

b . h . b . s .
by line

New Formulative Music

FORMULAS... Now there is absolutely nothing wrong in using formulas to solve mathematical problems, or using them to bake cakes, or even using formulas to write weekly music columns. However when formulae are applied to the process of creating music, the results are generally mixed. This week your dauntless critic examines an album by a formidable group, Steely Dan.

'Gaucho', which is Steely Dan's new product, or shall we say Donald Fagen, Walter Becker, and the cream of New York and Los Angeles session musicians' new product; it is a fine example of what I call Formulative (it's a new word I made up) Music. There is nothing wrong with the

album. It's pleasant and I'm sure it will not offend anyone. The people who have graced this album are most impressive: on horns, the likes of Tom Scott, the Brecker Brothers, Randy and Michael, and David Sanborn. Guest guitarists include Steve Khan, Larry Carlton, and Rick Derringer; drums and percussion are handled by Steve Gadd, Jeff Porcaro, Rick Marotta and Ralph MacDonald. Even good old Michael McDonald lends a voice in the effort. The studio players crave these sessions as a way of showing their virtuosity. The years of playing McDonald's Golden Arches commercials have left many of the musicians devoid of much spontaneity and musical creativity. The

resultant product is as expected.

The album starts with a mediocre tune in 'Babylon Sisters' and ends with another piece of elevator muzak 'Third World Man'. In between the first and last number is a great deal of filler-unoffensive, but not very inspiring either. The lyrics all have a sense of impending Californian paranoia, interspersed with one or two humable melodies, a danceable ditty ('Hey Nineteen'), and some jazz solos. In fact this album seems to remind one of the last Steely Dan l.p. 'Aja'. Seems strange that both albums sound very similar. Could it be that the boys are just churning out the same old shit?

Steely Dan have found

out over the last few years what the public buys, and so they've lowered themselves to the tastes of mass marketing. It sure may be musically stifling, and very frustrating to the people who remember the days when the group was innovative, but that doesn't produce platinum albums. True, 'Gaucho' sounds like the outtakes from 'Aja', but if we buy it, the next album will sound the same.

If you are a fanatical buyer of Steely Dan albums then you have already lined the pockets of Messrs. Fagen and Becker, but if you haven't bought 'Gaucho', don't. The only people who deserve this album are the ones who hum to the music played in supermarkets, and who really think this music is good jazz.

Sun Spots

My Friend is Goin' Down

This is a poem written by an inmate at the Sleepy Hollow Correctional Centre in Queens County, P.E.I. This poem is not a reflection of his personal experience but the experience of many he has known within the prison walls.

Have you ever loved a man that was locked inside,
A man that was sentenced and threw away his pride
He told you that he loved you, but kept on breaking your heart,
By going back to prison and tearing you apart

He came out with good intentions but lost out in the end,
By getting back into trouble he lost most of his friends.
They said that they's forget about things that happened before,
But every time he tried to explain they kept on shuttin' the door.

Sometimes he sits and wonders of times he had with you,
And holds his pillow hard and wishes it wasn't true;
He's waiting for your letter that says that you are through
But now she sits and cries of what she's got to do.

She says that she's been waiting time and time for you,
She'll probably always love you - yes, you know it's true.

Signed,
F.B.



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