cover hides some of the most obnoxious music I've heard in a long time. Maybe this is supposed to be a joke. Don't be fooled by the group's name or the exotic cover; avoid at all costs.

DEPECHE MODE: Everything Counts, 12", Mute.

The A-side is the most interesting pop song the group has cut since its first two singles a few years ago. The B-side is reminiscent of Heaven 17 when they're on the beam. A very good record.



GET YOUR ROCK OFF

BIFF BOURGUIGNON

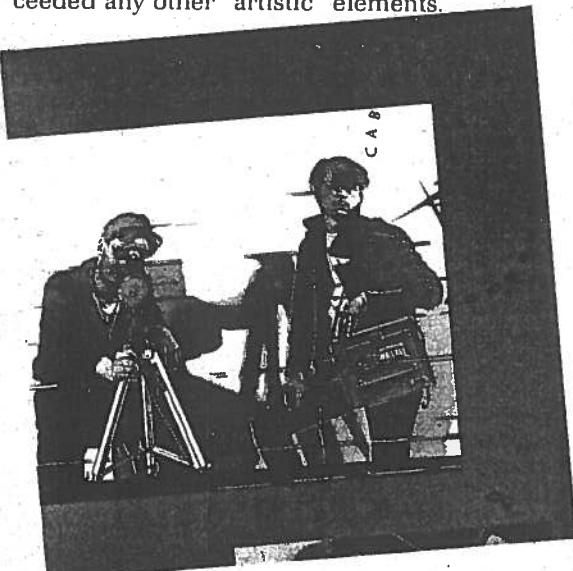
CABARET VOLTAIRE: The Crackdown, LP, Virgin.

I got goosepimply at times while listening to this album. Its excellence stems from many sources. CV has a long recording history that is comprised mostly of 12" 45's that are long mantra-like collages or pastiches of tape clips and repeated phrases, electronic wizardry as well as solid and inventive use of piano, trumpet, clarinet, and saxophone.

The new twist to this style is a more obvious dance rhythm. But the basic construction remains the same. The words Stephen Mallinder sings are half-sung or chanted until they melt into the music like another instrument.

So it appears to me that this new style has three major influences: Clock DVA, Shriekback, and Fad Gadget. The electronics often have the flavor of Fad Gadget. The vocals are often reminiscent of a less brutal Clock DVA, and the rhythms at times remind me of Shriekback. But it's still distinctively CV. A strong eastern influence is still there but more subtle.

Now, songs such as "Animation" strike me as pointing out graphically why disco didn't have to die. Disco died languishing for a change in beat. When we got to the point where we were (are?) counting beats per minute in order not to jar the dancing somnambulance of the crowd, we should have recognized the danger. Then followed songs with the same words (hot, burning, fire, higher, etc.) where electronics became as boring as parsley on a blue plate special and the beat superceded any other "artistic" elements.



So dance to this record, but get off the faggot-disco-two-step-shuffle. While you record, rubber

are re-mixing every old soul song (to maximize profits while minimizing artistic effort) from "Fill me up, Buttercup" to "Band of Gold," the excitement of music as a process and a progression is being ignored.

On the other hand, there will be a great number of people who will regret the change from "experimental" to "dance" that has occurred with CV. I love both styles. The only thing I hope they are finished with is re-mixing all their old material in the new style. Some people will always be upset when a cult loses its exclusivity and becomes almost mainstream. I don't think CV will ever lose all its mystique. Their music is too intelligent for radio. Did I say that?

TYE: Tye, LP, Panoramix.

Like many, I ignore local groups. When a local group can just make me listen to their album in its entirety they must have something. I listened to all of this one.

When you dig a little, the roots you expose are quite eclectic. I hear a lot of classical "straight" rock here which, while not being my favorite, I do not denigrate. So, if you like Doobies, Eagles, and Journey, this is for you.

I'd like, however, to see what they could do with more money and a hot producer. I feel they really enjoy what they do and are a good bet to see live. Under both the above conditions, I think they would begin to sound more like themselves and less like their influences. In any case, they have a firm foundation to work from.

Two things I would caution them about:

1. When you insist that lines of lyric rhyme, you run the risk of doing what Bob Dylan used to do — picking an unsuitable word to keep the integrity of the rhyme at the expense of the freshness of the lyric.

2. They come too close for my comfort to standard straight masturbatory guitar breaks. I've never understood what purpose they serve.

I hope for the group's sake that they get some radio play because they deserve it. They're better than most of the other trash punishing the airwaves right now.

BRAIN ENO: Apollo-Atmospheres and Soundtracks, LP, EG.

There probably is no one alive who has had greater influence on the contemporary rock scene than Eno. His list of production credits is tremendous; from Devo to the B-52's to, of course, Talking Heads.

The man who invented the word Ambient as it is used presently, felt that we were not suitably impressed by the moon-landing and has created background music he feels might rectify the situation. The music is partly soundtrack material from a film produced largely out of the six million feet of film taken at the time of the landing.

Eno has, for the last ten years or so, been creating atmospheric and meditative pieces of electronic genius. With David Byrne, he has shown us how the spoken word has a musicality of its own. "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts" is another landmark recording amalgamating the genius of Byrne and Eno to maximum effect.



With Daniel Lanois and Roger Eno, this LP creates the desolation, immensity, and newness of space and the moon-landing while suggesting the American pre-emminence in space. All Ambient and Obscure recordings spring of artistic motivation. Their calming and restorative powers work exceptionally well for me. I believe that Eno must feel that there is an accompaniment to anything and everything in life and he just hasn't gotten around to writing them all yet.

At an installation of his that I once saw, the music was so calming and the slow shifting of the video images so subtle that the catalog handed out wished to assure people that, unlike other shows, the viewer should not feel embarrassed if he falls asleep since this could well be seen as one of the purposes of the work. The same applies to this and other of his recordings. Throw out your Vangelis and buy some Eno if you don't already have it all.

P.S.: A big thank you to "Chaps" for minimal disco and non-romantic rock. Please continue. I never thought I'd live to hear "88 Lines About 44 Women" in a bar.

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