

RECORDS ON REVIEW

ROUGH TRADE--- WEAPONS

A sure thing. The most important Canadian album released this year, Rough Trade skyrockets to an artistic maturity with 'Weapons', combining jazz themes, funk and dance rhythms into a compelling blend. This album is absolutely superb.

With 'Weapons', Carole Pope and Kevan Staples finally show the stuff of which they're made. From the tantalizingly erotic album cover to the seductive synthesizer hooks, from Pope's smoldering lyrics to Staple's riveting intensity, they've done it.

XTC---MUMMER

XTC's new album Mummer comes on the heels of the tremendous success of 1982's English Settlement album, and the band's personal problems of 1983. It reveals the same wind-tunnel as last year's effort, leaving the listener weather-beaten but always refreshed. What can you say about a band that refuses to work within the confines of pop music? And how do you sell this same band to the general public if they will not tour?

It's very unlikely that a tour will accompany Mummer. XTC's last tour was cancelled after Andy Partridge, the band's driving force, collapsed after the opening show. Partridge's doctor could find no reason for his illness other than a psychosomatic reaction to touring.

Rough Trade's sat around Toronto long enough. After almost 15 years and 4 previous albums, they're ready to take the forefront of the music scene. And I hope they do. I don't understand why they've been ignored for so long. This is one band that deserves to be heard; possibly Canada's most important force in new music.

Weapons contains ten songs that range from dynamite dance numbers of jazz and mod tunes. Deca-Dance (a title which sums up life for Carole and Kevan), is an irresistible dance song with strong bassline and superb

vocals. Carole vamps it up (as she does at least once per album), in Soft-core, as she portrays a confused and troubled lover. Paisley Generation is a mod tune about the Velvet Underground days of acid, tie-dyeing and the like; and it features a sitar, played by well-known Toronto musician Don 'Ravi' Troiano. Also guesting are Lisa dal Bello and Nona Hendryx, the latter appearing in Territorial, which could be by Talking Heads. Very interesting! Ten outstanding cuts in all, including Weapons, the title track and so far the AM hit in Central Canada.

though, finding familiar rhythms and Partridge's workingman's vocal style prevalent in a majority of the tracks.

So, why call the LP Mummer? It turns out that mummies represent an old tradition of dumb show, performed in disguise, once a year, usually at Christmas. Partridge compares this to the making of an album.

XTC's quirkiness and epileptic rhythms have always stood in the way of an overwhelming commercial success for them, but I wouldn't change a thing. Colin Moulding and Andy Partridge are two of the most consistently interesting and innovative songwriters of the 80s. Their music has always been hook-laden and visionary. With all the shake-ups and middle-weight outside projects going on, this may not be their last effort. Here's hoping.

XTC has in no way stagnated over the course of their six albums. The music here is as fresh as the political filibustering Andy Partridge loves to challenge his listeners with. And it seems that's what the band enjoys: challenging the listener while providing them with the most for their entertainment dollar.

The album won't gather too many new fans into the fold. Fans of XTC should enjoy it thoroughly



HIGHLIGHTS

THURSDAYS

8pm THE HOMEGROWN SHOW: An hour of bluegrass

9pm HIP CITY: The 60s revisited with host Bob Ellis

FRIDAYS

6pm HAPPENINGS: A magazine of what's happening in entertainment on and off campus, including the popular game show Campus Quiz. Hosts Doug Varty and Joel Leger

7pm IMPORT HOUR: Music you may never have heard before, with John Westhaver

SATURDAYS

6pm FOCUS: The week in review. Compiled by the CHSR News Department.

8pm IN CONCERT: Live concerts of top bands recorded by the BBC

SUNDAYS

9am ENERJAZZ: What a way to wake up!

4:30pm CULTURES: Contemporary African music

6pm LES BLEUS DU DIMANCHE: 3 hours of French music

9pm JAZZ ON RECORD: A jazzy way to end your week

MONDAYS

10am LIVING SCIENCE: What's new and unusual in the world of science. With host Dr. Alan Sharpe

7pm UNB SRC Broadcast: Live for your enjoyment

9:30pm MONDAY NIGHT BLUES

TUESDAYS

2pm A TOUCH OF CLASS: The masters, with host Signe Gurholt

7pm FEEDBACK: CHSR's open line talk show

9pm NEWSTUFF: The week's new releases in review. Hosts John Hamilton and Tim White

WEDNESDAYS

8pm VINYL SPOTLIGHT: A new album played in entirety

9pm JAZZ CORNER OF THE WORLD: Contemporary jazz with your host Hutch

Digital Has Arrived

Once again, the ubiquitous computer has wrought a mini-revolution in some field of electronics, and this time in music production. Digitally-encoded audio is just beginning to emerge in North America and Europe, having been around in Japan for many months. Once and for all, the days of meticulous LP record care, cleaning, scratches, noise, and distortion are gone.

Audiophiles were the first to notice digital audio's miraculous performance: no hiss! No pops! No distortion! Technologically speaking, nothing so advanced has ever been offered to the home consumer.

What makes digital audio so superior to analog techniques of recording and playback? The difference lies in the method of storage. In analog recording processes, the actual waveform of the music is recorded. With digital, the music is first processed into a stream of numeric code, which is stored in binary form so familiar to computer science students. As a result, when the music is retrieved from the memory, you get music only...no noise.

The most popular form of digitally encoded music is the Compact Disc. Developed by Sony and Phillips. This is not a fad; these discs are here to

stay. WEA, Polygram, et al. are all now using this format. When a disc is inserted into the player, it's sucked up by the machine and the tracks nearest the hub are read for information such as length of disc playing time, beginnings of songs, and indexing points.

The costs of this new medium are its only disadvantage. CD's go for \$18 to \$20, while players average over \$1000. However, advances in manufacturing and production should lower these prices significantly in the next few years.

The availability of CDs is also a problem now. The production of such devices is what LP production was

in 1904. However, the same advances as evident in the players technology will raise that number, as will increased demand, which is inevitable. Many new albums are being mastered digitally also, like Peter Gabriel's 'Plays Live' and Saga's 'In Transit'. Many of the CD releases available now were recorded using analog technology but with the disc it is like listening to a copy of the master tape, a sonic experience few people can attest to.

In conclusion, digital audio is perhaps the highest discrete advancement of music reproduction since stereo.



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