



● Mark King, the driving force of Level 42.

Record Review

by Bob Woodhead

My favourite album of the Eighties so far is the latest by Level 42 entitled "Running In The Family." From start to finish the songs are truly outstanding and the musicianship is a joy to listen to.

It is always good to see a group you have followed from their early roots become famous and receive world-wide acclaim. They come from the Isle of Wight and back in 1980, 1981 and 1982 their records like "Love Meeting Love," "Turn It On" and "Weave Your Spell" were played in the clubs but not on the radio, and only "Love Games" had a brief flirtation with the Top 40, reaching No. 39.

From 1983 onwards their progress has been steady and assured with hits like "The Sun Goes Down (Living It Up)" and in 1985 they became one of the hottest bands when they released the LP "World Machine." That album sold 600,000 copies and yielded a top five single "Something About You."

The new album has sold 100,000 in its first week in the shops and although it failed to dislodge U2 from No. 1 and will probably be held off the top by "Now 9" and "Raindancing" (the forthcoming Alison Moyet LP) in the next few weeks, I will not be surprised to see it still in the chart this time next year having sold a million. (Consistent long-term sales are what count in the LP stakes).

Every track could be a hit

single and it is well worth buying the compact-disc or cassette version rather than the long-playing record because you get an extra cut called "Freedom Someday" which is very good indeed. It shows off how much Level 42 have been influenced by Earth Wind & Fire and have taken over from where they left off.

"Lessons In Love" (a No. 3 single last year) gets things underway, followed by "Children Say" a very melodic, singalong number. Third on the play list is the title-track "Running In The Family" (a recent Top Tenner) in its full six-minute glory. The real master-piece though is track 4, a six-minute ballad called "It's Over" which is in the same class as George Michael's "Careless Whisper." Among its features

are some superb vocal harmonies and piano playing. Songs of this quality are extremely rare; there are perhaps two or three every ten years, and I will be disappointed if this is not released to a wider audience on a single. It will undoubtedly receive many late night plays in the clubs.

Definitely out on a 45 soon will be "To Be With You Again" which is my favourite uptempo track. This is followed by "Two Solitudes," possibly the weakest song but not bad, and then on to "Fashion Fever" a funky dance cut with a great guitar solo in the middle and some wizardry on the bass guitar from Mark King. "The Sleepwalkers" includes some clever time-signature and key changes and infectious rhythm-guitar work.

Mark King, bass-guitarist and lead vocalist, is undoubtedly the band's driving force and is rightly regarded as the best bass player in the world. Level 42 will be appearing at the Brighton Centre later this month.

LP CHART

- 1 The Joshua Tree (U2)
- 2 Running In The Family (Level 42)
- 3 Men And Women (Simply Red)
- 4 Move Closer (Various)
- 5 Very Best Of Hot Chocolate
- 6 Phantom Of The Opera (Various)
- 7 Graceland (Paul Simon)
- 8 Silk And Steel (5 Star)
- 9 Picture Book (Simply Red)
- 10 Live Magic (Queen)