

# The Clash come through with class; Newton nice

(*'On Music'* is a weekly attempt to keep up with the record industry. Ratings are as follows: \*\*\*\*excellent; \*\*\*good; \*\*fair; \*poor.)

By BROWN BURNETT

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"STANDING ON THE EDGE" by Frankie Miller (Capitol) produced by Barry Beckett \*\*\* Frankie Miller, like the Dangerfield guy, hasn't been getting respect. But all that should change if this album is marketed right, because "Standing on the Edge" gives the Scot singer the album he has needed — a crafty, commercial album which evokes images of Rod Stewart and Bob Seger.

Like his American counterpart, Bob Seger, Miller excels at the rock and roll anthem, singing in a hoarse blues style nurtured by years of playing club dates. Miller sings with a lot of power and songs such as *Danger, Danger*, and *It's All Coming Down Tonight*, are

## On music

strong from beginning to end.

But Miller, despite his vocal talents and his songwriting ability, wears thin after awhile, so you'll probably want to take him in small doses. But that Muscle Shoals rhythm section, probably the best in the business, consisting of David Hood on bass, Roger Hawkins on drums, Barry Beckett on piano, and Pete Carr and Wayne Perkins on guitar, puts Miller in a most enviable position.

Fans of both Seger and Stewart should enjoy this rough-throated veteran singer despite some occasional monotony. Miller's a good one and so's his album.

"COMBAT ROCK" by the Clash (Epic) pro-

duced by the Clash \*\*\*\* Rock and rollers come and go but no one can keep up with England's the Clash. This is their third American album and while it's not as "big" or as ambitious as the previous two, "Combat Rock" is still head over heels above the rest of the crowd.

Basically, not much has changed with the Clash because they are abnormally consistent. Strummer still sings in that raspy voice, and Mick Jones' guitar playing is as demented and multi-rhythmic as ever. Drummer Topper Headon and bassist Paul Simonon still perform with machine-like efficiency.

But the best part of the whole Clash product is the music. Each song is filled with clever little rhymic games which keep you from taking their heavily politicized lyrics too seriously. Who else could write songs like *Ghetto Defendant*, *Atom Tan*, *Rock the Casbah*, or *Sean Flynn*, and get away with it. Side One has several good single cuts but Side Two eventually fades into rap/funk oblivion.

Still, as usual, the Clash are the best.

"QUIET LIES" by Juice Newton (Capitol) produced by Richard Landis \*\*\*\* Juice Newton's new album is a most pleasant surprise although it probably shouldn't be. Newton is a canny, talented, veteran singer whose selection of material is her strong point. She can switch styles from good-time folksy tunes such as the hit *Love's Been A Little Bit Hard on Me*, to the poignant *I'm Dancin' As Fast As I Can*, to the rock-weighted *Heart of the Night*.

So, I apologize Juice. I just haven't had

time to explore your music or your talent. I'm impressed and this is a first-class "middle-of-the-road" album.

"DAVID AND THE GIANTS" by David and the Giants (Priority/Columbia) produced by David Huff \*\*\* About five years ago I had an opportunity to meet and talk with David Huff, a local rock and roll performer who had enjoyed a modest amount of success on the club circuit in the late 60's and early 70's. At that time he gave me his Christian witness and said he was going to be a pioneer in what some people call "Christian rock."

Well almost five years to the day, David has fulfilled his goal and the first "Christian rock" record is extremely good, and superbly produced by Huff in his home recording studio in Laurel. What Huff and his band (consisting of his twin brothers, Rayborn and Clayborn, and drummer Keith Thibodeaux) have done is taken religious lyrics and put them into a commercial rock and roll format. The music is accessible enough for "Top 40" airplay, especially the song *Rock and Roll Blues*, yet the lyrics offer an intellectual and spiritual challenge to those who would take the time to listen.

My only complaint about the record is it sounds too "poppish" and I hope that "Christian rock and roll" doesn't become just another way to market the same tired old rock and roll format. There's an opportunity here for visionaries such as David and the Giants and I think they'll do well. Certainly "David and the Giants" is as good as its commercial competition and is even better than most.



JUICE NEWTON

Charles Bush/Capitol Records

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