

# Springsteen - velvet-rimmed emotion

by Doug Wavrock

**Bruce Springsteen-Born to Run** [Columbia KC33795] With the release of his third album **Born to Run**, Bruce Springsteen has suddenly been proclaimed by music critics as the top musical find of the year to emerge from the depths of the underground music scene. It's almost as if his third album features something magical about it that **Greetings from Ashbury Park, N.J.** and **The Wild, The Innocent & The E Street Shuffle** failed to present. But, on listening to both of these albums in addition to **Born to Run** there is no real characteristic that makes it stand head and shoulders above the others. The same phrasing by Bruce are to be found on all three L.P.'s in addition to his complex word imagery. The subject areas are no different from other recording efforts as he continues to deal with an area he is familiar with (New York City and the surrounding area) relating the experiences of the people, the bus drivers, pimps and hustlers, fast cars and motorcycles and the girls who don't quite fit the image of the ones who live next door. In a slight departure from his earlier albums, Springsteen here tends to zero in on a more specific subject and leaves his musical dialogue of bus drivers, circuses and pie-in-the-sky super heroes for another time. He carries his poetry of reality further and tells us of the struggle a young person has in coping with such a rapid world that continues to revolve around him and of how he tries to relieve these pressures by travelling on the streets of the city in his sleek "velvet rimmed" machine.

**Born to Run**, not quite so full of imagery as **Ashbury Park, N.J.**, almost seems to be the story of a lost human being who has not yet learned the meaning of 'self' in a rather strange world surrounded by eleven million other people wondering about the same thing. But the subject of this album, the young teenager, finds that no matter what he does he still has to face up to the fact that he is not the visionary super hero that he pretends himself to be, rather he is an ordinary person who has deceived himself. In "Born to Run" Springsteen relates the high ways jammed with broken heroes/on a last chance power drive/everybody's out on the run tonight/But there's no place left to hide.

In "Backstreets", this subject is outlined as the person realizes that even love in a cold beach house or cruising on the backstreets in a souped-up car will never endure, only the impersonal city will. "Night", one of the more musically crafted cuts on the whole album, featuring the sax of Clarence Clemons and the honky-tonk r'n'r music bed combined with the fine voice of Springsteen give a great deal of emotion to a song dealing with escape from reality in the seat of a car. "Born to Run", taken from the album as a single release, deals with the car as a motorized animal, Sprung from cages out on Highway 9/chrome wheeled, fuel injected/and stepping out over the line. Here Springsteen describes the city saying, "Baby this town rips the bones from your back/It's a death trap, it's a suicide rap/...Cause tramps like us, baby we were born to run." "She's the one", featuring over-kill jazz and Springsteen's sometimes frantic and soaring vocals brings to us the feeling that the girl 'with her killer graces' and That smile on her lips...That it kills me is the one he was always looking for. The music is frantic as are

Springsteen's words to reveal the whole sense of consuming love that the person thinks he has. "Jungleland" perhaps the highlight of the whole album features a wide range of emotions expressed in music, words and their interpretation by Springsteen and it is this latter factor alone that gives the album and the music its entire meaning. The imagery, simile and symbolism here is confusing for one can easily tell half a dozen stories from the words which at first seem to be highly deceptive. Is it about frantic love that will not persevere, is it about a gangland fight, a car race on the streets, or is it about a group of musicians who are recording for a record company where kids flash guitars just like switch blades/hustling for the record machine/the hungry and the hunted/Explode into rock'n'roll bands/They face off against each other out in the street/Down in Jungleland. Or is he really telling us about all those things all at once?

**Born to Run**, more than any other album reveals to us something we never thought possible; an album of the highest possible musical calibre dealing with a topic most of us can identify with but are scared in many ways to admit to. There have been songs, poems and stories dealing with cars and their fine points but never have we been confronted with an album or story dealing with their present-day use as a means of escape from the world about us. Perhaps this is why **Born to Run** has pushed Bruce Springsteen out into the open as a gigantic talent that must be reckoned with. His forte is reality, a poet and rock balladeer of realism unequalled since the time of Bob Dylan who may have in some ways lost some of the protesting zeal he once possessed as a hungry and unknown balladeer of truth and goals that seemed to be beyond the grasp of ordinary mortal men. Bruce Springsteen with **Born to Run** shows himself as a master of not only poetic imagery but as a master of musical emotion as well.

**Black Sabbath-Sabotage** [Warner Bros, BS2822] With the snarl of guitars and their predominant bass guitar howling out its message (what message?), the Black Sabbath have just released their latest L.P. entitled **Sabotage**. In comparing the material of **Sabotage** with the music of their **Paranoid & Black Sabbath** albums (their first two albums) one can not but note the similarity of music between them. It appears that Black Sabbath have not progressed musically in the approximately six years that they have been recording. When "Symptom of the Universe" sounds like the title cut of **Paranoid**, it begins to awaken you to the fact that Black Sabbath have fooled a lot of the people a lot of the time contrary to the adage you may be familiar with. Black Sabbath have to be as far as rock music goes, one of the most uninteresting and mundane groups in existence today. But the members of Black Sabbath have one thing about them which amazes me; they are the richest musicians in England who possess a grade six education! Yes, it is true! Good grief they must be more intelligent as musicians then their teachers gave them credit for, how else can anyone be as intelligent as they are to pull the wool over so many people's ears and get them to buy their so-called music. **Sabotage** is another album in a fairly long list of albums to avoid; it'll only give you heart burn and a headache. I wouldn't want to see you become uncomfortable.

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