SOUND AROUND

Carol Clerk

Roy Harper . . . the eternal hippy poet

Roy Harper — The Sophisticated Beggar (Big Ben)

The recent publicity about Roy Harper's sheep incident and his subsequent illness may attract a little extra attention to the re-release of this, his first album, first put out in 1966.

Nevertheless, it's still unlikely that it will sell in any quantity, for Harper appears to be the eternal hippy poet, destined to remain a minority interest for the rest of his career.

The music certainly is very much an acquired taste, for while it's based in folk, the warbling vocals, the lack of positive tunes and the overall eccentricity render it unpalatable to many people — myself included.

Harper fans might like to be reminded that the album contains such numbers as Goldfish, My Friend, Big Fat Silver Aeroplane, China Girl and Committed which explains the experiences he had undergoing ECT treatment at a mental hospital.

The Beach Boys Love You (Reprise)

Someone remarked to me that the Beach Boys never die — they just go on . . . and on . . . and on.

This album goes on for about 40 minutes too long.

While the Beach Boys may have made a significant contribution to music with the happy, summer surfing sound of their early career, they show themselves running sadly short of ideas in 1977.

The sunny vocal harmonies, once one of the band's most delightful assets, are kept to an absolute minimum, the songs mainly delivered in a deadpan voice over dull musical arrangements.

Side one, the better proposition, gives a few nods back to the old Beach Boys sound, but the songs themselves are unimaginative.

Side two brings together a clutter of dreadfully oversentimental compositions — I'll Bet He's Nice, Let's Put Our Hearts Together and (worst of all) I Wanna Pick You Up and Love is a Woman.

In short, this is an appalling set from a band of the Beach Boys' calibre. The Sooner they recover their old inspiration, the better.

The Clash (CBS)

This is a crucial time in the development of punk rock.

This is the time when the leading bands are starting to put out albums and the music has to stand or fall on its own merits. It has to reach people all over the country who have never witnessed the live punk spectacle.

So far, two highly important records have emerged from the new wave to convey all the energy, attack and excitement of the style. One is the recent Damned lp; the other is this.

The Clash — Joe Strummer, Mick Jones, Paul Simonon and Tory Crimes — hammer their way through 14 gloriously aggressive, rip-roaring numbes that would leave most of our heavy metal giants standing at the starting post.

The lyrics, particularly on tracks like Cheat and I'm So Bored With The USA, echo all the frustrating that finally found an outlet in punk music — and in this respect, the Clash score a few points over the Damned.

"White Riot" thunders along at an unbelievably frantic pace and was an excellent choice for a single.

The next one could well be Career Opportunities, for me an outstanding track that sums up in a couple of minutes what punk rock is all about.

It's fierce and furious with tremendously pointed lyrics, a great hook line and an extra certain something that can't fail to grip the listener on the first play.

Yvonne Elliman — Love Me (RSO)

Here's another disappointing album.

A lady with such an expressive voice and such an impressive musical background (including a lengthy association with Eric Clapton) might have been expected to come up with something a little more creative.

This is, for the most part, a collection of ballads and half-baked funk. None of it reaches the standard of the title track, Yvonne's recent hit single and the album's only selling point.

One song — I Know — is self-penned, a percussive little number that is weak enough to explain why the rest of the material came from other people.

The ballads however are rather dull and suffer from over-production. Yvonne's attempts at soul and funk sound half-hearted. Her treatment, for example, of Frederick Knight's Uphill Peace of Mind is postively listless compared to other versions, notably that of Carol Grimes.

My only advice to anyone who enjoyed the single is not to expect similar quality from the rest of this album. It's simply not there.

Old pictures at the Beach Boys may seem amusing now, but at least their music was original.

A disappointing album from Yvonne Elliman

Win an album

HOW good are you at putting names to faces? If you can identify this week's lady and answer three questions about her, you could win yourself a free album.

All entries should be marked "Album Competition" and sent to the Gazette office at 1 King Street, Acton, W3, arriving not later than Wednesday, May 11.

The answers to the April 7 competition were: 1 Small Faces 2. Ronnie Lane 3. Steve Marriott. The winner was Alison Williamson of Percy Road, Shepherds Bush.

This week we want you to answer the following questions about the pictured singer, for many years voted one of Britain's most popular female vocalists.

1 Who is she?

2 With which band did she rise to prominence?

3 Is she (a) English (b) Irish (c) Scottish?

ANSWERS:

1. .....

2. .....

3. .....

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