

# Dire Straits, Thomas Dolby: EP's back in vogue

by Peter Rockwell

Believe it or not the latest record ideas aren't newly-created, they evolve. Now the EP or extended play is the craze again. The EP is the halfway point between just buying a single song and purchasing an entire LP. As the EPs matured they began to take on a life of their own. What was once a new idea to sell one song has grown into short records with no connection to any other album.

Dire Straits' *Twisting By the Pool* EP has made a big mark across the country, and seems to be the most popular effort of its type to date. If you're used to the usual Dire Straits sound, cover your ears when you hear 'Twisting'.

Mark Knopfler, guitarist and guiding hand behind the band, has put together four songs that try everything the Straits aren't known for. All cuts are 180 degree turns from the fifteen minute Telegraph

Road from their last Album 'Love Over Gold'.

The title track is the real gem from this EP, as it recreates the danceable rock sounds of the fifties. Ex-Rockpiller Terry Williams is a major highlight on drums, but Knopfler's voice breathes new life into the Straits' format.

Both that cut and 'Two Young Lovers' are old rock-oriented but have a clear summer sound. That's unusual for a February release when most of us are turning up the furnace rather than twisting by the pool.

Rounding out the EP, 'Badges, Posters, Stickers and T-Shirts' is a fine vehicle for Knopfler's jazz guitar which dominates between the chant Beatnik lyrics. It pokes fun at the music star wags tippers and groupies, and gets your fingers snapping with its air of the old sixties Jazz clubs.

The last number, 'If I Had You', is a great poetic love number which has more of the band's original sound. Though backed up by excellent guitar work reminiscent of 'Lady Writer', Knopfler again carries this song with his earthy Bob Dylan-type voice that made Dire Straits so extremely popular.

*Twisting By the Pool* was recorded for the pure fun of it, and its dance sound begs for radio airplay.

Another newly released EP is Thomas Dolby's *Blinded by Science*. Dolby had a critical hit with his debut album 'The Golden Age of Wireless' last year, but it never really caught on in record sales. Along with Duan Duan, he was billed as part of the new British invasion, and it appears both groups have just now broken into the limelight.

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# Funk Out With Prince Till 1999

by Michael Brennan

Sex and a Dirty Mind! Making Up and Making Out! Funking In and Funking Down! Hey, Watch Out! This is about sex and funk and happiness and dance and joy and — yes, Prince! That slick, outrageous young Puerto Rican singer/musician who looks like the most beautiful male stripper there ever was, and he loves to flaunt it.

Prince has recently released another great album entitled *1999* (this time a double) filled with loads of funk, great melodies and hooks, and more new directions to soul and of course Prince's warm charm and soothing sweetness.

Prince casts no doubts about his sexuality and he's smart; he loves sex and energy and the wonderful hipness of the black ghetto streets. He makes it all come to life in the sensuous, primal black rhythms of his funk. Prince's music is like gospel — spiritual, sexual and invigorating — except it's modern funk

with lots more electronics and heavy bass and there's always Prince's healthy, punky ambisexuality that's never arty or mere pose. He really is like a stripper who feels no guilt and pays no heed to anybody else's repressive moral or decency ideals. He's a slick urban rudeboy with a lot of audacity and a wonderful sexuality. He's a sex symbol and he loves it.

To fill a double LP with a continuous flow of fresh, danceable funk and seductive rhythms and keep it alive is no easy task and Prince has succeeded for the most part. There are a few numbers I could do without. Some of the music and "getting it on" seductions go on too long without anything new to offer. But I only make this complaint in comparison to his *Dirty Mind* LP which never let up with such great numbers like "Uptown", "Head", "Sister" and "Party Up." It was almost flawless — so right, so musical and so

incessantly moving.

*1999* is a gem too, and again all the music is written, arranged and performed by Prince with occasional background vocals from friends. He's such an amazingly talented musician and so young (I think he's only 21 or so). To think that he's making such uncompromising and brave new soul music at such an age and playing all those instruments (drums, bass, keyboards, guitars) is amazing.

Record one is the best of the two discs and all five tracks are great, equal to and probably funkier than most of *Dirty Mind*. "1999" starts it off; it's a basic funk pattern about fucking the war and bombs and just partying until 1999. It comes off perfectly, the rhythm churning you out, especially as it closes.

Prince's music has great commercial appeal but not manipulatively so. He injects his funk with catchy and cheesy new wave keyboard fills and some fast, heavy

rock riffs and still it remains, without any question, deep black street music — vital, passionate and funky. His use of synthesizers and guitars is unique and gripping. It'll swing anyone out. Above all, it's his voice that does it; high, falsetto-like and soft, it couldn't be more seductively sensuous, compassionate or loose. The sexuality of his voice is never forced or overburdening but wonderfully outrageous and free. At times he even screeches out with a raw, guttural soul urge. Prince's music is pure like all great black music, and fun. He tells it best; it'll "loosen U up" and "show U how to scream."

Another favourite song is *D.M.S.R.* ("Dance, Music, Sex, Romance"). With it's heavy funk and joyous, "let your pants down" carefreeness, it's like a powerful gospel church shout:

Shake it like U just don't care

Never mind your friends, girl it ain't no sin

To strip right down to your underwear . . .

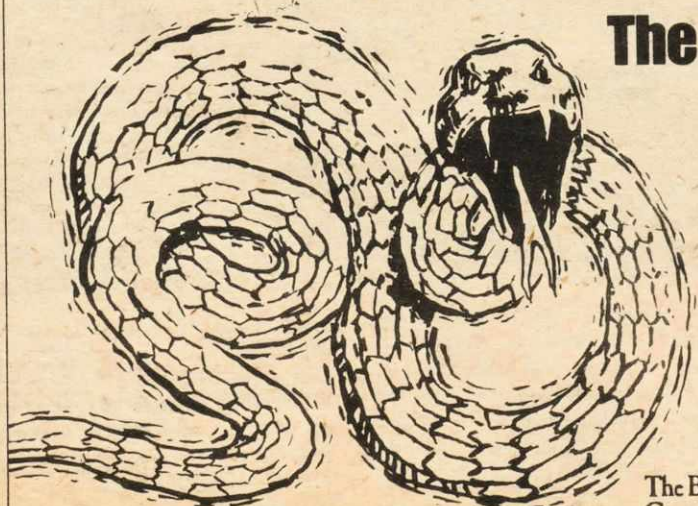
We only want to have some fun  
Do whatever we want  
Wear lingerie to a restaurant.

I also love "Lady Cab Driver", a melodic funk line that runs like a neurotic confession, and "All the Critics Love U in New York", a fun number with a great electro-funk beat.

"You can do anything you want to in New York," Prince whispers as sleazily and as dirty as he can.

Side three is the weakest side of the four and nothing on it really catches me. But that's hardly a great flaw with all the guts, suave and lively sexual abandon of most of these street songs. Chic, slick and loose, this young Prince is a requirement. As he says: "Girl, I'm not saying this to be nasty, but I sincerely wanna FUCK YOU."

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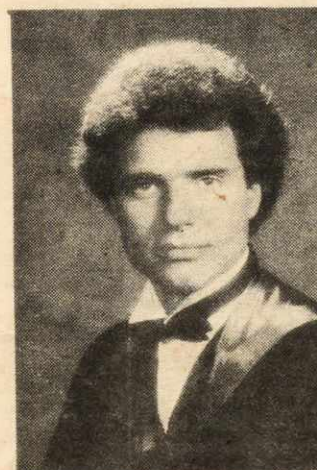
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