Vocals of awesome quality

Record Review

Soul superstar Anita Baker has followed up her stunning "Rapture" album with the equally impressive "Giving You The Best That I Got" – a new collection that certainly lives up to its name.

There are eight tracks opening with "Priceless", a melodic, mid-tempo affair, continuing the musical style so prevalent on "Rapture". "Lead Me Into Love" has some first class vocals and a memorable chorus, while the title-track is a jazzy, piano-based piece that points towards Anita's likely future direction. Side one closes with the album's masterpiece "Good Love" composed by Gary Taylor, with a melody and vocals of awesome quality that sends shivers down the spine.

Side two is not quite as strong as the first side, but three of the four songs are still rich in quality; "Rules" and "Just Because" have good tunes while "Good Enough" moves into the field of jazz again. It is noticeable that the two songs Ms. Baker co-wrote both have jazz leanings. It is a pity that the album's weakest track "You Belong To Me" is saved until the end, but this should not detract from what is a very fine album indeed.

The Detroit-based band Al Hudson And One Way have recently signed a new record deal with Capitol, and their first album on that label has the appropriate title "A New Beginning". Their career began in 1976 when they were known as Al Hudson And The Soul Partners, and since then they have released nine albums, all of which have gained Top 30 chart positions in the U.S.A.

The ten tracks on "A New Beginning" were all written and produced by the band, and are performed in a variety of soul and funky dance styles. The best of the dance tracks is the opener "Driving Me Crazy" with its pounding, energetic, percussive-beat fronted by really good melodic notation, but "Pleasure Seeker" also has a tuneful, up-tempo refrain. The album also has some classy, soul ballads, particularly "U, Me And The Other Guy" and "Say You Will".

The long-awaited debut album by Bomb The Bass, "Into The Dragon" is now in the shops. Bomb The Bass is essentially the work of producer/engineer Tim Simenon, a 20-year-old Londoner who made his name with a piece of scratching/sampling music written originally as a piece of homework for his college course on studio engineering. That piece was "Beat Dis" which shot to No. 2 in the charts earlier this year. He followed this up with another Top Ten hit, the even better "Don't Make Me Wait" featuring the soulful vocals of Lauraine Mackintosh whom I was lucky enough to meet when she visited Thursdays Nightclub locally as part of the Cool Notes in 1986.

The album features a stunning variety of Acid House sounds, with interesting mixing and sampling techniques. The best track is the unusual cover-version of "Say A Little Prayer" which is going to be the next 45 release.

LP Chart

1. Kylie (Kylie Minogue)
2. Money For Nothing (Dire Straits)
3. The Memphis Sessions (Wet Wet Wet)
4. Greatest Hits (Human League)
5. Private Collection (Cliff Richard)

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6. The Ultimate Collection (Bryan Ferry)
7. Soft Metal (Various)
8. New Light Through Old Windows (Chris Rea)
9. Watermark (Enya)
10. Smash Hits Party 88 (Various)

Bob Woodhead