

# This year's Christmas pop music selections

By EVAN LEIBOVITCH

In past years, rock had been getting a little lethargic, with no really imaginative ideas by established groups, nor any new groups worth talking too much about. This year has marked a turnaround in all of those trends, which hopefully will continue in the coming years. Accordingly, there are a very large number of folkish, top 40, and progressive rock and jazz records to choose from this Christmas time.

The newest of these is Wings Over America, released only last Monday. A three record set, the album is comprised of music from Paul McCartney's band as it toured North America. It could also be considered a sort of greatest hits album, because the recording is good enough to rate as a substitute for McCartney's studio stuff.

An interesting concept used in a double album was to use Beatle songs recorded by other artists in a documentary of World War II. Although the movie has not yet been released, the soundtrack is now on the stands. Featuring the Bee Gees, Rod Stewart, and the lead singers from Genesis, ELO and Roxy Music, All This and World War II, as it is called, does some excellent variations on the originals.

The other multi album set is the long awaited Songs in the Key of Life album by Stevie Wonder. Including two albums and a 45, Songs includes more than a few hit-worthy songs.



On the acoustic side, there is the new anthology of Leo Kottke. Though he's never had any hits, so to speak, his mastery of the 12-string is best brought out on this collection of what Kottke himself considered to be his best material. As well, the pair of Henri Auset and Jim Douchesneau have gotten together, called themselves Bonfield-Dickson, and created an vibrant, exciting album called Portage, on the fairly obscure Ahmek label.

Slightly more serious are the storytellers, and there are new albums by Bim, Joni Mitchell, and Phoebe Snow.

In the field of progressive stuff, there is a huge number of albums, some of them competent. If you're not interested in simply the newest releases, you can go for the Steve Miller, Steely Dan, Alan Parsons, or countless other albums this year.

The Bee Gees have continued their popularity with a new album, Children of the World, which though quite diverse, has a

specific direction: The upbeat, discoish style of music that characterised their previous attempt, Main Course.

A numbers of artists have been able to change their style recently, the most notable being George Harrison. On Thirty Three and a Third, he successfully gets his stuff together, and creates an album that's probably his most consistent post-Beatles material yet.

There are a few albums in the lot that are quite difficult to pin labels on. Another soundtrack, A Star is Born, with Barbara Streisand and Kris Kristofferson, has fairly raunchy cover pix, but the music inside is normal Paul Williams bland stuff.

From the other side of the ocean, is a group called oddly enough, the Wurzles. Their album called The Combine Harvester is an irreverent little gem, if you don't mind the sound of accordions and sousaphones.

The raunch rockers, the synthesizer freaks, and the disco scene, with a few exceptions, have gone nowhere this year, and most of this year's works can be safely avoided, with a few exceptions.

One exception is an imaginative new Canadian rock group called Offenbach, which by the looks of its first album, is a potential superstar.

A new trend in some of the new releases is a towards complex, almost orchestrated music coming out of some new albums. The most melodic I've heard this year has been the one from Bill Evans, called Symbiosis. Another popular one is Go, by Steve Winwood, Stomu Yamashta, and Michael Shrieve. Two Canadian entries in this field are Harmonium, a Quebecois group whose work is extremely serene and peaceful, and Symphonic Slam, whose lead guitarist uses some sort of super cool multitechnical whizbang new synthesizer-guitar to create all sorts of musical styles.

Jazz has probably been most marked this year by the fortunate (and lucky) emergence of George Benson to the success his record Breezin turned out to be. Though it's caused some to wonder how commercial his material is getting, it's still very high quality.

New jazz albums have recently

been released by Chuck Mangione, who abandons his usual group on Main Squeeze to delve into more guitar-percussion oriented stuff: by Gato Barbieri, whose Caliente! is as hot and fiery as the cover implies: Hubert Laws, who has enjoyed moderate success with his lively album titled Romeo and Juliet, and Gene Harris, whose In a Special Way is one of the best piano albums this year.

