Record Review by Bob Woodhead

The Pearson family of brothers and sisters from Romford, collectively known as Five Star, have released their third album entitled "Between the Lines." The quintet won the Record Industry Award for Best Group of 1986, but on the strength of this album they will be very lucky to repeat that victory.

To be fair to them they have been bold in their making of the new L.P. It is generally funkier than their earlier work and the music has a harder, rougher edge to it, but much of it sounds similar and therefore mundane. The best track is "Made Out Of Love" which is more tuneful than the others, and "Ain't Watcha Do" comes a close second. The recent hit "Whenever You're Ready" is included and there are a couple of rather dull ballads.

Brand new this week is the final album release by the disbanding Smiths called "Strangeways Here We Come." My favourite Smiths L.P.s were "Hatful of Hollow" and "The Queen Is Dead" but this one certainly does them justice as their swansong. Although their sound and musical style have probably been exploited to the limit there are signs of some new ideas on "Strangeways." Some of the songs have a heavier feel to them and different chord patterns. However, the poetic, wistful songs like "Girlfriend In A Coma," "Paint A Vulgar Picture" and best of all "I Won't Share You" win the day as far as I am concerned. I was particularly pleased that the latter spine-tingling ballad was chosen to be the group's final track.

Also worth hearing are "Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me," a brilliantly arranged and orchestrated song, and "Unhappy Birthday" with Morrissey's typically disturbing lyrics. But it will always be Johnny Marr's musical side of the compositions that I will remember best. He has just co-written "The Right Stuff" which is Bryan Ferry's more rock-orientated new single. The Smiths will be featured on "The South Bank Show" on ITV on Sunday evening this autumn.

The latest in the "Now That's What I Call Music" series is "Now — Smash Hits of the 80s" featuring 32 hits including four from every year from 1980 to 1987. When phenomenal tracks like "West End Girls" (Pet Shop Boys), "Careless Whisper" (George Michael) and "Everybody Wants to Rule the World" (Tears For Fears) all on one double-album, heavy sales are guaranteed in the run-up to Christmas.

Comedy fans will enjoy "The Secret Policeman's Third Ball (The Comedy)" which features recordings from a "live" show including Mel Smith and Griff Rhys-Jones, Ben Elton, Warren Mitchell and Rory Bremner, who appeared in Chichester last year. He is one of the most promising impressionists and his impersonations include the News At Ten team, Sir Robin Day and film critic Barry Norman! Royalties will go to Amnesty International.

LP CHART

1 Bad (Michael Jackson)
2 Dancing with Strangers (Chris Rea)
3 Wonderful Life (Black)
4 Actually (Pet Shop Boys)
5 Always Guaranteed (Cliff Richard)
6 A Momentary Lapse of Reason (Pink Floyd)
7 Between The Lines (Five Star)
8 Changing Faces (10cc And Godley and Creme)
9 The Cream of Eric Clapton (Eric Clapton/Cream)
10 The Joshua Tree (U2)

● The Pearson family — better known as Five Star.