

Queen's ^{6/7/89} 'Miracle' has harder sound

Rocking their way to the top of the LP Chart recently were Queen whose latest album "The Miracle" is better than I expected it to be.

As was widely predicted, the quartet consisting of John Deacon, Brian May, Roger Taylor and Freddie Mercury, have opted for a heavier, harder rock sound but they have been sensible enough to cater for other tastes.

After the raucous, powerful opening of the first two tracks, the title-song "The Miracle" has a delightful melody with strong vocal-harmonies fronting a staccato rhythm. The recent Top Three hit single "I Want It All" and "The Invisible Man" complete what is by and large a disappointing first side.

The latest single "Break-thru" opens side two. In my opinion this is one of

the weaker songs and I am rather baffled by their choosing to issue it on the 45 format.

However, the rest of the second side is really strong. "Rain Must Fall" is a melodic, rhythmic dance number performed in Freddie Mercury's typical "tongue-in-cheek" manner, and one can almost visualize Madonna singing this same song and taking it to the top of the charts! Another dance-orientated track "Scandal" follows on, and leads into "My Baby Does Me" with its slow, funky rhythm similar to Sade's music and with more great Mercury vocals.

"The Miracle" concludes with "Was It All Worth It?" a strong, rock number with really good lyrics. All the tracks were composed by Queen and the album was produced by the foursome in collaboration with David Richards.

At the opposite end of the musical spectrum Peabo Bryson's new album "All My Love" will undoubtedly please his followers. Bryson is best known in this country for his duet with Roberta Flack entitled "Tonight I Celebrate My Love" which was a No. 2 hit in 1983, but in America he has enjoyed success on the Soul music scene.

His voice is something of a cross between that of George Benson and Jeffrey Osborne, and he is a proficient songwriter and producer having composed most of these new offerings and produced most of them in collaboration with several other producers. Although Bryson is well known for his ballads, and most of the songs here are of the slower variety, it is actually the uptempo, funky numbers that stand out as the best, particularly "Palm Of Your Hand" in duet with Dietra

Hicks and produced by Nick Martinelli.

On the subject of soul music, how pleasing it has been to see an outstanding piece of slow-funk hitting the No. 1 spot in the pop charts. I am of course talking about Soul II Soul's smooth, summery "Back To Life".

LP CHART

1. Batman Soundtrack (Prince)
2. Club Classics, Vol One (Soul II Soul)
3. Ten Good Reasons (Jason Donovan)
4. Don't Be Cruel (Bobby Brown)
5. Raw Like Sushi (Neneh Cherry)
6. Past Present (Clannad)
7. Appetite For Destruction (Guns'N'Roses)
8. Flowers In The Dirt (Paul McCartney)
9. A Night To Remember (Cyndi Lauper)
10. The Miracle (Queen)

Bob Woodhead

Aretha's latest ^{13/7/89} is disappointing

Sixties soul singer Aretha Franklin has recently released her long-awaited new album entitled "Through The Storm", but sadly it

does not live up to everyone's expectations of the great lady, despite the top team of producers.

These include Narada Michael Walden, Arif Mardin and Aretha herself.

"Through The Storm" is perhaps most notable for the fact that it includes four duets with other top stars. "Gimme Your Love" features James Brown and it is performed very much in his style as opposed to Ms. Franklin's, so it will please his followers but not necessarily hers.

The rather dull, unadventurous title-song features Elton John but it has already been given the thumbs-down by record buyers as it only tickled the lower regions of the singles chart.

"It Isn't, It Wasn't, It Ain't Never Gonna Be" is a duet with Whitney Houston, but this works because

their vocals blend well together on this fast and furious dance number.

I can envisage this making a strong impression on the singles charts if it is chosen for release on the smaller labels.

My personal favourite among the four duets however, is "If Ever A Love There Was", a melodic, soul ballad featuring the Four Tops and Kenny G on saxophone.

Aretha's four solo offerings on the L.P. fail to recapture much of her old magic, although "Come To Me" is a brave cover-version of the Ruby Winters top 20 hit of 1978.

Those who follow the facts and figures of the charts will be interested to learn that Madonna's "Express Yourself" recently became her 18th top five hit record, and in this category she now only trails Elvis Presley, Cliff Richard and the Beatles.

If you are keen on hearing the top 20 charts of

bygone years you should not miss Alan Freeman's weekly "Pick Of The Pops" show between 12.30 p.m. and 3 p.m. on Sundays on Radio One, featuring three old charts.

Normally there is one from the 1960s (occasionally the 1950s), one from the 1970s and one from recent years. "Sounds Of The Sixties" between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on Saturday mornings on Radio Two is also a must for nostalgia fans!

The current music-scene is best portrayed by Chris Kelly's "Power Twenty" between 10.30 a.m. and 12 noon on Saturday mornings on Ocean Sound's Power FM on 103.2 metres in stereo.

This features the 20 best-selling singles here in the south. David Jensen's Network Chart between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Sundays features the national top 30 on the same frequency, or if you prefer you can tune to Bruno

Brooks' BBC top 40 at the same time on stereo Radio Two.

The best TV pop show at present is "The Chart Show" on ITV between 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. on Saturday mornings, and featuring all the best in pop videos.

L.P. CHART

1. Velvetene (Transvision Vamp)
2. Club Classics, Vol. One (Soul II Soul)
3. Batman Soundtrack (Prince)
4. Don't Be Cruel (Bobby Brown)
5. Ten Good Reasons (Jason Donovan)
6. Past Present (Clannad)
7. Appetite For Destruction (Guns'N'Roses)
8. Full Moon Fever (Tom Petty)
9. Raw Like Sushi (Neneh Cherry)
10. The Miracle (Queen)

Bob Woodhead