

High Fidelity

by S. Livingstone

The discard list

Kirby Ferguson, the music editor of the X-Press, usually allows me to review some of the material that floods our Charlottetown bureau on a regular basis. You might think this is because of his remarkable character as an editor or his ability to organize the work load and assign it to staff writers. I too believed this until I discovered (that's what reporters do) that the material he gives me is simply the leftovers of his column "High Fidelity" that he deems too painful to review.

At first I thought my journalistic integrity would be lost because of my reporting this scandal, but I have since come to the conclusion that we should all be very grateful that I am permitted to review Kirby's discards, for what he tosses aside as garbage I quickly pick up as excellent listening and review it for the masses. If it wasn't for Kirby's dedication to putting forth a music section devoted to diversity, many of the albums I am left with would go unnoticed. Now that I have taken up a good portion of the article reviewing Kirby's editorial qualities rather than the albums, it is probably best I get on with it. The first album from Kirby's Discards is *Hard or Smooth* by Wreckx-n-Effect (0). This album should never have left the studio let alone the discard bin, and although I am aware of its Billboard top forty standing, it doesn't even deserve a review of any great length. Now, I do like rap, but let's avoid

mincing words here and be very candid about the true quality of this album. It sucks! It has been a long time since I have listened to an album so very excruciating. It is a really bad rap album that has, by some fluke of nature and thanks to tacky music lovers everywhere, progressed beyond the realm of the discount bin where it will be in a month and reached the top of the charts. I cannot bring myself to talk about this album for much longer, but upon perusing a sampling of the song titles you can decide for yourselves. The rather suggestive titles include "Rump Shaker", "Knock-n-Boots", "Ez Come, Ez Go (What Goes Up Must Come Down)", "Hard", and "Smooth".

The other two albums I was given are nothing short of excellent and why they were seemingly worthless to the music editor is beyond my understanding. [Ed. Actually they weren't. I just couldn't be bothered.] Both albums are from England's The Stone Roses. This band might be compared to the Charlatans UK I suppose, but the Roses are more danceable with some of their songs. The 1992 release, *Turns to Stone* (8), contains just one of the songs of the 1989 self-titled release (7) which in my mind gives a new band added credibility. If you have come to appreciate that English sound that others all too often try to duplicate, you are sure to like The Stone Roses. The lyrics are well written, or at least those one can hear under the pleasant din of the instrumental arrangements, and the band is just plain cool.

Feel This
The Jeff Healy Band
(BMG)

Feel This, the Jeff Healy Band's third album blends yearning ballads, rock-blues and all out rock in an album with something for almost everyone. But, if you're looking for the same sound as on *See The Light or Hell to Pay*, you're in for a shock. *Feel This* gives the listeners a polished rock sound including screaming guitars and a strong bass line, even on the ballads.

The first single is "Cruel Little Number", with partial song writing credit going to ZZ Top's Bill Gibbons, has a definite ZZ Top ring to it. *Baby's Lookin' Hot* picks up right where *Cruel Little Number* leaves off. These are rock songs in every sense of the words with raucous vocals and harsh guitar solos. Another cut, *If You Can't Feel Anything Else*, combines this rock sound with the rap stylings of Jr. John for a sound like no other. These songs are not for dedicated fans of the JHB's blues-rock style, but are quite pleasurable as a change of pace.

For the fans of the blues sound so familiar from JHB, this album includes cuts like *It Could All Get Blown Away* and *The House That Love Built*. These incorporate the JHB's rock-blues style with their new found production edge to provide a new variation on their old sound.

The Jeff Healy Band's strength lies in their yearning slow songs. *Feel This* takes the popular style and gives it a harsher sound. Cuts like *Lost In Your Eyes*, penned by Tom Petty, and *You're Coming Home* are love songs with a sound quite unexpected from the JHB.

This album as a whole was unexpectedly good. The sound is nothing like anything else by the Jeff Healy Band. The writing was fairly impressive and the guitar was fantastic as to be expected from Healy.



The Jeff Healy Band

The new CIMN season started this Wednesday, the 13th, and programmers should come in to confirm their show times.