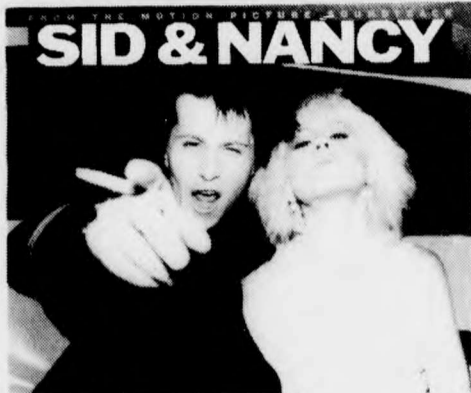


Excal rates those records!



Sid and Nancy: Love Kills

By WALTER RINALDI

Sid and Nancy, the new movie by director Alex (Repo Man) Cox, sounds like a nice love story about a young Jewish couple who fall in love and live happily ever after. The End.

Not so. The "Sid" is Sid Vicious, the last bassist for the Sex Pistols. "Nancy" is his girlfriend Nancy Spungen. Sid has accused of murdering Nancy, and before he could go to trial, Sid killed himself. Enough background. On with the music.

The Sex Pistols ushered in the punk movement in the late '70s, with an intense hatred of authority, government control, and uniformity. This movement spread a wave of anarchy across the ocean. If the Sex Pistols' music was nasty, the group itself was even nastier.

One would logically expect a movie featuring a famous punk to have a very punk oriented soundtrack. Not so with this album. The package of songs sound rather dull together.

The Sex Pistols' only representation on the album is "Pleasure and Pain" by ex-Pistol guitarist Steve Jones, who seems to have lost all his anger from the '70s.

The album features two songs by London/Irish electric folk band The Pogues, one nasty offering by California punk band The Circle Jerks, two solo ventures from Clash member Joe Strummer (including the fine title track "Love Kills"), an easily overlooked tune by John Cale, two terrible imitation songs by Gary Oldman who plays Sid in the movie, and dreamy instrumentals by Pray for Rain.

Oldman's swaggering interpretation of "My Way" and "I Wanna Be Your Dog" are weak attempts to sound like Sid Vicious. Not that Sid was graced with Pavarotti's voice, but at least he sounded like an angry punk. Oldman sounds like an actor trying really hard to be an angry punk. It just doesn't work. Hopefully Oldman's acting is better than his singing.

It's evident that the record company had two choices to make:

1. release a somewhat commercial soundtrack in order to maintain their corporate image, or
2. release a soundtrack capturing that violent period of music.

A compromise between the two was reached, and the record hit the stores. After all, if the movie is a success, who cares if the soundtrack flops? Rating: 4



Bambi: Rock On . . .

By ANDREW VANCE

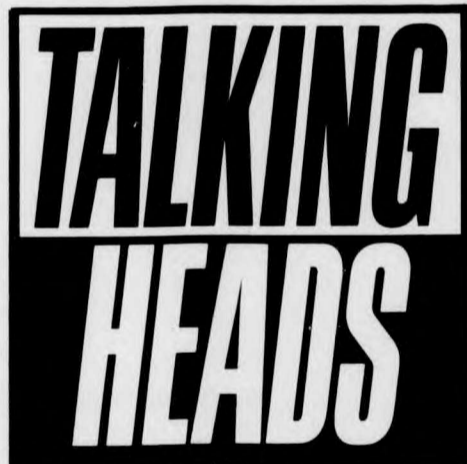
Is the phrase "rock on" dead? Not according to Bambi, which has now named their album after the phrase. Suffice to say that after 20 minutes of abuse at the hands of Bambi's publicity laden debut album I was left with a feeling of neural washout.

Since Bambi (aka Maggie Borg) is the sole songwriter as well as the vocalist it would seem appropriate to lay at her feet the blame for this dung. How do I despise this album? Verily, let me count the ways: limp lyrics, recycled melodies, and a backup band that plays with the unfettered energy of an afternoon spent watching Hymn Sing with your grandmother.

Not since the dark days of disco have I encountered material of such mind-numbing mediocrity. It makes one wonder at the amount of promotional flatulence wasted on an album so obviously destined to grow roots in the delete rack at K-Mart. But why belabour the point?

Those who, either by their own stupidity or by the generosity of well meaning friends, find themselves with this garden variety slice of syntho-swill festering in their collections can be assured of my deepest sympathies.

Available on CBS. Rating: 2



Talking Heads: True Stories

By WALTER RINALDI

As David Byrne, the core leader of Talking Heads is quick to point out, their latest album (on Sire Records) is not the soundtrack album to his new film *True Stories*.

