

Observer Entertainment

Level 42 – returning to top form in style

One of last year's top bands Wet Wet Wet, the quartet from Glasgow, have released an album of tracks that pre-date the successful "Popped In, Souled Out" album.

This latest package is called "The Memphis Sessions" and it features eight numbers mostly composed by the band. The songs were mixed and produced by the highly regarded Willie Mitchell in 1986, but were not released by Phonogram at the time because they were not considered commercial enough for an unknown group. They include earlier versions of the hits "Sweet Little Mystery" and "Temptation."

The former is a better

rendering than the hit version, with a more funky, soulful approach and strong production, but the latter is weaker. In fact Side Two is very disappointing, but the first side provides enjoyable listening. Apart from "Sweet Little Mystery" it features "I Don't Believe" with its catchy rhythm verging on bluebeat and reggae, "East Of The River" with its footstomping chorus and "This Time," a classy soul ballad co-written by Willie Mitchell.

Energetic

Rick Astley has shown himself to be a developing songwriter by composing six of the ten tracks on his new album "Hold Me In Your Arms." The record includes three Stock-Aitken-Waterman compo-

sitions as well as the old Temptations' soul classic "Ain't Too Proud To Beg" which is an innovative interpretation.

The best numbers are "Take Me To Your Heart" (which has already been a major chart success) and "I Don't Want To Lose Her" which were both written by the Stock-Aitken-Waterman team and carry their trademarks of energetic rhythms with good melodies up front.

The pick of Astley's own compositions are "Giving Up On Love" and "Dial My Number" with their good tunes and crisp production work. Overall, however, this second album is not up to the high standard set by his first.

despite a competent vocal style throughout.

Another of the top Christmas "Run-up" releases was the Dire Straits hits compilation "Money For Nothing" featuring the band's classic cuts from a ten year recording career, covering work like "Sultans Of Swing", the track that made their name in 1978-79, "Romeo And Juliet" from 1981, "Private Investigations" the marathon guitar-ballad of 1982, and a remix of "Twisting By The Pool" the tongue-in-cheek 1983 hit.

There are also three tracks from "Brothers In Arms," namely "Walk Of Life," "Money For Nothing" with its spine-tingling

intro, sung by Sting reminding everyone of "Live Aid," and best of all the "Brothers In Arms" track itself. As that album has sold three million copies in this country, and is the biggest seller every, it was perhaps sensible not to lift more than three tracks for this well balanced compilation.

Single of the week is the fabulous, rhythmic "Tracie" which sees Level 42 returning to top form in style. Sixties music continues to play an important part in the charts with Gene Pitney making a Top Ten comeback after an absence of 21 years, thanks to an imaginative pairing with Marc Almond on "Something's Gotten Hold Of My Heart," a song I selected as being one of the best of Marc's album reviewed in the Autumn. It

is marvellous to see Roy Orbison's "You Got It" storming up the charts, and his album of hits going to No.1.

LP CHART (with last week's placings in brackets).

1 (3) The Legendary Roy Orbison.

2 (1) The Innocents (Erasure).

3 (4) Greatest Hits (Fleetwood Mac).

4 (6) BAD (Michael Jackson).

5 (2) Kylie (Kylie Minogue).

6 (14) Anything For Your (Gloria Estefan).

7 (5) Greatest Hits Collection (Bananarama).

8 (9) Money For Nothing (Dire Straits).

9 (8) Watermark (Enya).

10 (10) Kick (INXS).

Bob Woodhead



Wet, Wet, Wet.

Reduced from A3 → A4.