Record review

9/11/89

Julia's jazz venture

The holder of the No.1 album of 1988 has returned with her second long-player.

I am of course referring to Kylie Minogue who has made the best start to any chart-career with three chart-toppers and four No. 2 hits with her first seven single releases.

These sold a combined total of 3.6 million singles in this country and the first album sold 1.9 million copies.

The new album is called "Enjoy Yourself" and all but one of the ten songs has been composed by the Stock-Aitken-Waterman team.

The exception is a new version of the Little Anthony & the Imperials hit "Tears On My Pillow" will be featured in Kylie's first feature film "The Delinquents" due to be premiered on Boxing Day.

In view of Kylie's current popularity "Enjoy Yourself" will undoubtedly end the year challenging the albums of Simply Red, Jason Donovan and the two by Gloria Estefan to be top seller, but it is inferior to all these and not nearly as strong as her debut.

There are quite a few slower tunes but apart from the catchy "Heaven And Earth" they do not really suit her vocal style.

However, Stock, Aitken and Waterman's genius for writing wonderful pop-dance songs is still clearly evident on most of the faster numbers like the chart-topping "Hand On Your Heart" and on "Never Too Late," "Nothing To Lose," "I'm Over Dreaming. (Over You)" and the title song "Enjoy Yourself."

Julia Fordham, the talented singer/songwriter from Hayling Island has recently released her second album "Porcelain" featuring ten new songs, all self-composed.

It is essentially a much "folkier" album than last year's stunning debut "Julia Fordham" and the tunes are performed in a quieter, more acoustic mood.

If I have to make a criticism it would be that there is not enough variety on this set. It is packed with light ballads, whereas the first album saw Julia in so many different moods on her songs which were brimming with ideas and variety.

The most interesting tracks on "Porcelain" are those on which she ventures into the jazz field like "For You Only For You" and most of all "Genius" where her vocal technique is not dissimilar to artists like Cleo Laine, and the Latin rhythms are excellent.

"That's The Way Love Is" with its catchy, mainstream-pop appeal performed very well in the charts when it was issued on the 45 format.

My main criticism of the other tracks is that the rhythms are too prolonged, unadventurous and repetitive, despite the first class vocal arrangements and performances.

L.P. CHART

1. Wild! (Erasure).
2. Welcome To The Beautiful South.
3. Enjoy Yourself (Kylie Minogue).
4. Runaway Horses (Belinda Carlisle).
5. Storm Front (Billy Joel).
6. The Sensual World (Kate Bush).
7. All Or Nothing (Milli Vanilli).
8. Greatest Hits (Billy Ocean).
9. Spark To A Flame (Chris DeBurgh).
10. Crossroads (Tracy Chapman).

Bob Woodhead

Record review

16/11/89

Andy Bell could be one of the greats

The duo that was voted the best British Group of 1988 in the Record Industry Awards, Erasure looks set to continue that success with a new album entitled "Wild!"

When reviewing the last album "The Innocents" in April 1988 I felt that Vince Clarke and Andy Bell had reached their artistic peak, and that view seems to be borne out having listened to "Wild!"

There are some tremendous songs here, especially "Blue Savannah" but they are not consistently good, and there are some dull efforts on the second side.

I rate "Blue Savannah" as the best track Vince and Andy have ever written or recorded, and if this does not make it to Number One as a Single then I do not think they will ever hit the top spot, remembering that they have already had a brace of runners-up.

The next best cut from "Wild!" is the beautiful ballad "Piano Song" which would also be a good choice for single release.

It features a great vocal performance by Andy Bell in front of a simple piano accompaniment. Bell proves on this and many other songs that he has the potential to be remembered as one of the great vocalists of the Nineties.

I already rate him as one of the finest British singers of the present decade.

Magic

Other highlights of the new album include "Star" which is a really tuneful, upbeat number with a memorable chorus, and "Brother And Sister" which again has a strong melodic chorus.

One of the most popular groups of the last three years, Wet Wet Wet, the quartet from Glasgow, have released a follow-up to their big selling "Popped In Souled Out" album entitled "Holding Back The River."

The band have released some fine singles like "Wishing I Was Lucky" and "Sweet Surrender" but I have been disappointed with their long-players.

The tuneful "Sweet Surrender" provides the perfect opening to the new L.P. but the remaining tracks fail to capture the same magic, and the ballads seem to be particularly tuneless and lacklustre apart from "Broke Away" which has a pleasant melody and allows Marti Pellow to display his full vocal talent. He has a good pop voice and this is the strongest feature on the record.

One of the most exciting new artists to emerge in recent months has been 24-year-old Sydney Youngblood, a black American singer living in Germany.

Catchy

He recently enjoyed a Top Three hit with the soulful dance cut "If Only I Could" which I am pleased to recall was my "Single Of The Week" in this column in August when he was an unknown quantity.

Now he has an album in the shops entitled "Feeling Free" and I would thoroughly recommend this to those who enjoyed the single.

There are some really striking, catchy dance tunes performed in a similar vein, and some interesting cover-versions of old hits like "I'd Rather Go Blind." Apart from the single my favourite numbers are "Not Just A Lover But A Friend" and the slower "Could It Be (I'm In Love)."

L.P. CHART

1. The Road To Hell (Chris Rea).
2. Holding Back The River (Wet Wet Wet).
3. Enjoy Yourself (Kylie Minogue).
4. Runaway Horses (Belinda Carlisle).
5. Wild! (Erasure).
6. Greatest Hits (Billy Ocean).
7. All Or Nothing (Milli Vanilli).
8. Welcome To the Beautiful South.
9. Stronger (Cliff Richard).
10. Spark To A Flame (Chris De Burgh).

Bob Woodhead