Record Review

23/4/87

One of the best albums to be released this Spring is "Men And Women" by Simply Red. This is the follow-up to "Picture Book" which was first issued at the end of 1985 when their debut single "Money's Too Tight To Mention" hit the lower regions of the chart.

However, the LP never took off until the summer when "Holding Back The Years" was a No. 2 single. Since then this six-piece outfit from Manchester has not looked back.

The new album opens with the recent 45 "The Right Thing" which in my opinion, is one of the weaker cuts. The second track "Infidelity" an upbeat, dance number, is going to be released as a single in due course. Also on side one are "Suffer" and "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye" (a Cole Porter song), both of which feature a powerful vocal delivery by flame-haired Mick Hucknall, the group's driving force and a major talent who will be around for years to come.

Side two is easily the best part of the record and it shows off the band's varying styles and diversity. "Love Fire" is Lover's-Rock style reggae with a melody not dissimilar to "Sailing." My favourite "Move On Out" has great lyrics and a very good guitar-solo in the middle that should have been much longer.

Mick Hucknall of Simply Red

I think the singalong chorus bears a vague resemblance to "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" although listeners I have spoken to disagree with this! "Shine" is descended from "Money's Too Tight To Mention" with a more complex arrangement and a fuller sound to it is therefore not quite as instantly appealing, but it includes some great rhythm-guitar work. Closing the set is "Maybe Someday," a beautiful, sad ballad, noteable for the horn playing in the middle.

Credit

Although Mick Hucknall is one of the leading white soul singers, credit must also go to the rest of the line-up who are all accomplished musicians performing well throughout.

"La Isla Bonita" is Madonna's 14th Top Ten hit which is a record for a female solo artist. All her Top Ten hit records have also reached the Top Five and her nearest rival in this category is Connie Francis who enjoyed eight top five hits.

Although Level 42's "Running In The Family" did not reach No. 1 in the overall album chart it has been top of the Compact Disc chart and their super video "Live at Wembley" is No. 1 in the Music Video chart. This concert was recorded at the Arena in December of last year and it runs for more than an hour so it is good value for money.

The highlight is Mark King being lifted high above the stage in a special harness still playing his bass-guitar. All in all it is the best concert video around at the moment so worthy of the No. 1 spot. The band's brilliant new single "To Be With You Again" (from the album) is now in the shops.

LP CHART

1 Now 9 (Various)
2 Raindancing (Alison Moyet)
3 The Joshua Tree (U2)
4 Electric (The Cult)
5 Move Closer (Various)
6 Running In The Family (Level 42)
7 Graceland (Paul Simon)
8 Men And Women (Simply Red)
9 Sign Of The Times (Prince)
10 Circus (Erasure)

Bob Woodhead