

b . h . b . s .

b y l i n e

" Face Value "

At last, at long last, the yearly post-Christmas, pre-summer record release blues are over. After three terrible months in the musical doldrums, finally an album of outstanding merit has managed to reach my turntable. The drought last year of course was ended by debut albums from The Monks and The Pretenders; this year the honor and the accolades are handed out to Phil Collins' new l.p., "Face Value".

Phil Collins was one of the founding members of the group Genesis. Although their early success was founded upon Peter Gabriel's showmanship, Collins was influential in initiation the Genesis 'sound'. After the departure of Gabriel it became clear that Collins could revitalize the group, and indeed did, as warranted by last years "Duke". Over

the years, Collins has become an outstanding vocalist, and also one of rock's premier drummers. "Face Value" is not a debut album in so far as it is a solo album.

At first listening, the similarities between this album and last years "Peter Gabriel" release are noticeable. Indeed, this may in part be caused by their mutual choice in engineers, Hugh Padgham, and studios, The Townhouse in London. The years of working together must also have produced a similarity in tastes and approaches. Both seem fascinated by African rythum and chant, and incorporate these influences effectively with modern synthesizes sound. However, whereas Gabriel provided an entire album to this synthesis, Collins contributes only two songs to this genre: "In the Air Tonight" and "Hand in Hand", both of

which are very fine musical works.

The drummer Collins seems not content with one musical style. In fact, he places on vinyl some uncharacteristic, yet effective, slow ballads, in particular "This Might Be Love", which features some fine vocal work by both Collins and Stephen Bishop. This song may be destined to go on and become a top ten hit. In addition to soft sounds, the l.p. is full of some very hard driving rhythm and blues. It might seem strange having the highly sophisticated percussionist Collins pounding away at R&B, but this combination on songs such as "Thunder and Lightning" yields surprisingly good work. In addition, the Earth, Wind, and Fire Horn Section on many songs inspires the session to greater heights.

For this reviewer the highlight of the record

has to be the reworking of the old Lennon/McCartney song, "Tomorrow Never Knows". Psychedelia seems to have gone out of fashion, thank god, yet in moderation this type of music is very exciting. The repetitive sounds of the sitar, the snips of disjointed musical ideas, and the overall spaced-out effect this song evokes is very reminiscent of the old Haight-Ashbury days. (For those of you too young to remember, look it up in your history books.) To end this musical journey through the tastes of Phil Collins, we have a very pure version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". Most rainbows have a pot of gold at their end, but this album is made of pure gold throughout.

"Face Value" may be a debut solo album for Phil Collins, yet his mature musicality and wide ranging tastes have produced a magnificent record.

Take a no-name cast, a good versus evil plot, and some good photography, mix with eerie Gregorian chanting for effect and you have "the Final Conflict".

"The Final Conflict" is the second sequel to "The Omen", which was released in 1976. Damien, (Sam Neill) who is Satan's son, is 32 (one of many Biblical references). If the antichrist and the forces of evil are to rule the world, he must destroy the saviour whose second coming is fast approaching.

Damien comes to power, as the book of Revelations decrees, by becoming the Ambassador to England (the old Ambassador had a slight gun mishap), and head of the United Nations Youth Council. Damien's true identity is not totally unknown; there are seven priests headed by Father DeCarlo (Rossano Brazzi) who have recovered the seven daggers lost in the last sequel. These daggers are the only thing that can kill "the prince of darkness". Therefore it is the mission of these priests to go to



England and kill Damien, thus safeguarding the arrival of the saviour. It is all too easy to figure out that the first six priests are doomed to failure; it becomes only a matter of rolling the film to see how. Damien becomes aware of the presence of Christ, who has been born again on earth. He sets out "Herrod fashion" to kill all the male babies born March 24, thus insuring the destruction of the Nazarene. In the end, however, the task of destroying the saviour is left to Damien himself. However, he is kept from attaining his goal and it appears that even the son of the Devil has to learn "Hell hath no fury like the wrath of a woman".

"The Final Conflict" inherits from "The Omen", and "Damien (Omen II)" the haunting music which adequately sets the tension before every evil deed. Although it has neither the acting quality nor the terrifying intensity of "The Omen", it is better than "Damien (Omen II)", and "The Final Conflict" finally does resolve the conflict between good and evil.