

7/19/81 Top group in legal wrangle

One of the finest rock bands of the 1970s particularly as a "live" outfit was Yes, and their ex-members are currently involved in a long, drawn-out legal dispute over the use of the name "Yes."

Four of the key members of that 1970s outfit - singer Jon Anderson, guitarist Steve Howe, keyboard player Rick Wakeman and drummer Bill Bruford have reformed, but they have been unable to use the name "Yes" on their latest album, so have opted for "Anderson, Bruford, Wakeman, Howe" which incidentally, is also the title chosen for the record itself.

It seems ironic that these key members have been barred by law from using their famous band name, as so much of the Yes success can be attributed to them, particularly Jon Anderson who was the founder member and inspiration in 1968. The dispute is with former members Chris Squire (the bass guitarist) and Alan White (the drummer who was Bruford's successor).

The new album is very good indeed, and much stronger than I expected. Messrs. Anderson, Bruford,

Wakeman and Howe have proved yet again there is no substitute for strong musicianship. A fine balance has been struck between their familiar "marathon" efforts and some short, striking little numbers.

The latter category seems to work best on this record, with the fast keyboard-dominated track "Fist Of Fire" really hitting the highspots. Jon Anderson's infectious, chanting vocals are a treat on this number. The pretty, little ballad "Let's Pretend", which Vangelis helped them compose, is also first class.

The Yes connection is perhaps best summed-up by the fact that the brilliant artist Roger Dean, who designed so many of their album-covers in the 1970s, has again performed the honours on the sleeve.

Recently I reviewed the latest Prefab Sprout album "Protest Songs" and this reminded me their previous offering "From Langley Park To Memphis" never received the review it deserved in this column.

In my view it is a much stronger record than "Protest Songs." The best tracks are those which were selected for single release, particularly "The Golden Calf" which is a great piece of rock of rock'n'roll with a first-rate crisp production.

"Cars And Girls" has a delightfully tuneful melody, and of course the Top Ten hit "King Of Rock'N'Roll" needs no introduction. I felt that the video that promoted this, featuring people dressed as "hot-dogs" round the swimming pool, should have been a contender for the best video of 1988.

The pick of the slower cuts is "Hey Manhattan!" which again has a polished production and dressing of the song. "From Langley Park" has deservedly been Prefab Sprout's most successful LP to date.

LP CHART

1. Cuts Both Ways (Gloria Estefan).
2. Ten Good Reasons (Jason Donovan).
3. Trash (Alice Cooper).
4. A New Flame (Simply Red).
5. Choices (Blow Monkeys).
6. Raw Like Sushi (Neneh Cherry).
7. All The Hits: Hot Sensational Remixes (Imagination).
8. Batman - Soundtrack (Prince).
9. Sacred Heart (Shakespear's Sister).
10. Don't Be Cruel (Bobby Brown).

Bob Woodhead