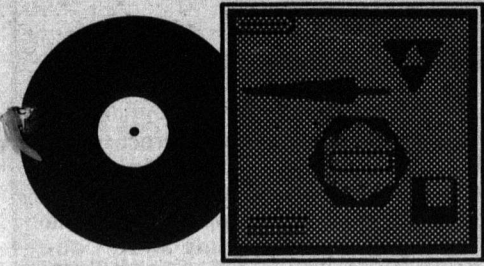


ROUNDAABOUT

by Nate LaRoi



Style Council
Introducing the Style Council
Polydor PEP 320

Led by ex-Jam singer/songwriter Paul Weller and including keyboardist Mick Talbot, Style Council is an important band almost by definition; the Jam's enormous U.K. popularity speaks for itself.

Introducing the Style Council, a seven-song mini-album collecting from three English singles and EP's, is Weller's first North American release since the Jam went their separate ways last December. It doesn't disappoint either, not only confirming Weller's remarkable flexibility but also making as clean a break from the Jam's legacy as could possibly be expected.

Leaving behind for the most part the guitar anthems, personal anger, and

political indignation (but note 'Money-Go-Round' 's jab at Thatcher capitalism) of *All Mod Cons* and *Setting Sons*, Style Council start afresh with a sound and approach all their own. Moving Weller's six-string from a lead to a supporting role and doubling up Talbot's Hammond organ with piano on the coolly romantic 'Paris Match' and with horns on the buoyantly innocent "Speak Like a Child", Style Council achieves a mellow subtlety only vaguely reminiscent of Beat Surrender's "Shopping".

And while antecedents to their initial single, "Speak Like a Child", could conceivably be found in the organ fills of 1981's "Town Called Malice" or the hop, skip, and jump of 1982's "Beat Surrender", nothing in Weller's previous work could anticipate Style Council's subsequent singles. The gently percolating "Long Hot Summer", with its synthetic bass and drums, is given a thoroughly contemporary club mix matched in trendiness only by the rap-inflected "Money-Go-Round" whose elephantine horns and funky bass riffs fit squarely into the proliferating dance/funk scene.

Style Council is still developing, however, and the jaunty keyboard instrumental "Mick's Up" and the cheerfully uplifting "Headstart for Happiness" demonstrate Weller's propensity to grow and expand.

Though by no means as intense or as significant as the Jam's best work, *Introducing the Style Council* is an impressively varied and surprisingly fresh sounding debut that can only augment Paul Weller's already highly respected standing.



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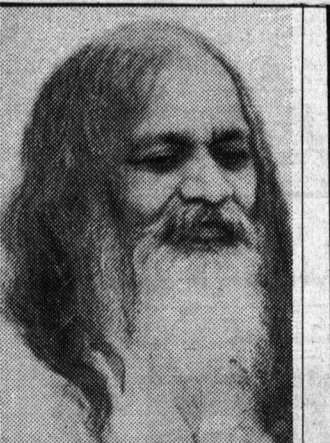
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