

Diverse releases reviewed

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Rational Youth - Rational Youth

A lot of electropop is really quite cold and impersonal. The fact that this is not the case with the Montreal-based group Rational Youth makes them pleasantly different.

This record is a five-song EP which bodes well for this up-and-coming group's future. Their lyrics are meaningful while their melodies combine the catchiness and danceability of electronic music with their own distinctive and less cosmetic sound. This sound is due to the combination of band leader Tracy Hall's synthesizers with real live bass, keyboards, and drums. Hall's lead vocals, however, are an even greater asset, as his emotional and meaningful vocal treatments are superb.

Only one song does not cut it, namely "The Man In Grey". Two of them, "Just a Sound In The Night" and "Holiday in Bangkok" are quite good, and "In Your Eyes" and "Latin Lovers" are both fantastic.

These frosh measure up well against the upperclassmen. Let's hope that more is heard from them.

Survivor - Caught In The Game

After struggling along in a relative obscurity for a couple of years, Survivor catapulted into the public eye last year with their

smash hit "Eye Of The Tiger", the theme song from the motion picture Rocky III. It was the number one single of 1983 on just about everyone's chart and earned the group a Grammy Award for Best Vocal Performance by a Rock Group.

"Eye Of The Tiger" was a dynamic song, but it was pretty well all that the album of the same name had going for it. By comparison, their latest LP, *Caught In The Game*, is a solid all-round album.

Caught In The Game is an album of mainstream rock which has the sound of Survivor at its best. Vibrant guitars, straight-ahead drumming, and dandy vocals mark such strong tracks as the album's first single "Caught In The Game", "Ready For The Real Thing", and "Half Life".

There are some sour notes, as "Jackie Don't Go", "It Doesn't Have To Be This Way", and "What Do You Really Think?" are downright boring pop rockers.

The Pat Metheny Group has risen to the forefront of modern jazz fusion during their career. They certainly maintain their tradition of excellence with their latest album *Travels*.

Recorded at concerts held during mid and late 1982, *Travels* is a live album with a difference. Many of the live albums which come out on the market are nothing but a glorified greatest hits album. However,

Travels is two-thirds original, providing a nice blend between the four previously-released songs and eight numbers. The songs are traditionally epic-length, explaining why a double LP format is used for a 12-song release.

There are no real surprises on this album. Metheny has established a reputation for writing and playing jazz fusion that is consistently mellow, even when it is upbeat. Take "The Fields, The Sky", for instance. A mellow undertone pervades this track even though it has its upbeat moments during its constant state of evolution from beginning to end. Likewise, two other compositions, the previously-released "Phase Dance" and the new song "Extradition", are vibrant but soothing.

Metheny on guitar and guitar synthesizer, Lyle Mays on piano, organ, synthesizers, autoharp, and the synthesizer, Steve Rodby on acoustic and electric bass and bass synthesizer and Dan Gottlieb on drums make up the Pat

Metheny Group. They are joined, as they were on *Offramp* and *As Falls Wichita*, So *Falls Wichita Falls*, by Nana Vasconcelos, whose vocals, percussion, and berimbau playing gives the album a special Brazilian flavor, particularly in "Goodbye" and "Straight On Red".

Arguably, the most enjoyable Metheny music is the downbeat type - plaintive, warm ballads. There are some beautiful instrumental moments in this category, most notably "Goin' Ahead", "Farmer's Trust" and "Travels". Throughout, Metheny plays purely and evocatively and Mays has a lovely piano break in "Farmer's Trust".

One of the album's most upbeat moments is "Song For Bilbao". Mays shows off his stuff as a jazz pianist in a salsa section reminiscent of Joe Jackson's fine *Night and Day* album from last summer.

The album "Are You Going With Me?", which introduces the listener to Metheny as a guitar vir-

tuoso, is one of four previously-released tracks on the album. The others are the relatively-upbeat "Phase Dance" and "San Lorenzo" and the marvellous "As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls". All four are performed well, and come off very similar to the studio versions.

Live albums are often not the audiophile's delight, to put it mildly, so that might be an initial concern to Metheny fans who enjoyed his musically rich, impeccably recorded efforts of the past. However, these fears are quickly dispelled upon a first listen. As well, the audience is enthusiastic but well behaved. Sure, a few spectators goof by applauding after a lull in "San Lorenzo", thinking that the song is over a good three minutes before its actual conclusion, but such over-zealousness is understandable with Metheny's lengthy songs.

Travels, in short, is a tasteful and delightful album - precisely what Pat Metheny fans would expect.

Ancient civilizations had technology

Twentieth century society is inclined to claim technology as its own innovation, but in fact ancient civilizations existing thousands of years ago developed sophisticated building techniques and labor-saving machines.

A. Trevor Hodge, an expert on such ancient technology, will present a narrated slide show on the subject at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

The general public is invited to attend his presentation at 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 31 in Tilley Hall, room 5.

In great demand as a speaker for professional engineering associations, Dr. Hodge's expertise encompasses ancient technology, the Roman aqueducts and construction methods. Many of his lectures have been televised and he is a frequent con-

tributor to CBC radio. An article of his on Roman aqueducts will appear in a spring issue of *Scientific American*.

Dr. Hodge, who holds a PhD from Cambridge University, is a professor of classics at Carleton University in Ottawa.

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