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by Mark Teehan

**BRUCE COCKBURN** - "Salt, Sun and Time" [True North]. Amidst the staggering mass of mainstream rock/pop LPs being released this time of the year with all the "heavies" about to unload their jewels at a time when slickness and flash count for too much, it's good to get into Bruce Cockburn's latest offering. As one of Canada's most-respected folk artists, Cockburn is the very antithesis of the conventional rock star and all the nonsense that goes with it. He refuses to compromise his values and music, and is not interested in amassing a quick-kill, huge fortune. Hand-in-hand with this is his healthy mistrust of the U.S. and refusal to do any hyped-up, big tours down there. The essence of Cockburn is his music-honest, direct and natural-and the humanistic sensibility he brings to it. Displaying a perceptive appreciation of the country and the value of its harmonious, uncluttered space, Cockburn has forged a unique musical style that knows no boundaries. Although his lyricism is very personal, being based on his own experiences, an abundance of imagery allows one to easily relate to his songs.

"Salt, Sun and Time" is Cockburn's 5th album, and with its sparse instrumentation would seem to represent a honing down, sort of a return to the basics after the peaking complexities of "Night Vision." But even with its simpler arrangements, "Salt" is still a warm, enriching experience that intensifies throughout its course. Cockburn's guitar work is as masterful as ever (on acoustic) and he is well-complemented by the more up-front pickin' of **Eugene Martynec**, who also chips with some touches of synthesizer. It's simply amazing what music they can create with only 2 guitars. Unlike Cockburn's earlier efforts, this album has a more marine atmosphere, with a number of seaside references reflecting his trip of last year to Europe. As on "All The Diamonds In The World" (very penetrating melody with a melancholic twist that stays with you): "Silver scales flash bright and fade/in reeds along the shore/Like a pearl in a sea of liquid jade/His ship comes shining."

The most jazz-influenced song is the instrumental "Rouler Sa Bosse," on which **Jack Zaza** plays some tasteful clarinet. "Seeds On Wind" is "Salt's" 7-min. counterpart to "Deja Vu" from the last LP; although not quite as gripping as its predecessor, "Seeds" is an engaging instrumental workout that uses alternate tempo-tonal contrasts to create dramatic tension. The halting "Never So Free" (as a seagull) dwells on Cockburn's continual search for freedom-from corruption and stagnation. On the floating "It Won't Be Long," Cockburn's vocal phrasing is especially good and the 2 guitars produce some pleasant rhythmic textures. Meanwhile, the words convey a sense of apocalyptic foreboding: "I'm going to the northland/where the weather keeps you real/till this devil's law is repealed/and I know it won't be long."

Although "Night Vision" remains Cockburn's most accomplished work to date, the raw-edged simplicity of "Salt" makes it a rewarding album to listen to. Bruce Cockburn will always be worth hearing. Pure Music.

**RENAISSANCE** - "Turn of the Cards" [Sire]. We journey over to England and haunted castles, tarot cards, and are treated to some extremely well-arranged classical-rock (for want of a better description) with soothing folk strains. Although this 5-person group

won't presently win any awards for instrumental virtuosity, their material is uniformly excellent. Exclusive use of acoustic guitars is a nice change of pace and gives them that British "String band" sound along with some orchestral inputs. Big plus is vocalist **Annie Haslam**, who has good range and comes close to sounding (surely unintentionally) like **Grace Slick** of **Jefferson Starship** fame (though Annie has a smoother tone and better-modulated delivery). Bulk of LP taken up by 4 long (roughly 9 mins. each) compositions with 2-3-min. shorties filling up the holes. Specific standouts include "Mother Russia" (panoramic drama of long length), "Running Hard" (Haslam singing over choppy beat, with guitars and keyboards climbing madly) and "I Think Of You" (mini rolling ballad with some nice harpsichoding). Actually, you can't go too far wrong here - no technocratic ELP monsterizing to surrender to.

**RASPBERRIES** - "Starting Over" [Capitol]. The American masters of mid-sixties pop-rock return with a changed/re-energized line-up and highly-polished derivative-concept elpee. Has been gettin' ecstatic reviews in rock press but on first hearing came across to these ears as sounding too contrived. Too mechanico-gimmicky. Repeated spins have diminished that impression to a low mumble (the brainwash effect) and me thinks we have it sussed out. You see, the original "Go All The Way" 3-Lp Berries were trapped by their AM-straight "we're dressed uniformly for '64" good-guy image. And well they might in these progressive (sic) days of jaded natural flash. The folks that bought their singles wouldn't go for their LPs, and Fm progs wouldn't be caught dead with a Berry under their arms. "Side 3" though was really quite solid as far as these pop-rock things go, spearheaded by the metallo-crunch of "Tonight." Well, to cut this gibberish short so we can take off with **Windhawk**, the group got a new rhythm section (OK) and on "Starting Over" they try and transcend stolen riffs/melodies/rhythms from masters like the **Who**, **Beach Bums**, **Beatles**. The results? Some surprising highs (I Don't Know What I Want" uses snatches of the Who's "Won't Get Fooled" and Eric Carmen sounds like A-line Cooper; "Cruisin Music" is bono-fido B.B. and "I Can Hardly Believe" is good somebody - P. Frampton?) and a fair number of average tracks. You pay for what you get.

**HAWKWIND** - "Hall of the Mountain Grill" [United Artists]. Fasten your seatbelts, our starship is headed for Alpha Centauri. And never comin back swissshoozzzrrllleee. Much more spacy-atmospheric electronic than usual flights, and minus some of the bottom muscle-churning stuff which fueled "Space Ritual" into oblivion. Suspect an attempt to clean up act-sounds spacy alright but lacks back-hole density of "live" (sic) recording. Except for "You'd better believe it (country-fied space rock) and "Paradox" which were recorded live at **Edmonton Sundown**. A touch of **Crimso** on "Wind of Change" (which proceeds to literally blow up atomic style on your turntable). Observers on earth have detected a number of re-cycled riffs near the Mtn. Grill-looks like "D-Rider" and "Goat Willow" from here. Highly recommended for **Floyd** fans who can't wait for the follow-up to "Moon" (gonna be awhile) and heavy metal freaks who can't get enough (of what?) and would rather ride than hide. Tip to the weak: "You can disappear in smoke [Like a Psychedelic Warlord], and that ain't no joke."