

'Technopop' finds place in history

Following the tragic murder of John Lennon in December 1980, sales of his records soared with "Starting Over" hitting the No.1 spot soon after his death.

In January 1981 "Imagine" was top for four weeks and was replaced in February by the brilliant new track "Woman". No other act had ever scored with three chart-toppers in such a brief interval, and prior to "Woman" displacing "Imagine" only one other act had succeeded in replacing itself at No.1... the Beatles in 1963.

Between May and October 1981 the charts were littered with compilation-singles and disco-medleys. In one September week there were eight medley-hits in the Top 40. This trend was pioneered by Dutch producer Jaap Eggermont who assembled a group of Beatle-soundalikes and called them Star-sound. Their "Stars On 45" Beatles-medley reached No.2, an Abba-medley achieved similar success, and the hits continued into 1982 with "Stars On Stevie".

Occasional medley singles popped up after this, but they became a rarity until a certain musical Bunny surfaced in 1989! The most unexpected compilation-hit of the year was the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's No.2 smash "Hooked On Classics" and their subsequent albums of the same name still provide enjoyable listening, having sold in large quantities.

Nineteen-eighty-one will also be remembered as the year of Adam And The Ants with the best selling album and the No.2 and

No.3 singles of the year. But rock'n'roller Shakin' Stevens (who had been performing for years without acclaim) was not far behind with three singles in the year's Top 20 sellers.

The foundations were being laid for the era of "Technopop" when new synthesizer-bands like Duran Duran, Ultravox and Depeche Mode enjoyed their first taste of success. The latter introduced us to Vince Clarke who became a true superstar of the decade with Yazoo, the Assembly and finally Erasure.

The best-selling single of 1981 was an exquisite piece of technopop from Soft Cell - "Tainted Love", which just failed to sell a million records and ended the decade as the 11th top seller. It was actually outsold by Human League's "Don't You Want Me" (No.5 for the decade), but sales of this were divided between 1981 and 1982.

The Human League led by the innovative Phil Oakey came from Sheffield, and their "Dare" album of 1981 is one of the most critically acclaimed works of the last ten years. These technopop pioneers have certainly booked their place in pop history.

Heavy Metal rock music was enjoying a great revival in popularity during these early years of the decade. Leading the way was Meat Loaf whose 1978 album "Bat Out Of Hell" was becoming one of the longest-running LPs on the chart, and whose new album "Deadringer" was a No.1. At the other end of the spectrum Bucks Fizz won the Eurovision Song Contest with the typically bouncy "Making Your Mind Up".

They were our 4th Euro-

winners and the only British victors of the decade. These were the only Ten Singles to sell more than a million records in Britain during the 1980s, and you will notice that they were all released in the early years. Later on sales rapidly declined but album sales rose dramatically. Eight out of the Top 10 are by British artists, and they all reached No.1 except "Last Christmas".

1. Do They Know It's Christmas? (Band Aid) 1984/5.

2. Relax (Frankie Goes To Hollywood) 1984.

3. I Just Called To Say I Love You (Stevie Wonder) 1984.

4. Two Tribes (Frankie Goes To Hollywood) 1984.

5. Don't You Want Me (Human League) 1981/2.

6. Last Christmas (Wham) 1984/5.

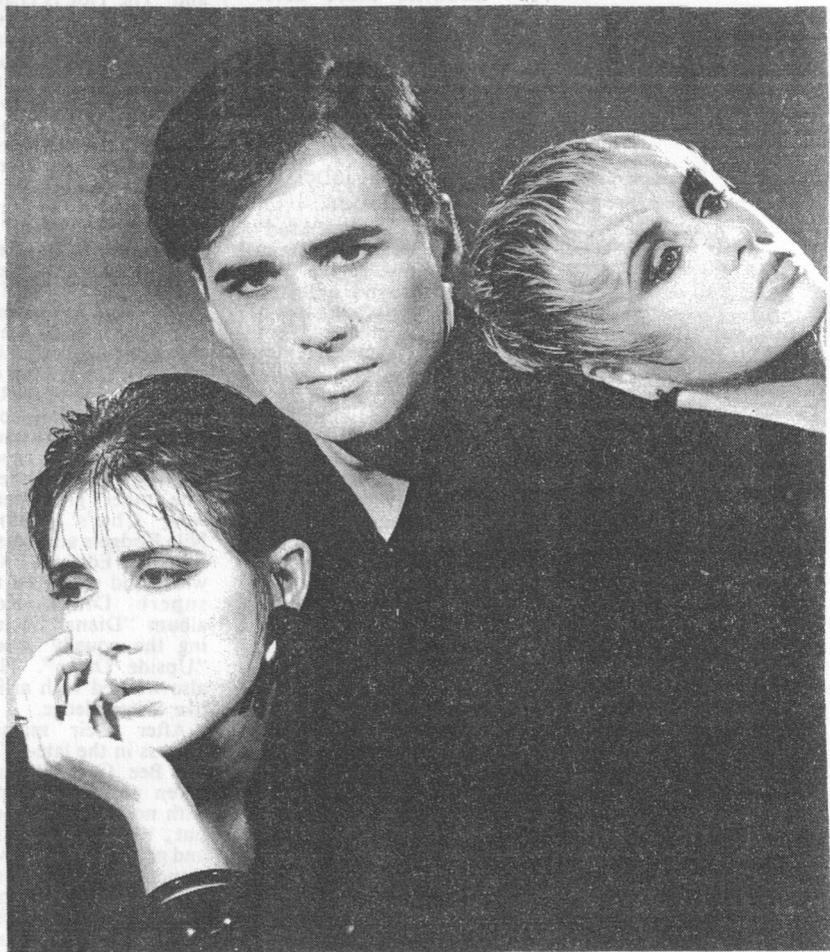
7. Karma Chameleon (Culture Club) 1983.

8. Careless Whisper (George Michael) 1984.

9. The Power Of Love (Jennifer Rush) 1985.

10. Come On Eileen (Dexy's Midnight Runners) 1982.

Bob Woodhead



Human League