

reviewed by JIM GREEN of New York's 'Trouser Press' magazine

SINGLES

SINGLE OF THE WEEK

THE BOOMTOWN RATS: 'She's So Modern'/'Lying Again' (Ensign). A raucous scream, some pounding, rip-roaring guitar and we're off! A touch of pop posing here from Modest Bob and the Gang, and the subject's a bit trite — but they have the power to back it up, and with the full, clear sound producer R J Lange has gotten them, they've yielded up a super single. The refrain'll hook you in no time, and the punch they pack made me think of a new wave Thin Lizzy, with all the excess flab cut away.

ALMOST SINGLE OF THE WEEK

NO DICE: 'Why Sugar'/'Down And Dry' (EMI). Dunno if it's got much of a chance as a single, the pace is a little slow and other niggling sorts of things, but it is a fine album track from a promising group. The chorus smacks of 'Tumbling Dice' and the vocal of Rod the Mod, and I'm just a sucker for this stuff. If you're short of bread both sides provide a fine sampling from the band's debut LP.

PROBABLY BUT ...

ELTON JOHN: 'Ego'/'Flinstone Boy' (Rocket). Didn't put his name on the picture, just the title. ('Ah. Changed his name?') Modified tango breaks into — why Eltie, you're almost rocking again! But it's not up to the standards of his best, er, 'power pop'. More like a would-be Cole Porter on how drattedly difficult it is to control one's Ego when one is a Star. 'Childish, foolish, fit for school-ish ...' But I have to grow through my Ego. That doesn't leave much room for us, does it, Reg? Probably a hit, but ...

STYX: 'Fooling Yourself (The Angry Young Man)'/'The Grand Finale' (A&M). This is for you, John Rotten, Joe Strummer et al. What's to be angry about? There's a whole lot of future for you. Look, straighten up and fly right, here, take a bath, there's a pastel-coloured polyester leisure suit, don't forget your happy pills today. Swooping synth, Yes harmonies, why, it could well be Billy Joel backed by Kansas. A huge hit in the US of A, land of milk and honey, home of the brave fast-food pioneers too. Probably a hit here as well, don't you think?

FOTOMAKER: 'Where Have You Been All My Life'/'Say the Same For You' (Atlantic). Take ex-raspberry axeman Wally Bryson, bring former Young Rascals Dino Danelli and Gene Cornish into the picture, and what will develop? All seriousness aside, Atlantic, I'm told, are shooting for this year's Foreigner, another rock act for whom every other track will turn out a hit. Musically, this sounds more in the 'mold' of Bread (ho ho), with its multi-tracked harmonies, dulcetly descending piano runs and gently chiming guitar (the strings come in at the chorus). We've heard it all before (as with Foreigner), but it's well-crafted and probably a hit (at least in the US).

IF YOU WANT IT DONE RIGHT, DO IT YOURSELF

SNEAKERS: 'In The Red' (EP) (CAR); **PETER HOLSAPPLE:** 'Big Black Truck'/'96 Second Blowout' + 'Death Garage' (CAR). The South shall rise again — these artists are from North Carolina — but if you're thinking, 'Uh oh, more

Southern boogie,' relax. Sneakers put out a celebrated 'underground' EP in a Big Star/Byrds vein in the summer of '75 and subsequently Chris Stamey left to cut 'Summer Sun', produced by Alex Chilton, in whose band he played bass. Stamey and ex-Sneaker Mitch Easter reunited to cut the disc at hand under the old name (and play all the instruments themselves on most of the tracks). In amongst oddities like an old live take of 'Roadrunner' and a theme for an imaginary detective show are five tracks running the gamut from the moody, Left Banke-ish 'Perfect Stranger' to the quirky rocka-rola of 'Decline and Fall', all suffused with a slightly cockeyed, fanciful feel, and well (if unusually) produced. (\$3.98 from CAR Records, 89 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10012.) Holsapple is a friend of Sneakers, which in fact now exists only on vinyl, since Easter's joined Holsapple in the H-Bombs. Stamey and Easter help out here, though Pete plays almost everything. 'Truck' sounds like the Move doing rockabilly, and the B-sides are entertaining explorations of the many facets and styles of punk rock ('60s and '70s). (\$1.98 from CAR as above.) (Enclose 25p for overseas post for each disc.)

THE CRAMPS: 'Surfin' Bird'/'The Way I Walk' (Vengeance). If you wanna get historical, this NY band's nucleus is from Cleveland — and they're the first-ever punkabilly band. If you wanna get hysterical, put on the record and hear a nifty rendition of the Trashmen's 'psychedelic surfin'' classic. The Cramps take it further than the original: gibbering guitar, vocal psychosis, weird effects, the lot. It does go on a bit (5:03), but the Jack Scott number on the flipside is short 'n' sweet — doomsday guitar chords and hiccupping vocals, both drenched in echo(-plex). Not

the first NY band to vinylise these tunes, but the Cramps were playin' 'em in CBGBs long before the Ramones and Robert Gordon cut 'em. With the assistance of Alex Chilton's production they've made a genuine FUN RECORD (remember them?).

