

From strength to strength

Five years ago an unknown singer performing in a Kansas City club was discovered by the group Tears for Fears, and from that moment onwards her career has gone from strength to strength.

The singer in question is Oleta Adams, whose second album, *Evolution*, has been produced by Stewart Levine who is most famous for his work with Simply Red.

There are a dozen really good songs, half of which were written by Oleta herself, and her compositions are some of the best.

In general her voice is more suited to the ballad style which dominated the disc, but there is one uptempo song called *Window Of Hope* which really is quite brilliant, thanks to a remarkably uplifting melody.

It is a hard choice picking the best of the slower songs, but the first two tracks *My Heart Won't Lie* and *Hold Me For A While* are performed with such emotion that they set the tone for the album and cannot really be bettered.

One of the brightest spots on the 1993 music scene has been the hard-earned success of the soul trio M-*People* whose second album has the interesting title of *Elegant Slumming*.

They have worked hard in the clubs building their reputation and this year it paid off with a run of Top 20 hits.

This new work is more consistent than their first album, and the writing and production work of Mike Pickering and Paul Heard, the two male members, is matched by the wonderful vocal style of Heather Small.

Apart from the hits, *One Night In Heaven* and *Moving On Up*, the best tracks are *You Just have To Be There*, and *Melody Of Life and Natural Thing*.

Now recording for the Rep-rise label, Earth Wind and

Album reviews By BOB WOODHEAD

Fire have released what I believe to be their best album for ten years, entitled *Millennium*.

The CD has a running time of more than an hour and there are 16 tracks with not a bad one amongst them.

The earlier songs are dominated by the vocals of band leader Maurice White, the best being the bright, melodic *Even If You Wonder* and the slower *Blood Brothers* featuring great vocal harmonies.

The later numbers give the set a good balance because fellow lead-vocalist Philip Bailey takes over. I particularly like the love song *Wouldn't Change A Thing About You* on which he divides his vocals, singing part tenor and part falsetto. He cleverly sings *Love Across The Wire* in a style very similar to that of Russell Thomkins of the Stylistics, and this is not surprising when one looks at the writing credit which reads "White-Bailey-Thom Bell." Soul fans will recall that Bell was the original man behind the success of the Stylistics.

These have been my favourite singles and albums of 1993:

SINGLES

1. *Sweat-a-la-la-Long* (Inner Circle)
2. *U R The Best Thing* (D:Ream)
3. *Show Me Love/Luv 4 Luv* (Robin S)
4. *The Love I Lost* (Sybil & West End)
5. *No Limit* (2 Unlimited)
6. *The Bottle*, 12 inch remix (Christians)
7. *In All The Right Places* - Soul mix (Lisa Stansfield)
8. *Stay* (Kenny Thomas)
9. *One Night In Heaven* (M-*People*)
10. *Living On My Own* (Fred-die Mercury).

ALBUMS

1. *Very/Relentless* (Pet Shop Boys)
2. *So Close* (Dina Carroll)
3. *No Limits* (2 Unlimited)
4. *D-Frost: 20 Global Floor Melters* (Various Artists)
5. *Janet* (Janet Jackson).



SOULFUL: Oleta Adams



In my opinion Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe of the Pet Shop Boys (pictured) have come closer than anyone since the 1980s to matching the songwriting skills of Lennon and McCartney.

However, it is doubtful whether anyone will ever be as prolific as that making waves in the most major way. The new album now days, Neil and Chris included.

After having three No.1 albums and a pair in No.2 they have finally broken the jinx and backing vocal talents from Sylvia Mason-James in a couple of years that I cannot order stand why it was not used throughout the song.

A part from this track the best opening track here are the best but the there is not a bad song on the disc which is truly a classic. There is also an up-