

## Record review

8/11/90

Bruce Welch, the rhythm guitarist and co-founder of the Shadows, who was born in Bognor Regis, has written an interesting autobiography. The book is entitled "Rock 'N' Roll I Gave You The Best Years Of My Life," and it gives one of the best insights into the early years of the British rock 'n' roll scene, and a detailed account of Bruce's career in the Shadows and their early struggle to become famous. Reading the book, I was particularly impressed with the way Bruce has not attempted to gloss over his often troubled personal life.

The Shadows are currently in the middle of a 44-date sell-out British tour, and I was lucky enough to see their splendid show at the Portsmouth Guildhall in which they performed most of their greatest hits and some of their lively early album tracks for a change. These included the delightfully jazzy "Nivram" and the rocking "Shadoogie." They also performed some vocal numbers including "The Day I Met Marie" and a spine-tingling version of the Everly Brothers' love song "Devoted To You." Drummer Brian Bennett performed his heroics on percussion for ten minutes with an updated version of his "Little B"

while the others took a break, and the show lasted a mammoth 110 minutes.

On the record scene the pick of the new albums is "Electrical Memories" by Electribe 101, who have created some of the most essential dance sounds of 1990. The CD version is a worthwhile investment as it features four bonus tracks featuring 12-inch versions of their hits, and it runs for 79 minutes - being the longest stereo CD in my collection. German expatriate Billie Ray Martin has an awesome voice of rare quality. She teamed up with four Birmingham musicians in 1987 and they became Electribe 101. This debut album includes all their hits to date including "Talking With Myself" but the highspot on the album for me is their interpretation of the 1982 Odyssey hit "Inside Out" which sounds like a huge hit to my ears.

Caron Wheeler, the former Soul II Soul lead vocalist, has released a fine debut album called "UK Blak" featuring a dozen songs performed in different dance grooves. The best numbers are the title-song, and two of the more soulful cuts on Side Two - "Song For You" and "Enchanted." On the evidence of this LP Caron's voice is likely to figure strongly in the charts over the next few years.

The best of the retrospective compilation CDs at present is "Kool Love" by Kool and The Gang, featuring a stack of their best-loved tunes including the up-tempo "Fresh" and the popular ballads "Cherish" and "Too Hot."

At the risk of turning this column into a book review I should mention two other first-class publications. Firstly, "Level 42 - The Definitive Biography" by Michael Cowton which gives a comprehensive account of the ten-year career of the popular Isle of Wight jazz-funk band, and secondly "Guinness Hits of the 80s" which lists all the hit singles and albums of the decade. The authors have devised a table to work out the top 50 artists of the decade, combining singles and albums success, and this was their Top Twenty:

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Michael Jackson | 11. Cliff Richard     |
| 2. Madonna         | 12. Duran Duran       |
| 3. Dire Straits    | 13. Eurythmics        |
| 4. Queen           | 14. Prince            |
| 5. Phil Collins    | 15. Elton John        |
| 6. UB 40           | 16. Diana Ross        |
| 7. Madness         | 17. Kool and The Gang |
| 8. U2              | 18. Spandau Ballet    |
| 9. Shakin' Stevens | 19. Status Quo        |
| 10. David Bowie    | 20. Level 42          |

Bob Woodhead