

The Music Beet

By Paul Bradley

This being the first column of the year (and my career) you probably expect a formal introduction of some sort. Don't worry - you won't get one.

However, I would like to state that under no circumstances do I claim to be a professional. Further, you will probably find yourself often disagreeing with what I have to say, I don't care.

Seriously folks, I am (I hope) a fairly normal student who has a relatively open mind where music is concerned. In some respects, this column should help you. I appreciate that it would be presumptuous of me to tell you what you should be listening to. However, while shopping around for (ridiculously high-priced) albums, a second opinion is often helpful. That is all that I can hope to offer.

Legend:

- 5 beets denotes excellent
- 4 " " very good
- 3 " " good
- 2 " " fair
- 1 " " turn on the vacuum cleaner.

Hard Promises - Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers

A lot was expected of Tom Petty in this.

his fourth album - as his last l.p. Damn the Torpedoes was hailed by many critics as one of 1979's best. Petty has delivered in spades with the intelligence, class, and style that critics and fans have come to expect.

Hard Promises is co-produced by Petty and Jimmy Iovine (the latter has handled Graham Parker and Stevie Nicks, among others) and features some of the catchiest, melodic rock and roll you'll want to hear. Through it takes several listens to decide just which songs are the best, undeniably "A Woman in Love (It's Not Me)" and "Something Big" are two of the album's higher points. Highlighting both tunes are glittering guitar licks and Petty's unique strangled vocals (something of a cross between Bob Dylan and Mick Jagger).

A pleasant surprise is Petty's collaboration with Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks. The latter is featured on two tracks - the best of which is "Insider", a beautiful ballad (but then what would you expect when you combine music's best male and female vocalists).

"Nightwatchman" has Petty and the Heartbreakers dabbling into blues. The balance of

the album is pure, straight from the hip rock and roll. "The Waiting" is the first single, though it is not the album's strongest cut. "A Thing About You" is reminiscent of "Shadow of a Doubt (A Complex Kid)" from Damn the Torpedoes.

Of the ten tracks, Petty has written 7; the other three he co-wrote with Heartbreaker number Mike Campbell. Petty and Campbell make this band work. The former plays 12 and 6 string electric and acoustic guitars, bass and electrical piano. The talented Campbell handles 6 and 12 string electric guitars, auto-harp, accordion, harmonium, and bass guitar. Rounding out the band are Ron Blair (bass guitar), Benmont Tench (organ, piano and vocals) and Stan Lynch (drums and vocals).

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers have done something that few acts are capable of doing consistently - that is, capture the admiration of both critics and fans. Proof of this is that - while getting deservedly excellent reviews - Hard Promises debuted in Billboards Top 100 l.p. chart at number 4, and quickly went to number 1. For my money this will stand as one of the year's

best - get it!

The One That YOU Love
Air Supply

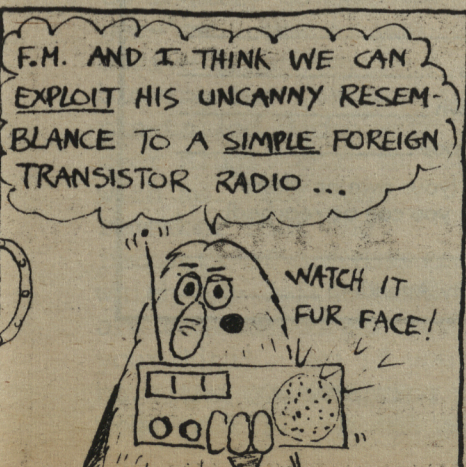
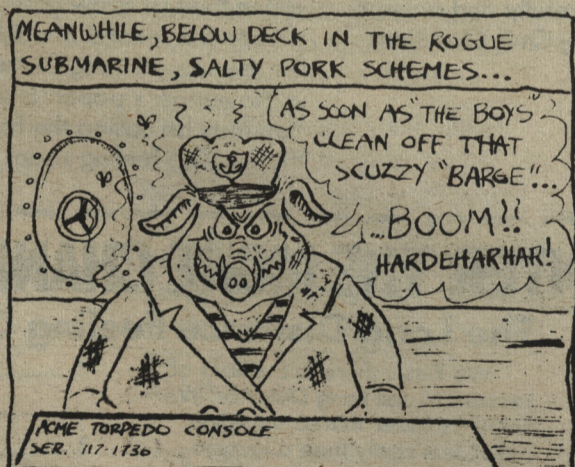
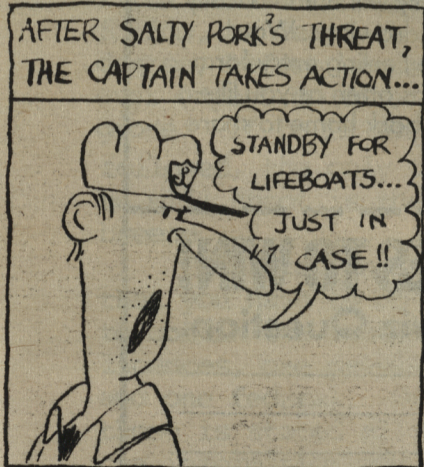
Air Supply is the latest in a list of moaners to come from Australia (following the likes of the Bee Gees, Olivia Newton John, Andy Gibb, et cetera ad naseaum). My question is simply: what did the rest of the world ever do to Australia to deserve this?

Lost in Love, the group's debut album, contained some lush, listenable ballads but - as tends to happen to lush, listenable ballads - they were beaten to death by radio station play. Hence, the band embarked on a new album and, as is sadly the case with too many bands today, commercial success is the only criteria.

Predictable, the material is - to coin a phrase - "high schlock rot". The melodies are insignificant hooks stolen from countless insignificant bands of this ilk. As for the lyrics, we - this band just has nothing to say - and they keep saying it over and over...

"Air Supply" writes strictly love songs because they say that love is all there is to write about. Gimme a break.

DEXTER T. GNOME



TO BE CONTINUED... PROBABLY!