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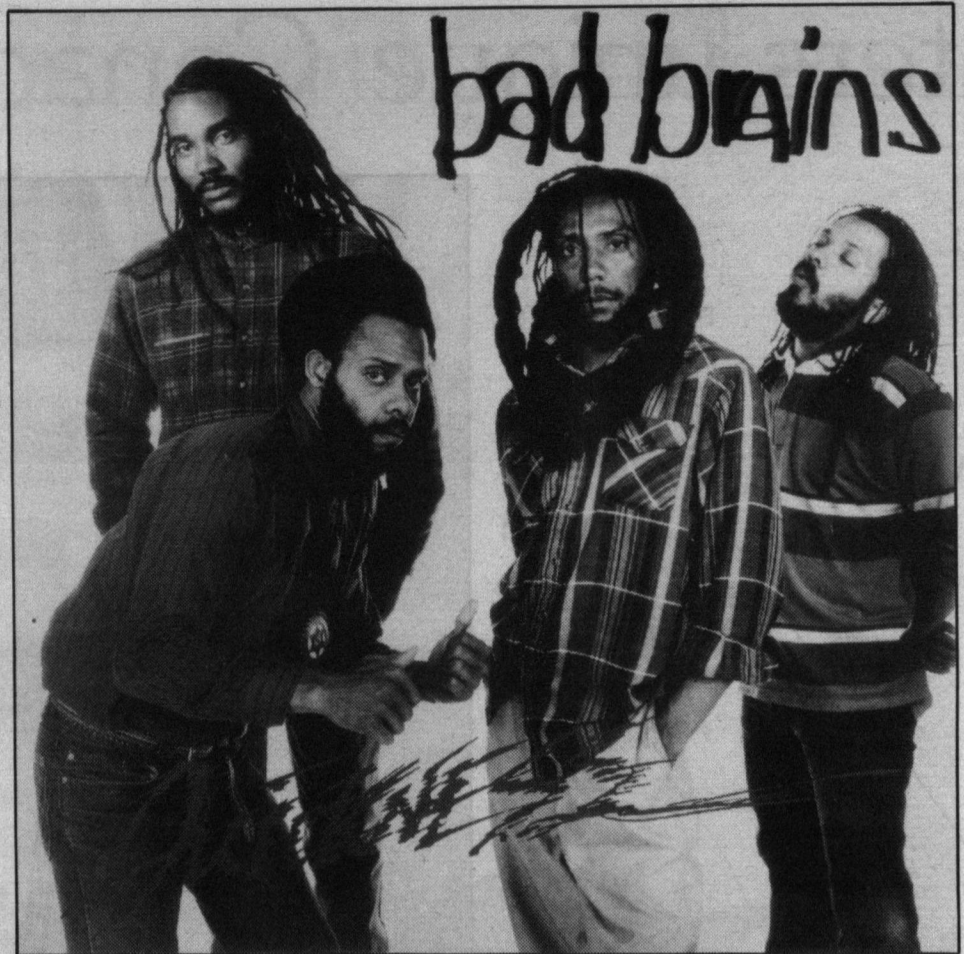
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**Bad Brains Quickness Caroline/Virgin**

In the beginning there was *Rock For Light*. Fast, fast, fast—one of the greatest things to be pressed on vinyl this decade. Then came *I Against I*. On that album, the Brains traded in their speed for something harder and more tangible. Oh, for a melding of the two. With *Quickness*, The Brains melt down the wax from their previous two LPs, making a new candle.

*Quickness* is everything you knew Bad Brains could be. The reggae influence that displayed itself prominently on *Rock For Light* is still there. I always wanted to see the Brains take this reggae thing that they do so well and blend it in with their aggressive songs, instead of just playing pure reggae songs between their intense, thrashy numbers. On *Quickness*, they do both. Songs like "Gene Machine/Don't Bother Me" showcase the reggae rhythm in an environment of semi-metallic heat. The Brains also give us pure, good, undiluted reggae on the second-last cut, "The Prophet's Eye."

