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by line

Stigwood's 'Times Square'

Poor Mr. Robert Stigwood. The Bee Gees are suing him, and for umpteen millions no less. The Saturday Night Fever Disco Boom has finally died a natural death. Lately, it seems that everything Stigwood touched has turned into 24 carat lead. Through the fog, however, springs the eternal light, and this week's column finds us examining the newest of Stigwood's projects, the album "Times Square", which coincidentally is also the title of his latest cinematic venture.

Mr. Stigwood has a penchant for producing films which seem to capitalize on the public's tastes and trends. Sometimes he is extremely successful, as shown in his best known work, "Saturday Night Fever", and then sometimes the resultant work is dismal, exemplified in perhaps what could be termed the worst musical ever committed to film and vinyl, "Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band". This new double album set "Times Square" (which could be sub-titled

the "R. Stigwood Organization jumps on the new wave bandwagon") includes some gems of songs, as well as a few notorious clams.

The first side contains perhaps the strongest collection of songs appearing on the album. All are beautifully crafted and performed and although diverse in style, all demonstrate the different approaches and techniques individual artists utilize in stating a similar message. The straight ahead Rock 'n Roll shown on Suzi Quatro's "Rock Hard" contrasts well with the electronic wizardry of Gary Numan's, "Down in the Park". The bitchy rough-edged sound of Chrissy Hynde and The Pretenders's "Talk of the Town" magnifies the smoothness of Roxy Music's "Same Old Scene".

Perhaps the anthem (if any exists) of this urban new wave movement may well be the Talking Heads' "Life During Wartime". The song emphatically states, "this ain't no party, this ain't no disco..this ain't no foolin' around." If any one song can portray

the urgency these lyrics command and require, this one song can, and indeed does so with a vengeance. Other standout tracks include, "Walk on The Wild Side" penned by one of the first young toughs, Lou Reed, and incidentally produced by David Bowie.

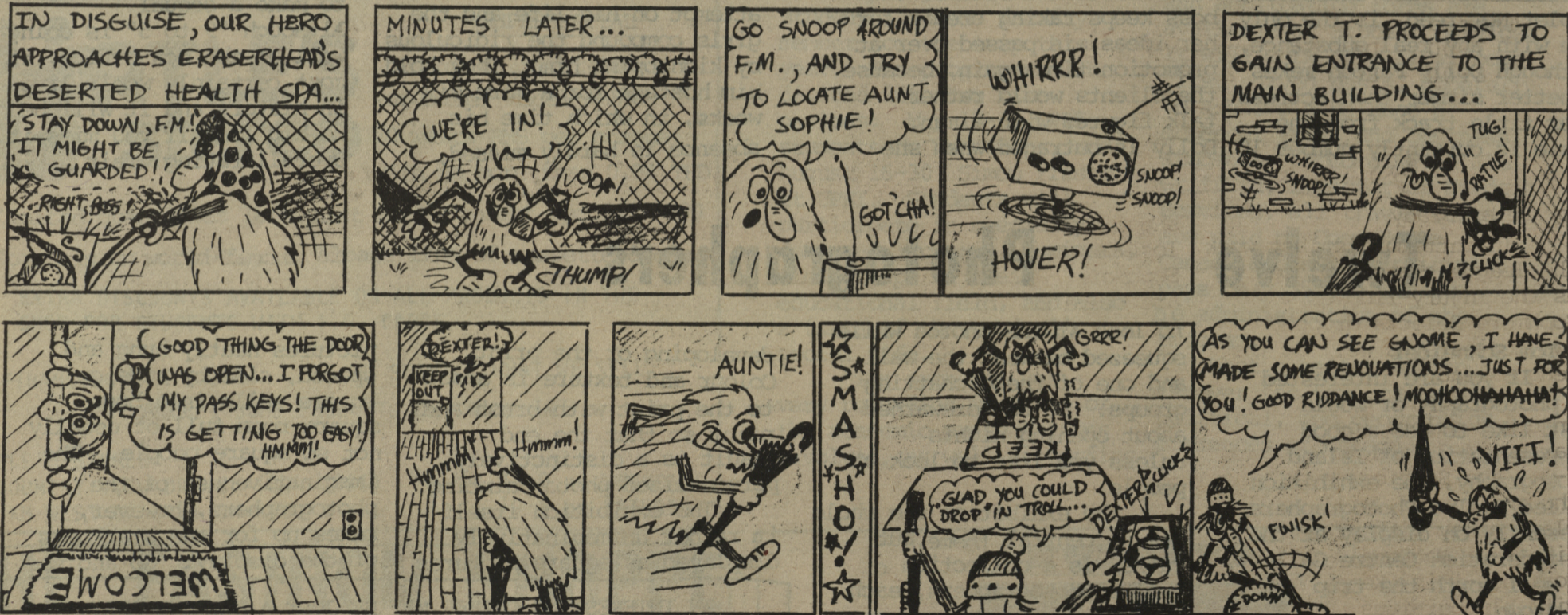
Also included are D.L. Byron's reworking of the old Smokey Robinson standard, "You can't Hurry Love", and the Ramones "I wanna be Sedated". The majority of all the songs which appear on the disc are very good, some by well known performers (Patti Smith, Joe Jackson, XTC), and some by unknowns, or at least performers who are unknown to me. (The Ruts The Cure), all giving credible performances.

I mentioned that this album also contains one or two songs of dubious quality. Two of these songs are performed by the film's alleged star, Robin Johnson. This gravel voiced teenager cannot really sing. Added to this are lyrics which assume the buyer has seen the film. This makes for a less than desirable standard.

Also included among some bad new wave, is some pathetic middle of the road. What M.O.R. is doing on an album of this subject is beyond me, however, the tunes do remain and stick out not unlike the proverbial sore thumb. The youngest of the Brothers Gibb Robin, contributes his limited vocal talents on "Help Me", insuring the next generation of post-pubescent girls another pop star from the Gibb brood.

Perhaps one can state that "Times Square" is a double album that should have been released as a single album set. Although there is a great deal of worthwhile material, the listener cannot help but become tired in listening to what, for all intents and purposes, is musical filler. The album remains a poor excuse as the definitive new wave compilation, but it is a fairly credible soundtrack from a very mediocre movie.

Dexter T. Gnome



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