

He's just an average John

by David Kuswanto

Once there was John Cougar. Then there was John Cougar Mellencamp. Now, of course, it's just plain ol' John Mellencamp. At least, that's the name on the current album, *Whenever We Wanted*.

A turnaround from the fiddles and accordions that made *Big Daddy* and the *Lonesome Jubilee* so distinct and colourful, Mellencamp has returned to the basic rock and roll sounds of his earlier recordings.

Although there are a few unusually bright spots (such as the trumpet that sounds like a guitar on "Love and Happiness"), most of the songs are fairly typical. That isn't to say *Whenever We Wanted* is without redeeming qualities; the bulk of the album, as represented by the first single "Get A Leg Up," is actually quite good. But for an artist who has made some of the best music in recent years, one expects more.

Mellencamp may have his reasons. Maybe he's tired of being a pop singer and would prefer to concentrate on his paintings and films. Maybe he's going through a midlife crisis



music

John Mellencamp
Whenever We Wanted
Mercury/Polygram

and finds comfort hiding behind the tough archetypal American fool/rebel persona. Or maybe he thinks this is the best he can do. For whatever reason, *Whenever We Wanted* comes off more like a cop-out and less like a natural musical progression.

Having said this, it's important to understand that Mellencamp has not coughed out a bad record. He's done something far worse. Mellencamp has released a product that is considerably below his potential; one that stands pale in comparison to what could have been.

Better luck next time, John.

Years later, disco still sucks

by Sally Teodoro

music

various artists
Disco Classics
BMG Music

When I was handed this tape, I thought "Hey, this won't be too bad." I was wrong.

Some of the songs on *Disco Classics* bring back memories, both good and bad. While listening to it on my way home, I found myself actually singing along with some of the songs.

Songs like "Turn the Beat Around," (which by the way, is an excellent remix), "Don't Leave Me This Way" and "Disco Inferno" are classics that would have even the toughest critics reliving a part of their life.

The rest of the tape is basically full of noise — horrible, irritating noise. Groups like K.C. and the Sunshine Band and (you guessed it) the Village People made me cringe. I mean, I thought the people at BMG Music

Canada would have burned these records by now, but I guess they escaped the bonfire.

Why not the Bay City Rollers? I mean, if you're going to torture us with the Village People, you might as well do irrevocable mental damage by listing one of BCR's songs as "Classics." Maybe *Disco Classics 2*, huh?

If you do get this tape — a big, big if — do yourself a favour and listen to the three songs I mentioned. Don't bother with the other "classics." If you want nostalgia, go for a walk down Queen Street or open your photo album, but don't encourage BMG any further by purchasing this tape.

Midge Ure's latest is Pure

by Leif Lahtinen

music

Midge Ure
Pure
BMG Music

Midge Ure's latest album *Pure* is just that: pure in its presentation. Anyone's interpretation of it will also be pure. Whether you like that is another question.

Some may know Midge Ure from Ultravox. This is not an Ultravox album, although some threads from the band remain.

This album (actually cassette) explores love, hope and faith through clean, innocent lyrics, as on the tracks "Pure Love," "Sweet 'n' Sensitive Thing" and "Light in Your Eyes."

This is presented in a neat musical package, something a pop fan should enjoy. There are no strange structures. This album has easily distinguishable and tidy verses and choruses.

Midge Ure's use of keyboards on *Pure* is typical pop; they flood the songs. There are guitars, but they are

neither too loud nor too raunchy. These are complimented by Midge Ure's smooth voice, although, it does sometimes get lost in the mix.

One particularly interesting ditty is "Tumbling Down." Different from the rest, it is a waltz in 3/4. Can you believe it! It has synth-created accordion sounds and the whole bit. It's my favourite track off *Pure*, perhaps because it is different.

The unfortunate thing with this otherwise good album is its lack of varying arrangements. So many of the songs are instrumentally indistinguishable from one another.

Nevertheless, *Pure* will satisfy many who enjoy pure pop music.