THE OUTCASTS: 'You're a Disease'/'Don't Wanna Be No Adult' + 'Frustration' (It). Ok, OK, so you've heard so much of this kind of punk record it's coming out of your ears — Ramone-drone guitar, badly recorded, silly lyrics. But 'Disease' and 'Adult' sport passable hooks and good vocals; these guys might be a good little band to see live, and in time might go further than It Records.

OLD FACES, NEW PACKAGES

ARTHUR LEE: 'I Do Wonder' + 3 (EP) (Da Capo). Quite a mixed bag from the man who brought us the immortal Love. Nothing so immortal about these tracks (and no clue as to whence they came), but while two are out-of-character throwaways, the opening and closing tracks are teasing reminders of what Lee is capable of. 'I Do Wonder' pleasantly recalls the earlier days of *Forever Changes*, and 'Happy You' sounds straight out of the sessions for the under-rated, Hendrix-influenced *False Start* album.

BOLAN: 'Hot Love'/'Raw Ramp' + 'Lean Woman Blues' (Cube). Better than the last re-release maxi-single put out to capitalise on his death (or commemorate his passing, take your choice). 'Hot Love' was the band's second hit, 'Raw Ramp' a worthwhile but hard-to-find B-side, and 'Lean Woman Blues' is one of the more tolerable tracks off *Tanx*. Nobody seems to have time for T. Rex music these days, or only as long as it takes to make fun of Bolan's degeneration, but this is a

nice package for collectors and fans, and a more than fair sample of one of yesterday's more consistent chartriders.

IAN GOMM: 'Come On'/'Darkest Night' (Albion/United Artists). Actually, a new pair of steamily atmospheric sides from the ex-Brinsley Schwarz stalwart, not unlike the latter band's r'n'b but, taken at a moderately slow pace, tougher, and ballsier. 'Come On' is Chuck Berry transformed from a casually comic plea to a menacing demand. A strong showing, well-produced by Martin Rushent.

DISCOSPACE CADETS

BRIAN BENNETT: 'Pendulum Force'/'Ocean Glide' (DJM). Could this be R2D2's idea of disco? Enough electronic effects to stuff a starship, easily good enough to be distracted by on a long elevator ride.

FRANCK POURCEL & HIS ORCHESTRA: 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind'/'Space' (EMI). Franck makes outer space safe for mums and dads; none of those crazed machines playing on this one, which is played and sung by real human beings. Embarrassing, isn't it? Muzak plus sci-fi plus disco equals drek.

DUNCAN MCKAY: 'Sirius III'/'The Serious Side of Sirius III' (Pepper/United Artists). Former Steve Harley sideman messing around. Martial rhythms and leapfrog bass bump along whilst ol' Dunc tootles about on a synth resembling a high-speed flute. Turn it over, and he gets 'serious', otherwise known as slowing it all down and getting grandiose. *Close Encounters* of the 6,379th Kind.

PLANET EARTH: 'Rocket Man'/'My Galactic Hero' (Pye). Oh no, not another one! (Thinks: 'Come now, be

professional.') Let's see; hmm, how 'bout 'Majestically catchy riff in the 'Close Encounters'/'Star Wars' frame of mindlessness breaks into that deuced disco washing-machine beat — Enough! Uncle!

POP POOP

GOLDIE: 'Making Up Again'/'Time to Kill' (Bronze). Not totally new faces here — this band includes a couple of post-Bowie Spiders from Mars whose album on Pye seemed to suffer from indecision as to which direction to go. Similar problem here: strong, gritty singing is wasted on a song bland enough in its own melancholy way to have been done by the Ray Coniff Singers — and the band can't figure whether to rock it up some or sell out totally, so bits and pieces slip through the strings, sax and backing chorus.

PUSSYFOOT: 'Dancer Dance (Parts I & II)' (EMI). My, but don't we look the part of a sex kitten in the press photo. Kraftwerk/Donna Summer rhythm section (sounds like supersonic stomach grumbings) and ill-making sliding synthesizer surround a not unattractive voice in this unimpressive workout — but all you reckless Romeos out there will want a look at the press photo (maybe I can sell it for 25p).

CLAUDE FRANCOIS: 'Bordeaux Rose'/'Magnolias Forevere' (EMI). Yet one more oddball entry in this week's singles sweepstakes. Sounds a bit like Aznavour gone reggae. According to the picture sleeve, this guy claimed to have engaged in a bit of the old in-out with over 3000 women. (Did he give gift coupons?) The fellow recently met a sad end in an accident replacing a light in the bath. Perhaps he'd just been dazed by Pussyfoot's picture and got over-anxious to make it 4000 (the wages of sin?).



THE CRAMPS — New York/Cleveland punkabilly (punkabilly?!? — Ed.)

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Time: 2:06

BRAIK RECORDS

BRS 01
BRS 01 A
SIDE ONE STEREO
45 RPM Made in UK

NOBODYS SCARED
(Vic Goddard)

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