There's so much to be found on this album. Twenty listens from now I'll still be experiencing newness on *Quickness*. One thing's sure: the Brains don't go whoring after the sounds of their proteges. The success of bands like Living Color offer a savoury temptation to hard-rocking black bands. But the Brains return to the savage intensity of *Rock For Light* on *Quickness*. They show everyone just who the innovators



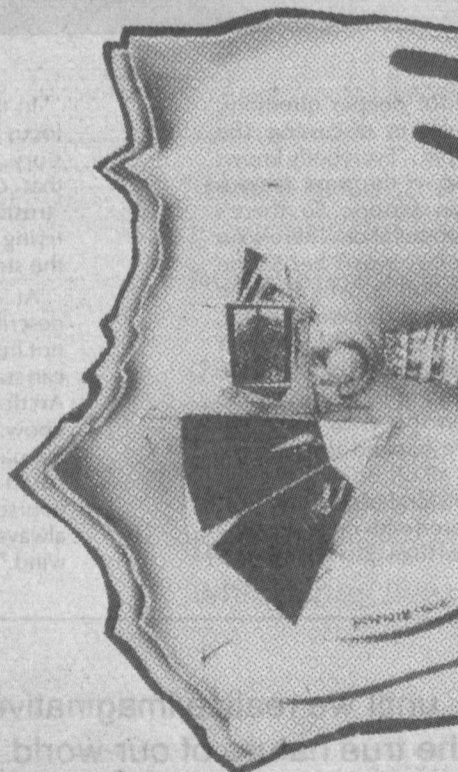
are in this quadrant of rockdom. Bad Brains continue to do what they do best—break new ground, and generally just kick your conchy ass all over the living room floor.

This band is ferocious. Some may find their

lyrics too preaching, too straight-edge, too Rastafarian. But I'll gladly give a band any indulgence if it means that they can reach the level of ferocity displayed on *Quickness*.

—Ron Kuipers

**Spirit of the West Old Material 1984-1986 Stony Plain Records**



"Oh no, not yet another album full of old material..." was my first thought when I first picked up this album. I guessed that it was just going to be old songs that were re-mixed, re-recorded and re-packaged so the band could make a few extra bucks during a slow period. However, I was pleasantly surprised with the quality of the music on the album.

Since I was brought up on Gaelic folk music, I am irresistibly attracted to the lively Scottish twang that permeates much of Spirit of the West's music. Their songs are unique and their style, while not complacent, is relaxed and easy-going. They include flutes and whistles in their songs and this makes tunes such as "Rock at Thieves Bay" elegant and enchanting to listen to.

Many of their songs are about Scotland (where some of the band members are originally from), for example "Down on the Dole" paints a bleak picture of Scottish unemployment, and "Time to Ring Some Changes" tells us about prevailing social conditions in Scotland. The album comprises

a wide range of Spirit of the West's highly original music and includes a rowdy drinking song called "General Guinness".

This is a band that sounds best live — the second side of their album is part of a concert they did in Vancouver, and is particularly enjoyable. This side is undoubtedly the best of the two even though the quality of recording is a bit rough. Songs such as "Aberdeen" and "Ships in Full Sail" are among the live recordings and they include the energy and charisma that are present in the band's live performance.

The studio side of the album is co-produced by the band and Barney Bentall and is made up of a mixture of re-recorded tunes from their previous albums. The first side has a cleaner sound and isn't as dynamic as the second but shows us, not a worse, but a different side to the band's music; one that is softer and more lilting than the lively vigor of their concert performance.

This new album is a fine addition to any Spirit of the West collection, and will undoubtedly convert some new fans to the enjoyment of the group's pop-folk melange. On top of it all, the cryptic cover graphic is amusing to contemplate.

—Rachel Sanders



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