In what seems to be a streak of confused

musical inspiration, it was decided to name the new album *True Stories*. Of course, a soundtrack album containing the score of *True Stories*, the movie, is also being released, containing some of the songs found on the new Talking Heads album, only sung by the actors in the movie.

Hence the disclaimer by David Byrne on the inner sleeve of the album hopefully clears up some of the confusion. If the album *True Stories* is any indication of the film by the same name (we won't go through it again), it should be quite the success for Byrne.

The album is an incredible mixture of fun rock'n'roll (the opening number "Love for Sale" for instance), whimsical hand-clappers like the first single, "Wild, Wild Life," and country croonings like the ones found on side two ("People Like Us" and "City of Dreams").

Byrne's song styling closely rivals his writing on the last Talking Heads album, *Little Creatures*. His voice is still as mystical and ominous as ever, but it is the whimsical style of Talking Heads that makes *True Stories* an exceptional piece of recording.

Musically, the band has never sounded stronger, although Byrne's centrestage approach to recording slaps the listener in the face with a very individual sounding album, geared towards his vocal style and his precise writing abilities. When you have such an interesting personality as a band leader, it's easy for the individual band members to get lost in the background. This is the case for *True Stories*.

The album showcases Talking Heads' professional outlook for 1986 (especially Byrne's talents) and at this time in their fruitful career, it's nice to see they've established a happy medium between quality and material and a sense of fun. Rating: 8



54-40

By ANDREW VANCE

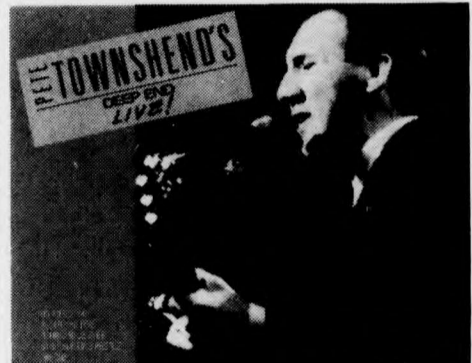
It seems rare nowadays to find a new group that does not depend heavily on a synthesizer but, as evidenced by Vancouver based 54-40's self-titled debut album, its inclusion in a group's armory in no way guarantees decent music. In the case of 54-40 the return to a harder edged sound results in some exciting moments but ultimately suffers from a lack of focus.

The band is comprised of Neil Osborne on vocals and guitar, guitarist Phil Comparelli, bassist Brad Merritt, and drummer Matt Johnson. Osborne is also responsible for songwriting and overall he seems to have done a fairly respectable job. The album is divided between the new wave relentlessness of "I Wanna Know," the country influenced ballads "Being Fooled" and "Take My Hand," and the failed Doorsian meanderings of "Holy Cow." The band gels most effectively when the material is of the straight variety.

"Grace and Beauty" and "I Wanna Know"

are among the album's highlights, both which show the band in a minimalist mood. Osborne's one attempt at a more laid-back reflectiveness in "Alcohol Heart" is a dreary strikeout, but thankfully, it's the only real low point on the album.

If Osborne's songwriting is a little weak in places it is only because he seems unsure of which style to adopt. Yet this can be put down to inexperience. In the long run there is nothing really stunning on this album but given time, 54-40 could do great things. Available on WEA. Rating: 6



Pete Townshend: Deep End Live!

By ANDREW VANCE

The release of Pete Townshend's *Deep End Live* finds the artist at a point in his career where he is finally being regarded as a solo entity rather than the brains behind the now defunct Who. With the exception of a memorable appearance on the Secret Policeman's Ball album in 1981, *Deep End* is the first recording to feature Townshend in live surroundings without the help of his former bandmates to thicken the sound.

The result is a concert experience far removed from the legendary sturm and drang that characterized the Who's better performances. As well as an assortment of Who standards ("Behind Blue Eyes," "Pinball Wizard," "Eyesight to the Blind"), Townshend has included his own "A Little is Enough," and renditions of r&b classics "Barefootin'" and "I Put A Spell On You."

The sound quality is excellent and Townshend is in fine form with the album's best cut being an acoustic version of the English Beat's "Save It For Later." Stripped down to its essentials and redefined through Townshend's hard-edged nasal vocals the song moves with an understated intensity—the power of an artist who has found his niche, or in Townshend's case, rediscovered it.

One senses the presence of a vitality which was so sadly absent from the post Keith Moon era of the Who and which only began to reappear in Townshend's writing when the shackles of the group were finally broken. A little older and a little greyer, Pete Townshend has lost none of his venom and *Deep End Live* serves as an adequate testimony to his durability as an artist.

Available on WEA. Rating: 8

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