

## Record review

22/2/90

In 1980 the British music industry had been in poor shape after the excesses of the previous decade, and record companies were suffering from the effects of misguided investment and poor album sales in the wake of the recession. However, by 1983 the situation had been turned around dramatically with the economy recovering and at the same time an incredible boom in young musical talent springing up all over the country.

In 1964 British bands had taken over the American charts for the first time, but by the end of the 1960s and right through the 70s our music only accounted for a small percentage of the chart-placings. But the year of 1983 saw us invading the charts, state-side with a vengeance, and by 1985 British artists accounted for about 40 per cent. of the positions and the Top 100 of the Year – an all-time record. By 1989 this had sadly declined to one of the smallest percentages ever.

The year 1983 also witnessed an incredible rivalry between four successful groups – Duran Duran, Culture Club, Wham and Spandau Ballet who hit top form with their "True" album after nearly three years of chart action. The tabloid press became obsessed with this rivalry but generally the bands spoke highly of each other, and became firm friends the following year when they all teamed up for Band Aid. Culture Club, in particular helped to bring back the "three-minute pop song" whistled and hummed across the country. Not since the mid-1960s had the Singles and Album Charts been so similar, and the barriers of "snobbery" over different musical styles were finally being torn down as so many styles were being dove-tailed together.

Rod Stewart was one of several established stars, who also had an incredibly successful year. He enjoyed his only number one placing of the decade with "Baby Jane", released a fine L.P. "Body Wishes" and performed to sell-out audiences worldwide. Elton John made a big comeback and David Bowie had his best year since 1973, but it proved to be his last taste of the really big time. Similarly, 1983 proved to be the end of the line for the Police

who dismantled, and it was a sad time for Roxy Music fans when they disbanded after releasing the exquisite "Avalon" L.P. the previous year. Hot Chocolate who had been the most consistent hit-makers on the Singles Charts for 14 years, were showing signs of a decline in the quality of their output and this was reflected in sales. The previous year they had issued their best single yet in my view – "It Started With A Kiss".

After Michael Jackson, America's most successful export in the British charts was former Commodores vocalist Lionel Richie. Among the groups to break through in 1983 were the Eurythmics (although they had previously been in the charts as The Tourists), the Thompson Twins, Galaxy and Kajagoogoo. Paul Young recorded some excellent songs, finally doing justice to his vocal talent, and taking him into the Top Ten on three occasions. His "No Parlez" album featuring gems like "Tender Trap" was the best of the year in my opinion. New Order's mammoth "Blue Monday" spent 38 weeks in the charts selling 600,000 singles even though it only peaked at No. 9. It sold a further 300,000 when it was re-mixed five years later, reaching No. 3, and it ended the decade as the 13th top seller, and the biggest selling 12-inch single ever – a remarkable achievement!

These were positions 21 to 30 in the Top 80 of the 80s (all reached No. 1 unless stated):

21. Swing The Mood (Jive Bunny) 1989
22. Do You Really Want To Hurt Me? (Culture Club) 1982
23. Hello (Lionel Richie) 1984
24. I Know Him So Well (Elaine Paige and Barbara Dickson) 1985
25. Imagine (John Lennon) 1981
26. Don't Stand So Close To Me (Police) 1980
27. Agadoo (Black Lace) No. 2 in 1984
28. Woman In Love (Barbra Streisand) 1980
29. Red Red Wine (UB 40) 1983
30. Ant Music (Adam & The Ants) No. 2 in 1980/

81

Bob Woodhead

