

Prince's Trust — good surface value

Various Artists
The Prince's Trust 10th Anniversary Birthday
A&M

review by Mike Spindloe

One of a spate of charity albums to appear since Live Aid (which, ironically, has not been released in any vinyl form), this 10th anniversary performance for the Prince's Trust in Britain is interesting for at least a couple of reasons.

One reason is that it throws more fuel on the ongoing politics-and-music debate fire. Do the two really make proper bedfellows? In this case, one can laud good ole Chuck and Di for their numerous charitable activities, while at the same time pointing out that Chuck is one of Britain's largest landowners (solely by birth), including tracts of slum housing in London, and a highly visible symbol of an oppressive and obsolete social caste system.

The event does attract quite a gathering of rock's own "royalty", though; and, after all, who would refuse an invite from the real thing? Not this crew, at least. So the album includes almost an hour's worth of live performances of mostly well-known songs by twelve performers who require no introduction to the public. On the surface, good value, and predictably there are some standout efforts as well as a few flops.

In the latter category must fall Dire Straits' cursory reading of "Money For Nothing", which unfortunately opens the record, and Big Country's "Fields of Fire", which probably looked better live than it sounds here. Maybe it's just the mix.

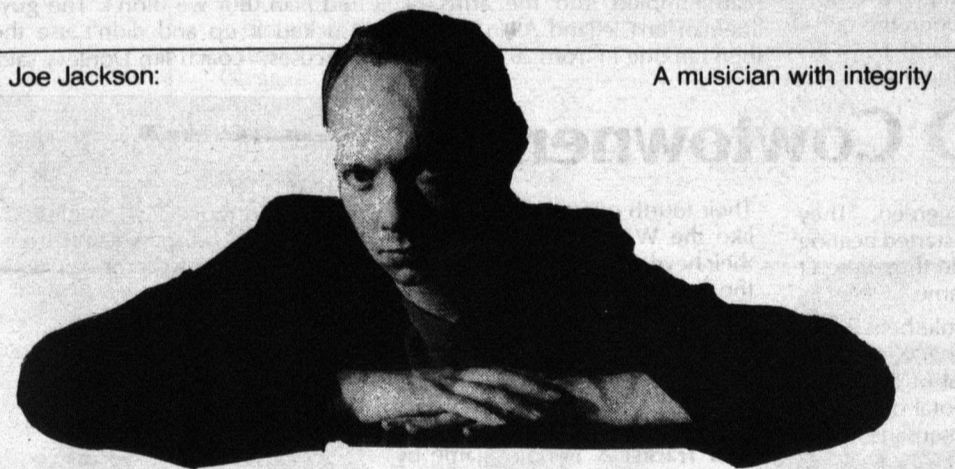
Pleasant surprises include Midge Ure's "Call of the Wild", which is better than anything his band Ultravox has done for awhile, and Suzanne Vega's "Marlene on the Wall", another gem from the '80s most talented unlikely-star pop-folkie. Phil Collins introduces "In The Air Tonight" with a bit of self-deprecating humour ("Oh no, he's not going to do THAT song again") but pulls off a stirring rendition nonetheless. Finally, Joan Armatrading gives an equally good reading of her "Reach Out".

Also included are cuts by Howard Jones, Tina Turner, Level 42 and moss-gatherers Paul McCartney (who had the good sense to sing a Beatles' song rather than his current dreck), Elton John and Rod Stewart, plus various name guest stars in the backing bands.

Prince's Trust, then, makes for mostly enjoyable if hardly essential listening. Whether or not it's for you probably depends on the strength of your affinity for the contributing artists — as well as your charitable instincts.



Top 40 types sing for charitable cause



Joe Jackson:

A musician with integrity

Music for "adventurous"

Joe Jackson
Will Power
A&M

review by Dragos Ruiu

Whether you enjoy his music or not, you have to admire Joe Jackson. His integrity is faultless, and he has proven himself to be a man of principles. He refuses to compromise his work or its presentation.

A good example is videos. For a long time now he has voiced his opinion that he does not want to do videos because he feels they lessen the music. Despite the enormous pressures, he has only released a handful of videos, and they all were in a simple concert style.

You can never know what to expect from Joe Jackson. Since his graduation from the Royal Academy of Music in London and his subsequent first hit album *Look Sharp* in 1979, his music has taken dramatic leaps in style.

From pop to reggae to swing, the style of each successive Joe Jackson album has been radically different. This latest album *Will Power* is no exception. It's an instrumental album with a definite classical twist. It was even recorded just like an orchestral album; that is, he got fifty people in a room and

recorded the songs directly on a two track recorder with a minimum of over-dubs.

The album will no doubt turn some people off. It's nowhere near the commercial hits that have made Jackson a star. The album was inspired by a 20 minute score for the Japanese film *Shijin No Ie* (House of the Poet), which was played by the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

A version of this score made its way on the album as a piece entitled "Symphony in One Movement". It's an interesting classical piece that actually starts with the orchestra tuning.

By far the gem of this album is a solo piano piece that Jackson plays, entitled "Nocturne". It is very beautiful and if you enjoy the piano, it is worth the album price.

In general, the whole album is non-aggressive, relaxing music that manages to avoid being boring. In a couple of spots the compositions seems a little disjointed, but not enough to make you hate the music.

Caveat Emptor (Buyer Beware) though, this is an instrumental album, and if you don't like instrumentals or orchestral pieces, don't buy this album regardless of how much you like Joe Jackson. But if you are adventurous and appreciate quality music, get a copy of *Will Power*.

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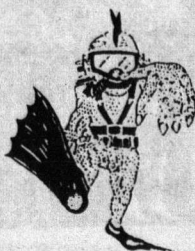
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