



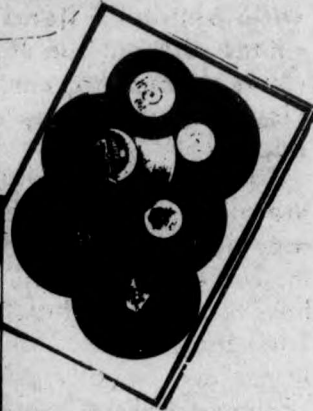
CATCH YOUR BREATH!

SLUG ME ONE BY TUESDAY 5 P.M.

ENTERTAINMENT



PLASTIC PASSIONS



RUSH

Hold your fire (Phonogram)

VARIOUS ARTISTS A Very Special Christmas (A&M Records)

Just what you always wanted - right kids? All your favourite popstars singing their hearts out in the name of Christmas. Ugh. But wait a minute here - what's this? Oh, I see, it's one of those post band-aid era compilations. This time its in support of the Special Olympics Fund and of course there is no way in the world that I'm going to trash a piece of vinyl that is completely charitable right down to production costs.

Anyway, take it away Eunice ...

... "Throughout the world there are 300 million people with mental retardation. Many of them still are shut away, denied the chance to know the joy and sense of achievement that come from the mastery of skills most of us take for granted. To bring the skill, courage, sharing and joy of Special Olympics to all the millions who still stand on the side-lines we need everyone's help. The stars of this album join me asking you to become part of this great world movement for love and justice."

Actually as a piece of jolly seasonal nonsense that attempts to tug at the hearts of even the most hard-hearted shithead it isn't all that bad. Most of the current big bastions of Top 40 popdom turn up to rehash their chosen Chrimbo faves. There's Annie Lennox crooning *Winter Wonderland*, the Pretenders giving forth a lovely little version of *Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas*, and Sting donates a particularly atmospheric version of *Gabriel's Message* that would melt even Scrooge's humbugs. Still on the mellower side your Mum

and Dad will love Alf's *Coventry Carol* and the lithe strains of Stevie Nicks' *Silent Night*.

On the more upbeat side of town we even have Run DMC rappin' up a storm with cut and scratch mixes of various carols doused with their own particular brand *Rhyiming Braggadocio*. Goodness gracious, even the ludicrous Bon Jovi throw in a live version of *Backdoor Santa* further providing evidence of a rather suspect anally fixated outlook on the whole affair. Look! There's U2 (*Christmas: Baby Please Come Home*), our own Bryan Adams (*Run Rudolph Run*), even Bob Seger (*The Lit-*

tle Drummer Boy) and Broooooce (*Merry Christmas Baby*).

It's further padded out by reformed drugs and sex fiend Whitney Houston (*Do You Hear What I Hear?*) and my favourite, squeaky little cutie Madonna with a cheeky version of *Santa Baby!*.

Alright, it is a reasonably cool record - certainly a light year removed from this year's generic watered-down rubbish that has as much soul as packaged egg-nog in a fake fireplace. We like it. Buy it!!!
BOBEAUX YAYZEUSE

We've all got to face up to the fact that, once a band has become successful, trying to get rid of them is like trying to cure terminal cancer. And so a new Rush LP was always inevitable and the chance of them contributing anything remotely interesting to the musical fabric of our society exceedingly slim.

Rush were always the most irredeemingly pompous of the 70's dinosaur acts. The music straying into the sub-HM Foreigner zone bogged down beneath a quagmire of guitar and keyboard solos, Neil Peart's lyrics pretentious to the point of being utterly ludicrous. One of his songs dwelled on the significance of a conversation between two trees. Elsewhere he cribbed, wholesale, the work of Romantic poets.

Locked in a timewarp along with the music, he is still bent

on devising an LP based on a concept. "Having enjoyed writing around the central theme of 'Power' last time, I decided to try something like that again, this time working with the theme of 'Time'," he declares on the press release. Try this: "Freeze this moment a little bit long/Make each sensation a little bit stronger."

Profound, eh kids? It's merely lightweight rumination of the Sting variety. This sort inspired by the hardship of recording an LP in Canada, Montserrat, and the Oxford Manor studios.

At least it keeps them off the streets.

DAVID GILES

MIKE OLDFIELD Islands (Virgin)

Mike Oldfield is back after a long break from his 1984 release of "Pictures In The Dark", where he faired okay in the North American market and took the European music industry by storm.

The first side of the album "Islands" is not that different from his 1973 release "Tubular Bells" in which he first tried to enter the "New Age" market of music. In fact it is a cross between "Tubular Bells" and "Pictures In The Dark" because the style is from his last release but it is impressionistic and falls close the "New Age".

The second side is very much like "Pictures In The Dark" with his powerful voice dominating over the songs. All the musicians on the album are good especially the keyboardist who played his synthesizer with a high degree of skill.

Overall the album is pretty good but for most people I'm sure it will not be their "cup of tea." Therefore if you have never heard him before try to find a copy of Islands and give it a listen; each person is their own best critic.

STEPHEN SEABROOK

RON and NANCY

TWO YOUNG PUNKS LIVING FOR KICKS!

THEY DROPPED THE BIG H

Things'll improve when we get to America...

We just nuked America, Ron.

LOVE KILLING REDS