

## HOTHOUSE FLOWERS People (London Records)

Talk about give a dog a bad name. The first time your humble reviewer heard of this Irish quintet, *The Hothouse Flowers*, it was from news that these chaps were to be the choice of Eire for the risible Eurovision Song Contest. This veritable circus of bad taste and awful music held every year over the other side of the Atlantic and televised live to several hundred million homes. It is characterized by the fact that winning entries had song titles like "Dong dong dong" (Denmark) "Fee diddle dee" (Sweden) and "Yubba Yubba Yoo" (Spain). This was because with language obviously being a difficulty in crossing national barriers, songwriters usually resorted to incorporating silly noises and onomatopoeias to generate audience interest. I remember as a small child when the contest was extraordinarily popular voicing my opinions on other nations according to the people representing them on the Eurovision Song Contest. This was of course quite dangerous and it was a couple of years before my naivete collapsed and I realized that places like Luxembourg and Italy were not solely populated by huge-breasted women in frightening



gowns and horrible greasy men that leered and grinned an awful lot. The only good thing about the whole travesty was that Norway knew what was up and submitted the most awful composition in the hope of getting last place. They invariably succeeded.

Back to the matter at hand then, the *Hothouse Flowers* were the Irish entry in last year's competition. Given my traumatic televisual experiences as a nipper, it came as a completely unexpected surprise that 'people' is easily one of the best five albums of contemporary music released so far this year.

Of course, it's easy to pick out the inevitable influence of

Van Morrison but that doesn't detract from the fact that they do have a style all their own. Side one appears to be rather interested in chasing gospel music all about the shop. Nevertheless, it's bright, breezy and unrepentantly vibrant up to the close of the first side "If you Go", which is about the death of a close friend and a real tear jerker. The latter is actually my favourite of the lot. It appears to be the ballad that the *Waterboys* should have recorded a long time ago and is undoubtedly a fine song with a bleating sax solo throwing dabs of blue around like a splurb-gun.

One of the most endearing

## ANTHRAX State of Euphoria (Island Records)

Picture the scene. There you are amidst several thousand representatives of the great unwashed all shouting "Ann Franks! Ann Franks!" It is a British heavy metal festival and cornish pastries, chicken carcasses and plastic lager bottles full of the punter's urine (sic) fly through the air with gay abandon.

"Whoooargh! We are the muthas!" slurs a neanderthal before passing out and being swallowed by the seething masses of suspiciously male predominance.

One thing you notice immediately is the volume of the twin bass-drums the sheer force of which whallops us all back like the wind-swept corn in the next field. A series of low flying guitar solos induce the explosion of several million pimples and then a grinning hairy man rushes to the front of the stage and shouts "Narrr Narrr Yarr Nyarr Narr Yarr Yarr!" about fifteen times and very, very

aspects of the *Hothouse Flowers* is the sense of sincerity and honesty behind the impeccable musical arrangement. Put this together with flawless instrumental work (including use of the traditional Irish instruments such as

the bodhran) and what we have here is an exemplary piece of pop magnificence that manages to thrust shafts of brilliant light across any dusty livingroom. Recommended.

× STEVE GRIFFITHS

# CONNEXION

Gallery connexion is launching *SOUND CONNEXION*, a new series, every second Friday, which will feature different types of music and readings, organized with the help of Paul Lauzon and Margaret McLeod. As they do for their visual art exhibitions, they want to combine in this way a venue for local musicians, writers and performers and also bring in people from outside this area to Fredericton. They want to create an environment where established musicians can do their more experimental material, where young musicians can play for an audience and where we can access, through a network of similar artist-writers who are touring the Atlantic region.

The first Friday event will take place Friday Oct 28 and will feature *THE ROLAND BOURGEOIS QUARTETT*, a local jazz group; this will be followed on Nov 11 by Steven Peacock (guitar) and Angela Birdsell (voice); their work will

include both classical and contemporary music. In addition Roger Moore will be reading from his own works. November 25 is song writers night; it will feature Paul Lauzon, Geordie Haley and others. For December 9, *ORAN* will play gaelic and scottish folksongs and a local writer will be reading, yet to be announced. Additional events include: Beth Jancola, a poet and writer from Vancouver will read from her recent work on Wednesday Nov 9 at 8 p.m.

All events take place at 8 p.m. at Gallery Connexion: there is a \$3 admission charge and coffee and a snack will also be available.

These events were made possible through the financial assistance of The New Brunswick Cultural Development Branch and The Canada Council.

Gallery Connexion is located in the back of the Justice building on Queen and York Streets. For more information call 454-1433.



"Whoooargh mamat!" Anthrax's Belladonna provides insight on the current situation in the Straits of Hormus

fast. It is as if the bagful of thumb tacks and sulphuric acid he has so obviously been gargling with backstage has suddenly disagreed with him. "Ann Franks! Ann Franks!" The crowd chant, apparently oblivious to the fact that five young men are doing their darndest to have an aneurysm up on stage.

These then are *Anthrax*, part of the younger delegation of metal heads currently causing the misery of untold numbers of peace-loving parents. When one blunders into an album typical of the latter-day contemporary speed mutants, it's usually a bit of a yawn. Yeah, yeah: blood; death; and enticing SATAN up for a quick cuppa hot mystical babes either riding around on bikes, unicorns or the subject's groin (yawn). We used to have a lot of fun getting real angry about all this violent sexist racist bullshit, but nowadays it just isn't worth the bother. I mean you don't go up and lecture to little kids about the heinous concept of playing 'war' do you? Here is a similar situation.

*Anthrax* however seems to be a little different. A quick scan of the lyrics on the sleeve reveals not one reference to wizards, nuclear destruction, torture or big tits. Amazing eh readers? Instead, we have a lot of old half-baked social commentary on the likes of religion, dealing with everyday drudgery and being unfriendly(?) There is actually a dodgy bit about slagging off women, but closer inspection suggests it's just a lot of little boys sulking over being jilted by a girlfriend that realized she was going out with an ape (try Dian Fossey lads!)

I like my metal real super bastard fast to tell you the truth and quite often the crap lyrics don't mean a toss because I'm really only concerned about banging my head on the floor to the glorious incessant noise. Unfortunately there is a lot of sluggish tripe on this album, but if you do what I do, namely tape all the good bits end to end, it's possible to produce an excellent package of the required stuff. Get dubbing.

STEVE GRIFFITHS