

...The Cure so so

Jackson continues to diversify with new LP

Joe Jackson: Mike's Murder Soundtrack
The Cure: Japanese Whispers

review by Warren Opheim

Once in 1979 there was a young man from England named Joe Jackson who released his debut album *Look Sharp*. It spawned the hit "Is She Really Going out With Him?" and was filled with lyrics of cynicism and hurt over loves gone sour. The music was characterized chiefly by aggressive guitar and base with the occasional slowly-paced song put in for aural good measure. His next LP, *I'm The Man*, was slightly less heavy musically as was his his self-described "London Album", *Beat Crazy*.

Joe set some time aside in 1981 to release *Joe Jackson's Jumpin Jive*, a tribute to the old masters of swing who received accolades in his father's time. In the succeeding year, we were treated (perhaps shocked?) with his "New York Album", *Night and Day*. Gone forever was that guitar, Joe Jackson's musical trademark. He replaced it with Hammond organs, Minimoog synthesizers, xylophones and flutes. He crooned (as only Joe can croon) about the dangers of TV worship, cancer paranoia, being marked for murder, and trying to find out just what a "real man" is.

Recently, Mr. Jackson was chosen by Warner Brothers to compose a soundtrack for the as yet unreleased movie *Mike's Murder*. This record picks up where *Night and Day* left off, but as we've come to expect, it is not entirely like all his other recordings. He has written three instrumentals, all contained on side two: "Zemeo", which is thirteen minutes of background music, "Breakdown", and

"Moonlight Theme", both of which are much shorter (and better) than the milked "Zemeo". All three are slow and intelligent. Given that these are his first three attempts at instrumentals, Joe gets an "A" for effort. He'll improve if he continues.

On side one are five songs: most differ from *Night and Day* in that there is a solid musical punch inherent. Of prime example are "Cosmopolitan", "1-2-3 Go (This Town's a Fairground)", and "Memphis". "Laundromat Monday" is musically minimal, but contains the wittiest lyrics:

I'm gonna change the world
But not today
Think I'll just go get drunk
Down on Avenue A

A sign of the times. "Moonlight" is the offspring of his earlier works "Breaking Us in Two" and "A Slow Song"; mushy music with smart lyrics.

If you liked *Night and Day*, you should fall in love with the *Mike's Murder Soundtrack*. If you're waiting for another "Is She Really Going Out with Him?", keep waiting. If you couldn't care less about Joe Jackson, buy the record anyway, just for the cover photograph. Is it every scary.

The Cure have finally released *Japanese Whispers*, their newest album since *Pornography*, but alas, it's only a compilation of their *The Walk* EP and *The Love Cats* single. Nothing too distinctive here after the Cure's stepping from doom-and-gloom rock onto the techno-disco bandwagon ("The Love Cats" excluded), although Laurence Tolhurst's whining is often downright funny (I believe it is intentional). Let's just hope that this trend of marketing songs for all they're worth (for example *The Human League* and *Bananarama*) quits right now. Hey, didn't the Beatles do this sort of thing.

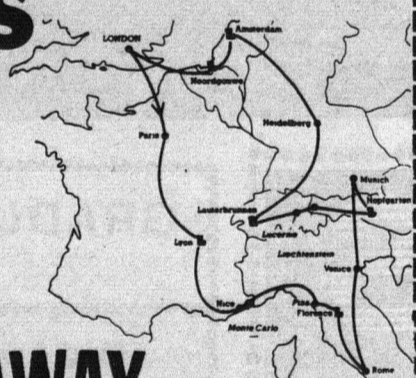


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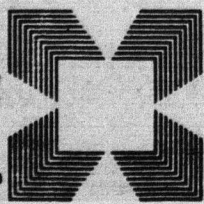
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