

The Passions - "Hunted" (fiction).

This starts with a snappy drumbeat and a fluid bass prodding and poking about. These are joined by a restrained lead guitar and the reggae riff takes over. Barbara Gogan's haunted vocals add to the atmosphere, as does the careful use of echo, to give the whole thing a white reggae/dub feel. This single succeeds in being both entertaining and yet slightly eerie and the chorus/hook line is catchy enough to give it a chance as a commercial success if it gets the airplay. An excellent single from an interesting new band who we will probably hear more of in the future.

T.W.

Ruefrefx - "One by One"

Ruefrefx are an Irish band and this single is released on Northern Ireland's "Good Vibrations" record label. "One by One" starts with a Magazine type introduction and the strained vocals sound like a new wave Bob Dylan. After about a minute there is a pause in the playing and the tempo speeds up. The vocals become more emotional and are at times emphasised by the use of a second vocalist as an echo. The drums become more frantic with vigorous use of the cymbals. Towards the end an electric violin breaks in for a short while before the vocals once again intone to end the track. Although the full meaning of the lyrics is slightly confusing we still recommend this single.

THE CLASH - Friars Aylesbury.

Standing in the bar, and somebody shouts Ian Dury is on stage. On entering the hall I see the hunched figure of Ian Dury with his marvelous backing band The Blockheads. They play favourites such as "What a Waste", "Hit me with your Rhythm Stick" and the impressive "Sweet Gene Vincent" and encore with "Clever Trevor". They were very well received and with the powerful rhythm section you can't help but dance to them.

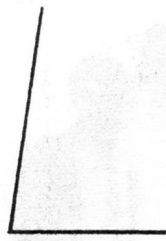
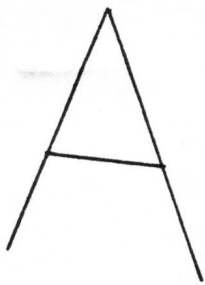
The Clash are disappointing. Energy, sweat and gob exudes from band and audience alike. Clash put a lot into it but, probably due to an at times atrocious sound, they are frustrating. Joe Strummer occasionally is reduced to turning away from the crowd and grimacing. Songs like "London Calling" and "White man in Hammersmith Palais" are given the same decibel treatment as stronger songs such as "Brand new Cadillac". The band, who seemed upset by the poor sound, only came back for one encore and then left the stage for good.



X-HIBITION

X-hibition I recently discovered playing Kettering's Corn Market Hall. They are Alan Ayre, writer vocals and guitar, who comes from Leeds & Terry Kerr, bass and occasional vocals, from Luton. They are at present without a drummer as he left because of personal differences musically and direction wise. Their first gig was at Bishops Stortford leisure centre on the 31st August 1979 and they have also played Stroud Subscription Rooms supporting Capital Letters. Their immediate priority is to find a drummer and they will then proceed to record and cut their debut single. Gigs are also planned for the Nags Head at Wollaston, Kettering Corn Market Hall and an invited return to Stroud.

The three tracks I reviewed are full of potential. The first two "No looking back" and "Time devours" deal with the wasting away of time and have the obvious message of get on with it. "No looking back" is memorable for its use of the fluid bass as a second guitar "Time devours" starts and ends with a distinct Adam and the Ants/Zerox Machine guitar sound. On all three tracks the lyrics are sharp and definitive and although sung with conviction they remain clear and decisive. "Stranded in the City", the final track, compares the city with a desert. The loneliness, the abandonment in a sea of people, the struggle for survival. Alan Ayre exposes the problems of city life. The guitar is brought to the fore and there is a cutting break towards the end of the track. An overtly telling piece that deals thoroughly with a subject without ever going over the top.



X.T.C. - Drums and Wires.

Andy Partridge and Colin Moulding again share the songwriting credits, the latter's compositions being easily his best to date. The single "Making Plans for Nigel" is included on this album along with other tracks with single potential such as "Real by Reel". For me though the meat of the album is in tracks such as "Roads Girdle the Globe", which tells of how man idolises the piston engine, and "Complicated Game", which is the best thing the band have ever done in my opinion. This track starts off quietly and slowly builds to a climax, making full use of Andy Partridge's excellent vocals. X.T.C. make full use of the studio when recording their albums and the result is another elaborate and professional offering, probably their best yet. With my copy I also received a free single and a worksheet covering all the bands recorded material.

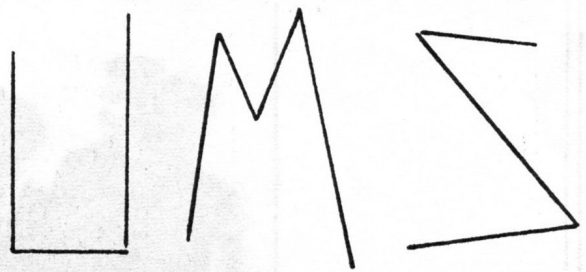
T.W.

Gang of Four - Entertainment

This is the Gang of Four's first album and it is an accomplished debut. The production is good and captures the bands live excitement well. The hacking, full-blooded guitar work of Andy Gill comes over well also. His loud guitar sets up a powerful, attacking riff but the bass and drums are not prepared to let him have it all his own way and they also battle away to help produce that distinctive Gang of Four sound.

Side one opens with the excellent "Ether" followed by my favorite track "Naturals not in it", then "Not great men" and the well known "Damaged goods". These four tracks are a worthy opening for any album and by comparison the last two tracks on this side are something of an anti-climax. Side two also has six tracks including "At home he's a tourist" the last single, and "5-45". The last track, "Love is like anthrax", is a clever number using two sets of lyrics which are sung simultaneously and skilfully interlinked. On the whole a good album that lives up to the title - Entertainment.

T.W.



Joy Division - Unknown Pleasures.

I had seen Joy Division on the T.V. show "Something Else" and I liked their use of the basic trio of instruments, yet I was still surprised at the depth and far reaching qualities of this album. The band use each instrument as a separate entity to achieve their overall sound. Peter Hook's bass is powerful and yet still climbs and swoops and is almost delicate at times. Add to this the precise knife edge guitar of Bernard Albrecht and the excellent drumming of Steve Morris and you have the perfect setting for the awesome vocals of Ian Curtis. The tracks vary from the more instant pieces such as "She's Lost Control" and "Interzone" to the almost psychedelic feel of "Day of The Lords" and "New Dawn Fades". This album is a technical achievement to be taken seriously and despite being hard going in places it is for me the best debut LP of 1979. Make the effort it's worth it.

T.W.

The Clash - London Calling.

A double album for £3-50 (Virgin Records) can't be bad, especially when it's by The Clash and especially when it's the best thing they have ever done. At last they have lived up to their previously over-rated image. The production, by Guy Stevens, is rough and basic which I am sure is exactly what was intended and which suits The Clash down to the ground. The album has 18 tracks (19 including the unmentioned "Train in vain" on side four) and they contain some of the most varied musical styles that The Clash have ever tried before. The band play Rock & Roll, Jazzy, Ska and Soul type numbers as well as plenty of the good old Clash type rock which we all know and love. More important than what they play though is the WAY that they play it. They actually sound like they are enjoying themselves and this is something that has never come over before on their recordings. They usually come over as being solemn about and even bored by their music whereas on this album they seem to be actually having FUN. London Calling is good and there's plenty of it so get to Virgin while it's still on offer and grab yourselves a bargain.

T.W.