Record Review

26/11/87

The Shadows are back on the scene with a new L.P. entitled "Simply Shadows" which they have arranged and produced themselves. The album features their versions of recent hits like "Chain Reaction," "I Want To Know What Love Is" and "I Knew You Were Waiting For Me." They have also recorded a delightful medley of the television themes to "EastEnders" and "Howard's Way" as well as their own official theme to "Pulaski." But for real sentimental mood music the Shadows have done masterful interpretations of George Michael's "Careless Whisper" and "Walking In The Air" from "The Snowman." These provide after-dinner listening of the highest calibre.

A fellow guitarist from the same era as the Shadows, Duane Eddy, has also released a self-titled album. He has worked with a whole variety of artists on these new tracks, including Paul McCartney on the "Rockestra Theme" which was recorded at The Mill Studios here in Sussex. The best numbers are those produced by Jeff Lynne (of the E.L.O.) like "Theme For Something Really Important" and "The Trembler." George Harrison plays slide-guitar on these, which is no surprise as Lynne has been collaborating with him on a new album which I shall be reviewing in due course. Also listen out for "Blue City," a ballad, with Ry Cooder playing a prominent role on slide and acoustic guitars.

We have come to that time of year when many of the major artists and groups are issuing Greatest Hits packages. By far the best of the current batch is "The Singles" by the Pretenders, led by the talented, charismatic Chrissie Hynde on vocals. Despite the tragic and untimely deaths of two of the original line-up, Chrissie has carried the band through nearly nine years in the studios and on the road with rock classics like "Kid," "Talk Of The Town," "Message Of Love" and their Christmas song with a difference "2,000 Miles," all of which are included here. My personal favourite is "Thin Line Between Love And Hate," a song with a lot of soul and atmosphere, which should have gone much higher than No.49 in the summer of 1984. With Johnny Marr of the Smiths now playing guitar with the Pretenders their unique rock style is likely to go from strength to strength.

Chrissie Hynde's duet with UB40 "I Got You Babe" is featured on both the Pretenders album and "The Best Of UB40" which is another recommended purchase, charting the Birmingham band's hit-making career from 1980 to the present day. The songs include the chart topping "Red Red Wine," the lovely ballad "Don't Break My Heart" and the 1981 anthem of the unemployed "One In Ten" which sounds better today than it did then. Also featured on this LP is "King" which was a double-A-side coupled with "Food For Thought" in 1980 but never received the radio airplay in deserved.

There are a bumper batch of new singles competing for the honour of being Number One on Christmas Day from the likes of Rick Astley, Madonna, Michael Jackson, the Pet Shop Boys and another Mel And Kim, namely comedian Mel Smith and Kim Wilde singing "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree!" In my opinion the battle will be between the alternative Mel And Kim and Rick Astley singing "When I Fall In Love" with Astley winning. I shall be reviewing his fabulous album shortly.

LP CHART

1. Bridge Of Spies (T'Pau).
2. All The Best (Paul McCartney).
3. Best Of UB40.
4. Tango In The Night (Fleetwood Mac).
5. Faith (George Michael).
6. The Singles (Pretenders).
7. Savage (Eurythmics).
8. Best Shots (Pat Benatar).
9. From Motown With Love (Various).
10. Hold Your Fire (Rush).

Bob Woodhead

● **The Shadows**