

# Another big mess of them records again

reviews by Brent Jeffery

**One Step Ahead**  
Shari Ulrich  
A&M SP 9067

What a strong, quality album! That is the first thing that one can say about Shari Ulrich's *One Step Ahead* release. She has finally separated herself from the musical family of the Hometown Band, Valdy, and Claire Lawrence to gain her own due recognition. And this lady deserves it.

*One Step Ahead* is a very heart-felt record opening with a very moving, gutsy song, "Not Gonna Stop", which has Ulrich coming to grips with herself after the horror of a sexual attack in 1980. She gains instant respect for her fortitude here.

She does not stop there either. "How Bad Do You Want It", "Romeo", and "She Remembers" have her exploring relationships and personal convictions. The depth of these songs is truly amazing and each tune is excellent in all respects.

The melodies of the songs aside, what is also very noticeable is the good production and guitar work of Bill Henderson of Chilliwack. The production is very tight and controlled with little wasted arrangements on fill time. And Bill Henderson performs admirably with solos to rival anything else he has done.

With these positive contributions, this record is even worth the \$8.99 list price.

**No Refuge**  
Eddie Schwartz  
A&M SP 9056

I know I am going to appear un-nationalistic in this era of nationalism, but Eddie Schwartz has to be one of the biggest Canadian jokes around (some others being Prism and Dan Hill). Yet Eddie has a good P.R. man. So good in fact that he won a Juno award as "Composer of the Year" (1980) for "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" (such are the sorry state of the Junos). And this guy takes himself seriously!! Really.

*No Refuge* is such an average record for the second effort of the "composer of the year" that it is a wonder it made it to vinyl at all. There is nothing special or interesting about his songs and their mediocrity is highlighted by his poor voice (to the producers credit they tried to support it with heavy background vocals but to little avail).

Lyrical he is also very shallow. Such great lines as *Like to accommodate all your wishes/And I won't leave behind no dirty dishes* characterize his perceptive insights.

"Over the Line" and "Auction Block" end up as the only songs worth listening to. (Unless you have had a bad day and want to make it worse). These songs, mercifully, have good melodies and pop arrangements.

But if this fellow is the cream of Canadian talent, we are in trouble!

**Pretty Bad Boys**  
Goddo  
Attic LAT 1120

Goddo has been on the verge of really making it big in the Canadian rock scene for some time now. With a strong core of faithful followers and a good new album just released, *Pretty Bad Boys*, they have improved their chances immensely.

This new album shows two things quite clearly. One, that Goddo, or rather Greg Godovitz, is capable of writing more than just mind-numbing musik, and two, that although it is not mind-numbing, it still is not a study in intricacy. Still, the songs are very catchy.

"Am I Crazy, Crazy", "Feelin' Strange Today", and "Vampire Eyes" are representative and quite enjoyable songs. Reggae crops up in "Shooting Stars" and Godovitz proves his lyrical competence with "If Tomorrow Never Comes". To complete the package, there is the rhythmic drum song called "Ngorongoro". Different.

A good piece of work, and hopefully a sign of better things to come.

school band would do. If they exercised a little more control and spent more time developing their songs, these tendencies would not occur. (Maybe a different producer's perspective would help).

All in all there are enough good songs here to justify the expense of the record, but it could have been better.

**Allied Forces**  
Triumph  
Attic LAT 1122

Triumph is an impressive band. Their shows are as exciting as any you will ever see but sadly their music is not progressing along with their theatrics. *Allied Forces* is not such a bad album really, it is only a return to the music that made them a Canadian success story (i.e. I have heard these songs before on earlier Triumph albums).

The music still rocks with a vengeance and Rik Emmett still executes as searing a

make this record very interesting.

For the most part Mary Burns uses her low, husky voice to good advantage but she does let it rasp at times. To start out with she has a very restricted range, and when she transcends her limits it becomes all too obvious. A strong background vocal crew would have helped here.

A very positive aspect of the album, which separates mediocre records from quality ones, is the guitar work. The guitars often provide the songs with a little extra kick to augment the melody. Well done. "Stranger" benefited the most from this.

