

SOFT ROCK POPULAR



(*****)DIAMANTINA COCKTAIL-LITTLE RIVER BAND (HARVEST RECORDS)

The only apparent trend in music in the last two years has been the increasing popularity of the "soft-rock" sounds. This has been borne out by the incredible success of such bands as Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles. It is into this expanding market that the Little River Band have focused their considerable talents. Australia's top export, this side of kangaroos for zoos, has produced the definitive "soft-rock" album. Borrowing touches from Fleetwood Mac for "Help Is on Its Way" and whole passages from the Eagles for "Another Runway", the Little River Band has effectively combined the most potent aspects of each of these groups into a subtly satisfying sound. Each song on Diamantina Cocktail is steeped in hidden melodies and underlying funkiness, which both become apparent after numerous listens. As far as "soft-rock" goes, the Little River Band are the best in the business. Diamantina Cocktail should be a part of everybody's collection.

(***)BURNIN' SKY - BAD COMPANY (SWAN SONG RECORDS)

The music of side one on Burnin' Sky is on a par with the best Bad Company has ever produced. Side two is certainly the worst. The obvious question that arises is, what happened between those two sides?

The answer lies in the writing credits. Paul Rodgers either wrote or

co-wrote all the tunes on side one while Simon Kirke and particularly Mick Ralphs take credit for writing the majority of trash on side two. Rodger's "Morning Sun" and "Leaving You" are instant Company classics while Kirke's "Peace of Mind" is, in a word, terrible. That's not the worst of it, though. The whole band takes credit for the seven minute jam, "Master of Ceremony", that closes the album. Why it was included is still a mystery, as there is absolutely nothing of value to be found on the aimless track. In a way, this could be expected.

Bad Company's music appeared to peak with their second album, Straight Shooter. Run With The Pack was a poor follow-up and side two of Burnin' Sky continues this down-hill slide in quality. Considering the talent involved, this decline is hard to explain. Bad Company's next album will have to be extraordinary if they hope to maintain any kind of following. Bad Company is Burnin' Out.

(****)NITE CITY (20TH CENTURY RECORDS)

Ray Manzarek, former organist for the Doors, has re-surfaced after a couple of solo albums to front a new rock group called Nite City. The Doors' influence is evident from the first organ notes of "Summer Eyes" which opens the album. Much of the album consists of pieces such as "Nite City" and "Bitter Sky Blue". Over all, it's a fine album and worth checking into. Recommended cuts are "Summer Eyes" and "Love Will Make You Mellow".

(**)PEZBAND (PASSPORT RECORDS)

The Pezband, as their name suggests, is the latest group aiming their music at the bubblegum rock market. Most of the band's tunes bear a striking resemblance to the sound of Eric Carmen and the Raspberries, except they lack the memorable hooks always found in Carmen's material. Therefore there is no reason whatsoever for investing in the Pezband.

(**)EVEN IN THE QUIETEST MOMENTS - SUPERTRAMP (A & M RECORDS)

The title says it all. There is nothing on this album that will wake you up from your deep sleep that set in after "Give A Little Bit" ended and "Lover Boy" began. "Give A Little Bit" is the only song that even comes close to matching the calculated brilliance of "School", "Dreams", or "Sister Moonshine". Besides, what's Churchill making speeches during "Fool's Overture" for?

(****)WIND AND WUTHERING - GENESIS (ATCO RECORDS)

Genesis has long been a mainstay group in the British music scene but to this point has met with little acceptance in North America. Wind and Wuthering has been produced with an eye on this market, an album calculated to break Genesis with American audiences. The first single from the album, "You Own Special Way", achieved wide-spread play in the States but failed to catch on in Canada. Regardless of this, "Your Own Special Way" and the rest of

Wind and Wuthering is finely crafted material from a very professional band. Peter Gabriel's absence doesn't seem to have affected the band at all, a surprising fact since most people considered Gabriel to be the only creative force in the group.

Don't look for heavy rock from Genesis, as their music is in a much softer vein. Whereas Supertramp put you to sleep with their songs, Genesis builds songs within songs, changes tempos frequently, and most important of all, keeps the listener interested. It's an album to listen to when you are in a special mood for simply good listening music. Genesis can fill that need effectively with Wind and Wuthering.

(****)CLARKE, HICKS, SYLVESTER, CALVERT, ELLIOTT - HOLLIES (EPIC)

This is the best Hollies material culled from their last two releases in Britain, Write On and Russian Roulette, neither of which were released in North America. Well-rounded to say the least, the material ranges from rock ("Russian Roulette") to disco/reggae ("Dragging My Heels"), to beautiful love ballads ("Love Is The Thing"). If their record company ever takes any interest in the group again (they certainly didn't spend any great amount of money on the jacket) the Hollies may yet re-achieve their deserved position as kings of the pop music industry.

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