



Deborah Harry, of Blondie.

## Record review

The opening year of the 1980s will be best remembered as the year of the "Mod-revival" replacing "Punk-Rock" which had become stale after three years. The revival had begun in the closing months of 1979 when the Specials had opened their cult "2-Tone" label in the Midlands.

Unlike the "Mod" movement in the mid-1960s this revival was based around a British Ska and Reggae style of music... much of it emanating from Coventry. The Specials enjoyed the most success scoring a number one with "Too Much Too Young" and another the following year with "Ghost Town" a highly acclaimed record due to its social comment on the crippling youth unemployment problem. Next up were UB40 who had three Top Ten hits in 1980 but went on to enjoy their greatest success in 1983 with their chart-topping cover version of "Red Red Wine".

Madness took the country by storm with their blunt Cockney-wit on songs like "Baggy Trousers", and their success continued well into the decade with 1982 being their best year. But 1980 really belonged to The Police who had the top single and the number two album, pipped by Abba with "Super

Trouper" - their last major success.

The Police's main rivals were Blondie, led by the charismatic Debbie Harry. They enjoyed three consecutive number one singles - "Atomic", "Call Me" and "The Tide Is High", but, like Abba, this was also their last year in the top flight. Disco music was very much at the forefront of things, with two production teams doing especially well. First from the Quincy Jones team came my favourite LP of the year - "Give Me The Night" by George Benson. Quincy also produced Michael Jackson's "Off The Wall" which spawned five hit singles. Much of the credit for both these albums must go to ex-Heatwave member Rod Temperton who composed many of the tracks and was later to repeat the magic on "Thriller". The other great team were Chic's guitarist Nile Rodgers and bassist Bernard Edwards who wrote and produced the superb Diana Ross album "Diana" including the equally superb "Upside Down". They also worked with artists like Sister Sledge.

After their massive success in the late-1970s the Bee Gees began a seven year barren spell with no hits as a group, but their songwriting and production achieved wonderful results on my other favourite album of 1980 "Guilty" by Barbra Streisand and the number one hit song "Women In Love". They went on to do the same for artists like

Jimmy Ruffin, Leo Sayer, Dionne Warwick, Kenny Rogers and Diana Ross. 1980 also brought us a silky-smooth new soul voice with the arrival of Luther Vandross guesting on the Change 45 "Searching", and it brought us the first traces of the "Brit-Funk" movement with bands like Linx, Shaktak and Level 42 enjoying minor hits. In December John Lennon was assassinated by a crazed gunman in New York just weeks after he had ended a five-year silence with the brilliant "Double Fantasy" album. The pop world had been robbed of a genius.

These were the Top Ten selling albums of the Eighties. You will notice that most of them are from the latter part of the decade when sales rose rapidly and sales of 45s declined equally rapidly!

1. Brothers In Arms (Dire Straits) 1985 (3.2m.)
2. BAD (Michael Jackson) 1987 (3m.)
3. Thriller (Michael Jackson) 1982 (3m.)
4. Greatest Hits (Queen) 1981 (1.9m.)
5. Kylie (Kylie Minogue) 1988 (1.85m.)
6. Whitney (Whitney Houston) 1987 (1.85m.)
7. Tango In The Night (Fleetwood Mac) 1987 (1.8m.)
8. No Jacket Required (Phil Collins) 1985 (1.8m.)
9. The Joshua Tree (U2) 1987 (1.5m.)
10. True Blue (Madonna) 1986 (1.5m.)

Bob Woodhead