

Record review

6/12/90

After his amazing "Graceland" project of 1986 in which he explored the underground music and rhythms of South Africa, Paul Simon has once again come up with another masterpiece. On this occasion he has explored Brazil, written and produced a collection of new songs using Brazilian musicians, and the finished recipe is available on the album "The Rhythm Of The Saints."

In my opinion the recordings blend together better than they did on "Graceland" but there are four tracks that really stand out. Firstly "The Obvious Child" with its strong Latin percussion, "Can't Run But" with its infectious, rhythmic keyboard-refrain, "The Coast" which is based around a delightful, gentle guitar-refrain, and finally the title-song which has a spiritual, gospel feel to it.

The Pet Shop Boys continue to release al-

bums of high quality and their latest entitled "Behaviour" is no exception. If a criticism has to be made it would be that their songs are becoming a shade too "formularized" and predictable, but a more melodic, gentler approach is clearly in evidence here. "My October Symphony" is the best track - it has a wonderful melody and overall feel, featuring Johnny Marr on guitar, a string-quartet and a superb backing vocal refrain by Jay Henry. The next best numbers are the current single "Being Bored" and "The End Of The World" which is a really tuneful dance sound with a great atmosphere.

One of my favourite bands to emerge this year has been the soul outfit Innocence who have released a string of brilliantly-produced dance singles from the uplifting "Let's Push It" to the gentle, summer ballad "Silent Voice." Their debut album "Belief" features all the hits, including their latest - the catchy "Matter Of Fact." Of the remaining tracks "Remember The Day" really stands out. The focal point of the album is the amazing voice of Gee Morris.

Another exciting new band are the team of Richard Norris and Dave Ball, the former

partner of Marc Almond in Soft Cell. Under the name The Grid, Richard and Dave have issued a fine L.P. called "Electric Head" on which they experiment with some wayward, electro-dance sounds which at times are really offbeat but never boring. The best cuts are the Hi-NRG pop-dance sounds of "A Beat Called Love" and "This Must Be Heaven."

Among the highlights of "Greatest Hits" re-issues on C.D. are "The Very Best of Ben E. King & The Drifters" and "Love Songs" by Marvin Gaye. The latter features 18 of Marvin's best-loved songs including "What's Going On," "Abraham Martin & John," "Sexual Healing" and the duet with Kim Weston "It Takes Two." The Drifters package features 20 hits spanning a twenty year period including two solo efforts by Ben E. King - "Stand By Me" and "Spanish Harlem." Other highspots include "At The Club," "Up On The Roof" and "Like Sister And Brother."

With Alan Freeman's terrific 30-week series "30 Years Of Number Ones" drawing to a close on Radio One FM Sunday lunchtimes, I am pleased to report that he will be featuring the top selling records of 1990 on Sunday, December

30, between noon and 3 p.m.

These were my favourite singles and albums of 1990:

SINGLES

1. Close To You (Maxi Priest).
2. Joy And Heartbreak (Movement 98, featuring Carroll Thompson).
3. Don't Miss The Party-line (Bizz Nizz).
4. Blue Savannah Song (Erasure).
5. Dirty Cash - Money Talks (Stevie V).
6. I've Been Thinking About You (Londonbeat).
7. The Power (Snap!).
8. Killer (Adamski).
9. Take Your Time (Mantronix, with Wondress).
10. Unchained Melody (Righteous Brothers).

ALBUMS

1. Pump Up The Jam (Technotronic).
2. Now Dance 902 (Various Artists - July 1990).
3. Deep Heat 7 (Various Artists - June 1990).
4. Runaway Horses (Belinda Carlisle).
5. Reputation (Dusty Springfield).
6. Listen Without Prejudice (George Michael).
7. Summer Dreams (The Beach Boys).
8. Only Yesterday (The Carpenters).
9. The Northern Beat (Various 60s Artists).
10. Electrified Memories (Electribe 101).

Bob Woodhead