After going through a list like this one, I won't dare try specific. It's good to notice such a variety of good music and that for the first time in a while, there has been some improvement in some realms of popular sounds.



DEC. 6-11

**DION**

DEC. 13-15

**RICHIE HAVENS**

DEC. 16-18

**TRACY NELSON AND MOTHER EARTH**

DEC. 20-24

**Ray Materick**

DEC. 27-JAN. 1

**THE GOOD BROTHERS**

JAN. 3-5

**FRED NEIL**

FOR INFORMATION ON SHOW TIMES AND PRICES PHONE 961-2558

NO ONE ADMITTED UNDER 18 DOUBLE PROOF OR AGE OF MAJORITY CARD

464 SPADINA AVE. CORNER OF COLLEGE

## A Salad Days story

By JENNY JOHNSON

The York Theatre Journal's November issue presents a casebook on 'Salad Days' a British musical that was put on by the fourth year students of York's theatre department last week.

Through a series of articles and interviews with people who were directly involved in the designing of sets, costumes and lighting, the Casebook conveys some sense of the excitement as well as the frustration that must have accompanied the formation of such a production. 'It is very difficult for all three designers to collaborate at the same time,' says set designer Sue Hodson.

The need for the coordination of all aspects of production from costuming to choreography in order to create a final polished and unified presentation is something that the average theatre goer may overlook (provided it is done well). Thus the journal should be of special interest to the theatre goer who would like a clear if not simplistic behind the scenes glimpse at the more technical facets of the theatre.

For the reader interested in the less down to earth aspects of the theatre, the 'Carte Blanche' section at the back of the journal features two articles. The first of these entitled 'Musical Theatre: Knowing Through Feeling' by Sky Gilbert outlines two opposing schools of thought on the extent to which emotional expression should play a part in the singing of a musical production.

The second is an extract from an interview with fourth year student Frank Wolfe on the role and importance of good public relations within the theatre. Wolfe is currently working in the publicity department of the Stratford theatre.

The York Theatre Journal is a tri-annual publication put out by the York Theatre Department in order to document and analyse the various department productions put on throughout the year.

Similar studies to this one will

be composed on the department's next productions of 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Separate Tables'.

Anyone wishing to contribute may submit their articles to Rm. 204, Administrative Studies.



**YORK UNIVERSITY FLYING CLUB  
BECOME A PILOT**

New courses start in January which lead to the Private Pilots License.

Come to our Christmas meeting and social, **Saturday, Dec. 11, at 7:30 PM** in Winter's and Vanier Masters dining rooms, and find out how inexpensive and enjoyable it is to learn to fly.

Members and guest - N/C  
All others - \$1.00 (Buffet Included)  
Cash Bar

For more information call **667-2584** or visit our office in 027 Winters.

and now  
for  
some good news

By an unbelievable stroke of luck (wanna bet?) the long-awaited inexpensive version of the world's most successful Headphone has been delivered to the TAT HI-FI Centres, just in time for Christmas. (Ho Ho Ho)

Despite the apparently "convenient" timing, we are indeed pleased to finally announce the arrival of the **New Sennheiser HD-400's**. Ever since their introduction a few months ago, the demand for this incredible "open-aire" headphone has far onstripped the supply.

These headphones boast wide frequency response with special attention to natural bass. Unusual smoothness. Superior transient ability.

Extremely light-weight, rugged construction. Unbelievable comfort. And at \$35.00 they warrant a very close examination by anyone considering a headphone purchase. (Especially by anyone familiar with the old-style, bulky, air-tight seal variety).



Come in and wear a pair  
...you'll like them...



**SENNHEISER**

Makers of the World's Most Successful Headphones

We carry the complete line of Sennheiser Headphones and Microphones - for home and professional use.

GUARANTEED  
**TAT**  
Hi Fi Centres

6174 Yonge Street  
Willowdale, Ontario  
223-9551 - 225-6292

10, 176 Yonge Street  
Richmond Hill, Ontario  
884-4439