

Narada: from drummer^{16/1/82} to star

Record Review



Joan Baez: back on the scene.

One of the most important figures and influences on the music scene throughout the 1980's has been Narada Michael Walden.

He was born in Michigan in 1952 and began drumming at the age of eight after receiving a drum-kit as a present. By the time he was 21 he had joined the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and he went on to work with Jeff Beck and Weather Report. By 1980 he had become an all-round musician and enjoyed two smash disco hits in his own right, "I Shoulda Loved You" and "Tonight I'm Alright." He then moved into the field of songwriting and producing records for other artists like Stacy Lattisaw's "Jump To The Beat" and Sister Sledge's "All American Girls" album.

Over the past three years Narada has hardly put a foot wrong, having produced Aretha Franklin's "Who's Zooming Who" album and contributing to both Whitney Houston's LPs. He has also seen success with artists as diverse as Starship and Jermaine Stewart, but at long last he has released an album of his own again.

It is named after his terrific hit song "Divine Emotion." Those who have enjoyed the dance music he has written and produced for the aforementioned performs will also be keen on this collection of contemporary tunes which he has written, arranged and produced, working closely with lyricist Jeffrey Cohen and a top-notch assemblage of supporting musicians.

Apart from the title-song the stand-out tracks include "That's The Way I

Feel About Cha" and "I Belong" which have mid-paced funky rhythms and catchy refrains. Since completing "Divine Emotion," Narada has been working closely with the Four Tops and Lionel Richie on their forthcoming LPs.

In contrasting style to Narada, Sixties folksinger Joan Baez is back on the scene with a brand new collection of nine songs. "Recently" (on the Virgin label) was produced by Alan Abrahams and includes two of Joan's own compositions, as well as some interesting interpretations of famous songs like Mark Knopfler's "Brothers In Arms" and Peter Gabriel's "Biko." The album also includes Joan's arrangement of the traditional songs "Let Us Break Bread Together" and "Freedom," recorded as a medley "live" in Los Angeles last year. The record confirms that after

a quarter of a century Joan Baez has few serious rivals in the field of folk music.

Lack of space prohibits me from reviewing the new LPs by the Railway Children ("Recurrence") and Jean Beauvoir ("Jacknifed") but these are well worth listening to and certainly should not be passed over.

LP CHART

1. Nite Flite (Various).
2. Tango In The Night (Fleetwood Mac).
3. Popped In, Souled Out (Wet Wet Wet).
4. Motown Dance Party (Various).
5. Heaven On Earth (Belinda Carlisle).
6. Dirty Dancing - Soundtrack.
7. More Dirty Dancing - Soundtrack.
8. Stronger Than Pride (Sade).
9. Whitney (Whitney Houston).
10. Love (Aztec Camera).

Bob Woodhead



Narada Michael Walden: Own magnificent album.

53/1/82