Observer Entertainment

Record Review

PRT Records have released a series of Hit Collections and I have been listening to three of these by the Kinks, the Searchers and Petula Clark.

The album by the Kinks, "Hit Singles" traces their career from "You Really Got Me" in 1964 through to "Apeman" in 1970. I was very interested to hear one musical commentator give the opinion that the former was probably the first "Heavy Metal" record, and I would tend to concur with this view. One of the most impressive features of the Kinks career was Ray Davies's lyrics, many of which summed up the Swinging Sixties perfectly. The most obvious of these were "Sunny Afternoon" and "Dedicated Follower of Fashion." The LP has many other highpoints, most noteably on "Tired Of Waiting For You" and "Set Me Free."

Links

The Searchers were more of a "lightweight" group whose success was short-lived in comparison with many sixties outfits. Nevertheless, in a two-year period they made some memorable records, most noteably "Goodbye My Love." They also managed to have three No. 1 hits which are all included on "Hits Collection", namely "Sweets For My Sweet," "Needles and Pins" and best of all "Don't Throw Your Love Away."

Petula Clark, who was born in Chichester and still maintains strong links with the city, can be justly proud of her "Hit Singles Collection." In fact she had so many hit records over a 20-year period beginning in 1954 that her album is a double one. It begins with the enchanting "Little Shoemaker," which I had never heard before, and this immediately captivated me and set the mood for the rest of the songs which run in chronological order. Petula recorded a remarkably versatile range of songs from the strong ballad "With All My Heart" to the bright and breezy "Romeo," and my favourite of the uptempo tunes "My Friend The Sea." My overall favourite is her chart-topping ballad from 1967 "This Is My Song" which had the most unlikely composer in Charlie Chaplin! Also not to be missed are the profound lyrics on "The Other Man's Grass" and the clever changes of rhythm and melody on "Don't Sleep In The Subway." Of these three LPs Petula Clark's stands the test of time the best.

Appealing

The Kinks are one of several artists and groups whose career is mapped out on Video Biographies containing 100 per cent. music and vision with no commentary, produced by Virgin Vision. Of the first batch of these "Abba (1974-82)" is the most appealing, visually tracing the career of the most successful band of the 1970s. The Bee Gees video is also good but it only follows them until 1978, and in their early days of 1967-70 very little original footage is available. The 1986 "Story Of The Bee Gees," narrated by Roger Scott, is a better buy. Single of the week is "I'm Not Scared" by Eighth Wonder, a song full of atmosphere that has been produced by the Pet Shop Boys.

British Single: Never Gonna Give You Up (Rick Astley).

British LP: Nothing Like The Sun (Sting).

Soundtrack/Cast Recording: Phantom Of The Opera.

Music Video: True Faith (New Order).

British Classical Record: Vaughan Williams, Symphony No. 5 (Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra).

British Producer: Stock/Aitken/Waterman.

British Group: Pet Shop Boys.

British Male Artist: George Michael.

British Female Artist: Alison Moyet.

British Newcomer: Wet Wet Wet.

International Newcomer: Terence Trent D'Arby.

International Solo Artist: Michael Jackson.

International Group: U2.

Outstanding Contribution to British Music Special Award: The Who.

Bob Woodhead

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● The Kinks