

JUJU!

KING SUNNY ADE & HIS
AFRICAN BEATS
Synchro System
(Island/WEA)

Rock-and-roll has always owed a lot to Africa. Funk, soul, and the blues would be unthinkable without their African origins. In the past few years, people like Peter Gabriel, Brian Eno, and David Byrne (of Talking Heads) have exposed a considerable interest in African rhythms. (Albums like Byrne's *Catherine Wheel* and the double-album *Music & Rhythm* compilation document the trend well.) With the release of *Synchro System* on a major label, we finally get a chance to hear something from the other side of the fence, and, not surprisingly, it seems that Africa has been as much influenced by the West as vice versa.

"King" Sunny Adé is familiar to Toronto audiences from appearances at the Concert Hall and, more recently, the Police Picnic. Adé is a Nigerian tribal prince, and his band of 18-plus musicians play a form of modern Nigerian dance music

("Juju music") that draws on

What this all boils down to is that Adé is a very wealthy man and his music is a wealthy, westernized African dance music—entrancing and seductive, propelled by dense and sultry multi-layered rhythms, supplemented by call-and-response singing, rhythmically terse electric guitars, the occasional slinky and ethereal slide guitar and some rather discreet keyboard and synthesizer effects.

The playing is flawless, production is slick, and, most of all, it's real danceable stuff. At times, though, it seems like something's missing, as if the combination doesn't quite ignite. The resemblance to bands like Talking Heads is most obvious on "Maajo", "E Saiye Re," "Penkele," and the title cut, while "Mo Ti Mo" has a somewhat Caribbean feel.

Although *Synchro System* is enjoyable, it is a less exciting album than its predecessor, *Juju Music* (which isn't available domestically) and not nearly as satisfying as seeing Adé and company in concert.

Adrian Iwachiw

Staff meeting today, Thursday, September 8 at 3:00. Bring your creativity to Central Square room 111. We're just around the corner from Dawn's Typing Service and the CYSF office.

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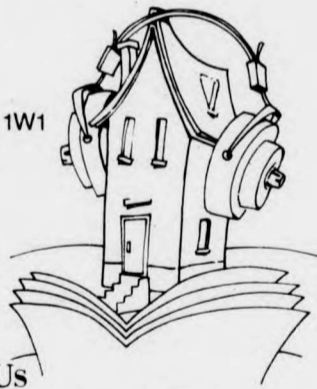
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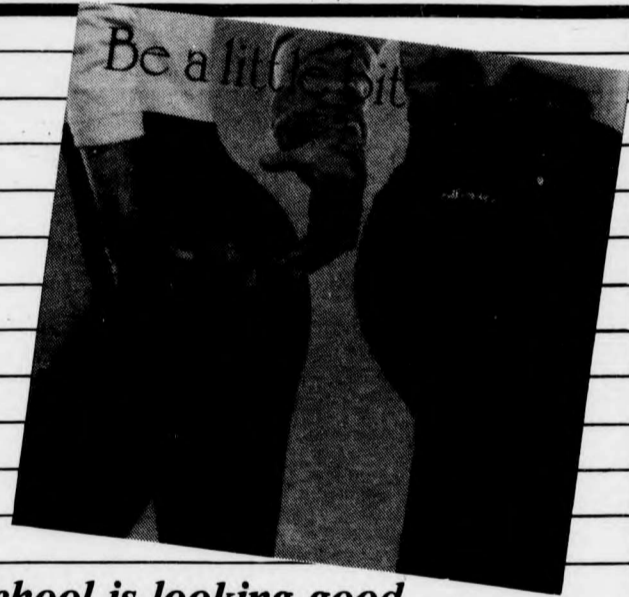
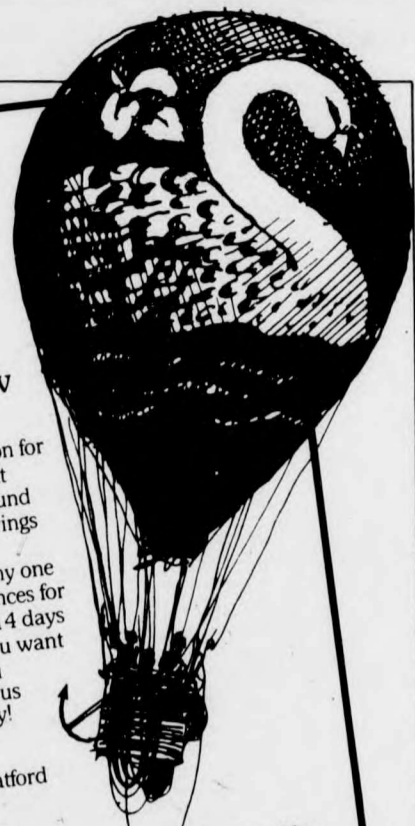
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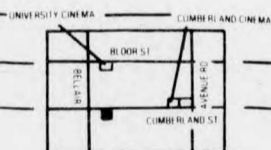
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