

Record review

17/10/91

My personal favourite band of the 1980s have released their first album of the new decade. The "Guaranteed" CD named after their recent Top 20 hit single, features the first collection of new songs by Level 42 for three years and sees them moving away from their jazz-funk sound to a more rock-orientated style.

Apart from the title-song I only found four of the 12 songs came up to the group's high standard set with previous albums. Firstly, "Over-time" which is a pleasant mid-tempo number with some good saxophone-playing at the end, and secondly "Seven Years" which is a very personal song by leader Mark King with obvious references to his broken marriage. Next up "My Father's Shoes" is based on an attractive, acoustic-guitar rhythm with a good tune, and finally "With A Little Love" is another mid-paced, infectious melody.

"Guaranteed" sees the Isle of Wight band finally severing all songwriting links with former members Boon and Phil Gould and they are clearly suffering as a result, although the musicianship is once again faultless.

The duo of ABC on the other hand, are back in prime form on their new CD "Abracadabra" which comes close to the standard of their 1987 album "Alphabet City". As usual all nine tracks have been composed by the duo of Mark White and Martin Fry and they collaborated with Dave Bascombe on the production. The best numbers include the melodic "Unlock The Secrets Of Your Heart" with its great percussive rhythm, string effects and funky, guitar-sound, "Answered Prayer" with its strong dance rhythm and excellent vocal performance from Mr Fry, and "Say It" with its terrific, synthesized string backdrop and catchy tune. The last two tracks "All That Matters" and "This Must Be Magic" are also really strong.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Mozart and Decca Classics have issued a superb collection entitled "The Essential Mozart" to mark the occasion. The CD which runs for 72 minutes, features 15 of his most popular pieces recorded for the Decca company over the last 30 years. Apart from the obvious selections of "Symphony 40 - 1st Movement", "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik - 1st Movement", "The Marriage Of Figaro" and "A Musical Joke - Finale" which is used as the theme to BBC-TV's "Horse Of The

Year Show", there are some beautiful pieces lesser known to the average record-buyer, albeit familiar to the classical enthusiast. There are some of his slower, more soothing compositions and two brilliant pieces performed by Andras Schiff on the piano, namely "Turkish Rondo" and the tuneful "Piano Sonata in C - 1st Movement".

The Castle Communications company who specialize in re-issuing oldies on the CD format through labels such as Knight and Sequel, have just released a superb compilation on the latter label entitled "The Moments Greatest Hits" featuring 20 of the New Jersey soul trio's recordings made between 1968 and 1977. Their strong, distinctive vocal style earned them great acclaim and their success rivalled that of the Philadelphia groups - the Delfonics and the Stylistics. Their biggest success here was the No. three hit "Girls" in 1975, and this appears twice on the CD - the bonus version with French lyrics. Other highlights include "Sexy Mama", "Love On A Two Way Street" and "Look At Me" - all performed in their masterful, soul-ballad style.

Of the earlier, lesser-known tracks I really enjoyed hearing "My Thing" which has a lovely atmosphere about it, so typical of its time.



The ever-successful Level 42.