Overall, this is an album which should please a wide variety of tastes.

**Fleet Street**  
Fist  
A&M SP 9068

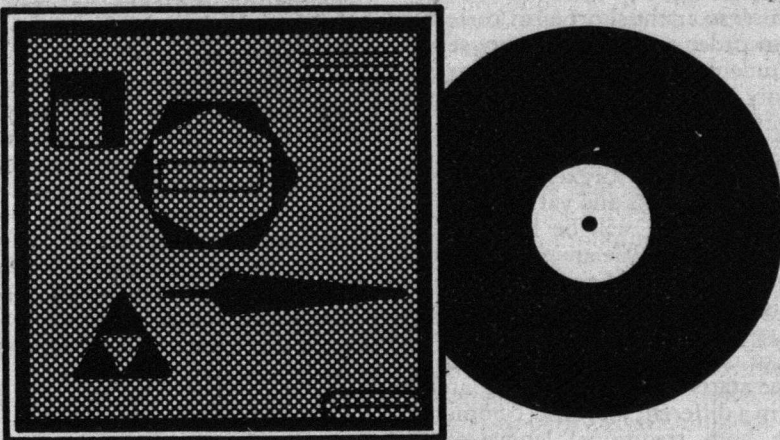
Fist are going nowhere very fast. Their album *Fleet Street* is so hopelessly dated that they cannot expect to generate any interest from such a typical, shallow effort as this one.

They rely on power chords with a heavy backbeat designed to shake the foundations of even large skyscrapers. Despite this there is a lack of power behind the music which in turn makes listening to it very tedious. "Double or Nothin'", "Thunder In Rock", and "Evil Cold" suffer horrendously from this.

As authors of this junk, guitarist Ron Chenier and bassist Jeff Nystrom must take the blame. I mean who are they trying to kid? The solos and bass lines have all the originality of yet another Trans Am screeching away from an intersection. Moving up and down the scale as fast as possible with the heaviest possible distortion seems to be the basic goal of Chenier's efforts.

The most intriguing thing the band did was a Sherlock Holmes-Dr. Watson talking part as an introduction to the song "Fleet Street". Here the band manages to save a little face. Following "Fleet Street" is their best song "Open The Gates". For this song they finally put Ivan Tessier's keyboards to good use instead of Chenier's guitar.

There is a liner note on the album to Uncle Dougie thanking him for keeping the band together. Well Uncle Dougie, next time mind your own bloody business!!



**Mayday**  
Mayday  
A&M SP 4873

"Power and sex appeal taken to extremes beyond your wildest dreams" screams the first sentence of the press release. The sex appeal I am not too sure about but the power, definitely.

*Mayday* is an album that does not show us any great new musical inroads but it does do a credible job staying within established ones. That, in essence, will be their biggest problem for future records. If they insist upon doing what has already been done, they shall become redundant, typical. And that will kill them.

"Life In Space" is the closest thing to "different" on this album. Its choppy rhythm and haunting keyboards makes one listen. "Innocent Bystander" and "New York City" possess the "power" which they brag about; the former's is salient while the latter's is up-front, driving rock and roll.

There is also a Neanderthal, metal influence (Editor's note: heavy? light? zinc? titanium?) in some of the songs which is performed with great zeal but in the end overworked, akin to what a high

solo as ever but they are not showing anything new. For most of the record one can ignore this, but with songs like "Magic Power" - little more than a reworked "Hold On" - the similarity is all too apparent. The songs could have been improved by diverging from the typical, dope head mentality; but they don't. Everything from Gil Moore's predictable drumming to the lyrics exhorting the virtues of rock and roll remain static, stale.

A band of their talent should do better.  
**The Opera Ain't Over 'Till The Big Lady Sings**  
Mary Burns  
Attic LAT 1121

Mary Burns is one performer who has certainly paid her dues. She played in lounges for several years, doing endless covers, waiting for a chance to record her music. Well, she got the chance and makes good use of it.

*The Opera Ain't Over 'Till The Big Lady Sings* is basically a blues-influenced album, but with pop, country, and rock audible as well. The diversity of the styles and the consistent strength of the songs



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