

Genius on the blues guitar

The Robert Cray Band have followed up their internationally successful LP "Strong Persuader" with another strong package entitled "Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark".

The new album was recorded in Los Angeles with producers Bruce Bromberg and Dennis Walker, the successful team behind Robert's last three albums, "Bad Influence", "False Accusations" and the aforementioned "Strong Persuader". Saxophone player David Sanborn and the Memphis Horns make some important guest contributions on the album, but it is Cray's genius on the blues guitar that is allways predominant.

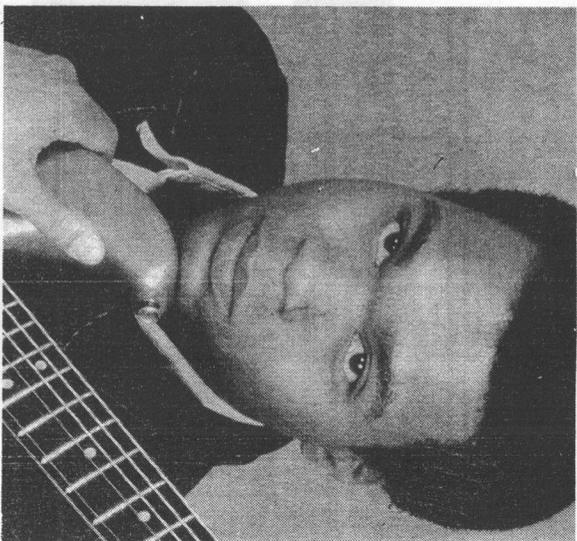
"Don't Be Afraid Of The Dark" has just the right balance of technical virtuosity and straightforward good tunes, and Cray is quite rightly regarded as the most successful young performer of blues music. His exemplary picking on the guitar and soulful singing cannot fail to captivate the listener. Of the ten tracks there is not a bad one, but the highlights include the tuneful, upbeat title-song, and the similarly styled "You Secret's Safe With Me". But the finest cut is saved until the end, namely "Laugh Out Loud". This veers away from the blues style into a soul-orientated vein, but that waiting guitar sound still comes over in complimentary fashion.

Singer, songwriter and producer Jeffrey Osborne who has noticed up a string of hit singles catalogued on four acclaimed LPs, has just issued a new album entitled "One Love - One Dream". Side one features a pleasant mixture of up-tempo and slow soul songs, while the second side has some interesting rhythms and tunes with a difference. Osborne was the lead singer with LTD for ten years before venturing into a career of his own in 1982, and when listening to his "Jeffrey Osborne" LP of that year one can appreciate how much his music and vocal style have progressed. The most impressive number is the dance-bound "She's On The Left", closely followed by the mid-tempo ballad "Can't Go Back On A Promise".

In the spring Taylor Dayne released a strong album named after her huge hit 45 "Tell It To My Heart" which I was unable to review in this column as there were so many other interesting releases. I can now rectify that situation, although you only have to recall the chain of first class singles she has released since then to appreciate how good the album is. All the hits have been lifted from "Tell It To My Heart" and they are notable for their extraordinary variety proving that Ms. Dayne is one of the most significant new vocal talents to have emerged this year. My favourite track is the dance floor groover "Don't Rush Me", but the dramatic ballad "I'll Always Love You" also stands out. Of the lesser known cuts "Where Does That Boy Hang Out" performed in a Sixties Motown fashion, is well worth hearing.

- LP Chart**
1. Flying Colours (Chris De Bureh)
 2. Revolutions (Jean Michel Jarre)
 3. New Jersey (Bon Jovi)
 4. Pop Art (Transvision Vamp)
 5. Moonlighting (Various)
 6. Kylie (Kylie Minogue)
 7. Rap Trax (Various)
 8. Conscience (Womack and Womack)
 9. Staring At The Sun (Level 42)
 10. Ones On One (Various)

Bob Woodhead



Robert Cray

Psycho." The trio of Martyn Ware, Glenn Gregory and Ian Craig-Marsh composed and produced this new work themselves. They have steered away from their "electro" sound and into a funky dance sound which in my opinion is less suited to them. Nevertheless the album has some brighter moments particularly on Side Two with songs like "Dangerous" with its effective chant, "Train Of Love In Motion" with its quick rhythm, and "Responsibility" which is a good ballad to end on, featuring some infectious guitar-licks behind the vocals.

The new three-piece London-based band Breathe, consisting of David Gasper on vocals, Marcus Lillington on guitar and Ian Spice on drums, have issued their debut L.P. called "All That Jazz." Gasper and Lillington co-wrote all the songs except one, and they have worked with several leading producers to create a worthy album. Tracks to listen out for include "Monday Morning Blues," "Liberties Of Love," "Won't You Come Back?" and the title number, all of which have good melodies. "How Can I Fall?" is a strong ballad sung with great emotion, and on the evidence of this and several other cuts David Gasper looks set for a long and successful career.

L.P. CHART

1. Rattle And Hum (U2).
2. Introspective (Pet Shop Boys).
3. To Whom It May Concern (Pasadenas).
4. The Greatest Hits Collection (Bananarama).
5. Revolutions (Jean Michel Jarre).
6. Flying Colours (Chris De Bureh).
7. Kylie (Kylie Minogue).
8. Moonlighting (Various).
9. Conscience (Womack And Womack).
10. Ones On One (Various).

The Pet Shop Boys have just released their fourth album entitled "Introspective." The record is very different from last year's "Actually" and is a bold step forward. It is not packed with the catchy hit tunes that so characterized "Actually" but instead concentrates on some amazing, digital, computerized sounds and epic mixing of cosmic proportions.

There are only six tracks averaging eight minutes duration, beginning with "Left To My Own Devices," a cleverly arranged song with interesting orchestration and vocals that are mostly spoken. The track becomes really striking after a few hearings and I can envisage the Boys remixing this for future Single release.

Next up is "I Want A Dog" which originally appeared on the B-side of last October's hit "Rent" and features some fascinating lyrics entangled around synthesized percussive beat. Side One closes in grand fashion with an eight minute remix of the recent smash "Domino Dancing," while the second side opens equally impressively with "I'm Not Scared." This is the Pet Shop Boys' own version of the hit number they wrote for Patsy Kensit and Eighth Wonder.

Next on the menu is "Always On My Mind/In My House," a new and better version of their four-week chart-topper from last Christmas. This variation is dominated by a punchy, digital bass line and a strong "House" rhythm with some fancy vocal programming where Neil Tennant's voice has been computerized. The album concludes with "It's Alright," another nine minute "House" styled epic, but lacking the catchy melody necessary to make it a hit.

Heaven 17 are back on the scene with a new album on the Virgin label entitled "Teddy Bear, Duke And

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Record Review



Pet Shop Boys