

22/3/70

Yearning for nostalgia

In the latter part of the 1980s a strong yearning for nostalgia developed into a notable chart trend, and the peak year for this was 1987.

In March five songs in the top six were composed at least 15 years earlier, with Ben E. King's "Stand By Me" leading the way, enjoying greater success second time around thanks to a TV advert featuring the song. The new stars of 1987 also seemed keen to record cover-versions of old hits.

In my opinion 1987 was the greatest year yet for album releases, and it seems that the nation agrees with me, as four of the decade's top ten were first issued during this year. Michael Jackson's "BAD" led the way, achieving the highest-yet one week sale of 350,000 in its first week. Nine tracks from the C.D. (eight from the album) went on to become hit singles. The other three 1987 albums in the top ten of the decade

were Whitney Houston's "Whitney", U2's "Joshua Tree" and Fleetwood Mac's masterpiece "Tango In The Night" - all of them spawning several hit singles. This year also saw Fleetwood Mac breaking the record for the most weeks on the L.P. chart when "Rumours" spent its 397th week on the listings.

Luther Vandross's silky-smooth voice had been delighting soul audiences for seven years, and he finally reached major pop audiences in 1987, with a string of hit 45s. Alexander O'Neal broke new ground with the "Hearsay" album written and produced by the prolific Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis partnership. It featured party-chatter in between classic dance cuts and ballads, and deservedly gave them their greatest success, with a run of hit songs lasting until 1989. Narada Michael Walden was America's other star producer at this time. His projects in 1987 included working with Star-

Record review

ship, Aretha Franklin and the aforementioned Whitney Houston.

Britain's answer to all this was the team of Stock-Aitken-Waterman whose career in production had started with Divine, Hazell Dean and Princess in 1984 and 1985. By the end of 1987 they were becoming a phenomenon, having produced chart-toppers for Mel & Kim, Ferry Aid and a bright new singing star Rick Astley. Other successful newcomers included T'Pau, Terence Trent D'Arby, Wet Wet Wet and Swing Out Sister, whose speciality was dance and soul music coated with glossy production work. ABC had their best year since 1982 thanks to a fine album, the Pet Shop Boys had four top ten hits including two chart-toppers and a duet that brought Dusty Springfield back into the public eye, and Andrew Lloyd-Webber enjoyed his

largest selling album "The Phantom Of The Opera" from the great musical.

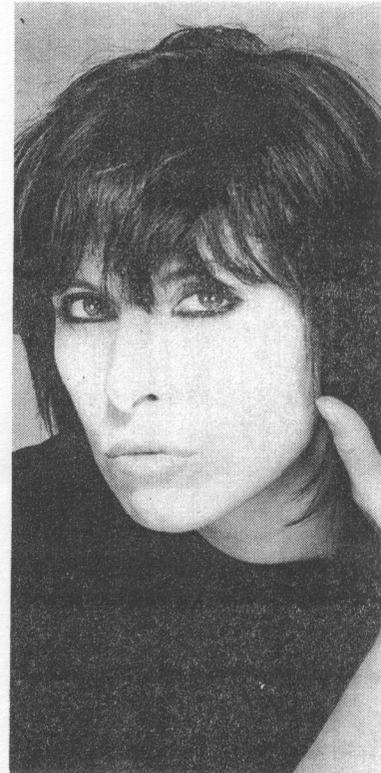
Level 42, who had begun their career as a small jazz-funk outfit on the Isle of Wight in 1980, built up a steady following with each album and single release, finally achieving a worldwide stardom in 1985 with the terrific "World Machine" set. In 1987 they reached their peak on the "Running In The Family" album - my favourite of the decade - which did not have a bad track. Their leader Mark King became universally accepted as the world's finest bass player.

Possibly the best of the "Greatest Hits" packages to be issued in 1987 was "The Singles" by the Pretenders. The group's leader, singer/songwriter Chrissie Hynde overcame many setbacks including the death of two band members earlier in the decade, and by now she had become one of the most respected and admired musical talents on the scene. This

album was the icing on the cake. These were positions 61 to 70 in the top 80 of the 80s (all number one hits unless stated):

- 61. Total Eclipse Of The Heart (Bonnie Tyler) 1983.
- 62. True (Spandau Ballet) 1983.
- 63. Chain Reaction (Diana Ross) 1986.
- 64. We All Stand Together (Paul McCartney & The Frog Chorus) number three in 1984/85.
- 65. The Only Way Is Up (Yazz) 1988.
- 66. Living Doll (Cliff Richard & The Young Ones) 1986.
- 67. Ebony & Ivory (Paul McCartney & Stevie Wonder) 1982.
- 68. Only You (Flying Pickets) 1983/84.
- 69. You Drive Me Crazy (Shakin' Stevens) number two in 1981.
- 70. Wake Me Up (Wham!) 1984.

Bob Woodhead



Chrissie Hynde