

Pop peters out with Paul McCartney

Flowers and Fever:

by David Deaton

Who says Pop has petered out? The latest releases by rock greats Paul McCartney and Tom Petty turn out to be candy for the ear...

Paul McCartney — *Flowers in the Dirt*

At first listen there appears to be more dirt than flowers. But oh, how this album grows on you!

McCartney triumphs on *Flowers in the Dirt*. It's his liveliest, arguably his best, album since he became an ex-Beatle.

You don't have to look too far for the reason. Four of the tracks were written with Elvis Costello

(still angry after all these years), who's managed to work some of the same magic as, yes, John Lennon. The lyrics are pungent and pun-ridden, the music downright punchy.

McCartney reveals that he's still happy after all these years and still in love with his wife, who still can't sing very well.

Here are the complete words to one song, too weird to be described:

*Ou est le soleil?
Dans la tete.
Travaillez.*

McCartney gets five minutes out of that, and a most entertaining five they are. Maybe it'll be a hit in Quebec.



PAUL McCARTNEY
FLOWERS IN THE DIRT

In another song, McCartney is to be drugged as to ask:

*Is it better to love one
another*

*Than to go for a walk in the
dark?
Is it better to love than to
give in to hate?*

If only more minds in high places went to pot.

Flowers in the Dirt does not come off an unmitigated success. A couple of the numbers positively stiff.

McCartney is many things, but profound is not one of them. When you hear him singing about a martyred rain forest advocate, you want to crawl under a couch.

But balancing this gobble is the pristine gem "Put It There." It's as perfect and peerless a song as "Yesterday," which it graciously takes after.

People who hate love songs "on principle" will still hate Paul McCartney's latest. Ol' Poodle Eyes remains incorrigibly sappy, insufferably happy.

Costello's contribution adds some fibre to the mush, but mush it still will seem to those who insist that life is but a drag.

Yet even they will have to acknowledge McCartney as the master of merry melody. If he's still not achingly profound, well, neither was Mozart. It's hard to be deep when you're having a good time.

And a good time is what this album delivers.

... and Tom Petty

the return of the (less than) greats

Tom Petty — *Full Moon Fever*

Tom Petty has never had much to say and this album is no exception.

Most of his songs have been either gritty assertions of independence or catalogues of wimmin troubles. But Petty's dextrous playing and sincere, reedy singing save him from the clutches of clichedom.

In albums past, Petty styled himself a Southern rebel, a Dixie daredevil. His recent collaboration with the Travelling Wilburys has obviously mellowed him. Now he concedes that this love business can mess up women too.

That ain't all. You could play this album for your grandmother. Petty edges toward folk-rock on the ironically named *Full Moon Fever*. There's more yapping than barking here.

Petty's cover of the Byrds' zinger "Feel A Whole Lot Better" has less bite than the original. You wonder why he bothered.

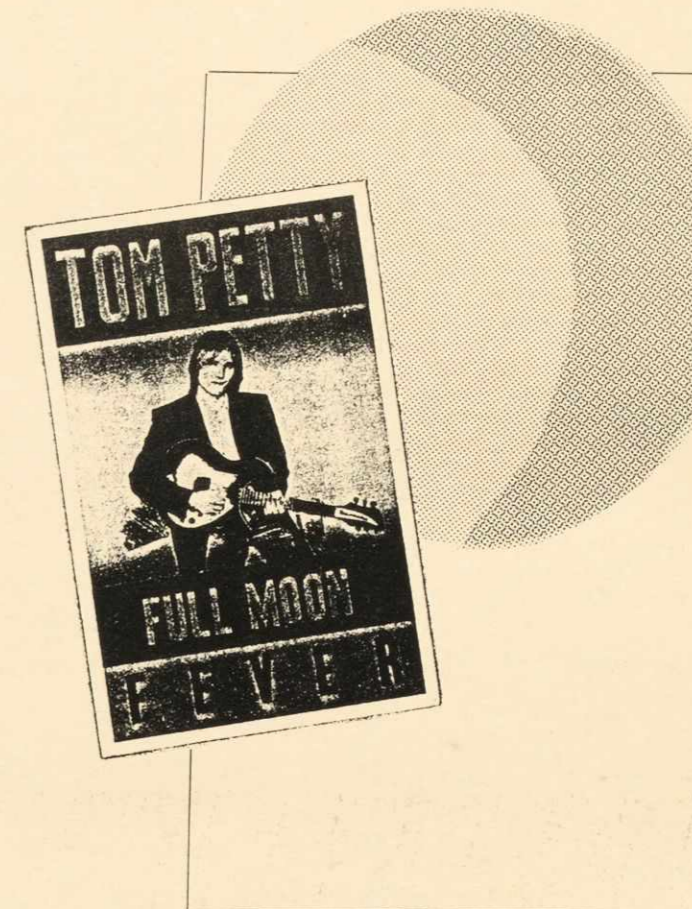
Answer: *Full Moon Fever* is Petty's first 'solo' album (read venal grab for the top forty). Instead of his mainstay group, the Heartbreakers, he works with fellow-Wilbury, Jeff Lynn, formerly of ELO. Even without the strings, a few miasmal traces waft over this album.

Lynn, as slick as he is crass, tones down Petty's vitriolic vitality. Instead we get gyp-rock.

The album's big single "Running Down a Dream" resorts to the most hacknied rock riff to get going. Then it drifts out into watered down Springsteen or Bob Seger.

See, Tom's flyin' down the highway, radio blatin' (how 'bout yours?) an' he's "workin' on a mystery" instead of a night-movie. I understand the video for this single is a children's cartoon, which makes perfect sense.

Happily, Petty also tosses off his share of songs that are short and sweet. It's hard to resist the effervescent charm of the seven



songs on side two. On "Yer So Bad" he chortles:

*My sister got lucky,
Married a yuppie.
Took him for all he was
worth.*

But apart from the death tarts cheerfully addressed in "Zombie Zoo" (what a title), this album will make no enemies.

But how many life-long admirers will it win? Those hoping for a classic cut such as "The Waiting" will be sadly disappointed.

Full Moon Fever is a nice album, not a great album, and will doubtless get more airplay than all of Petty's previous albums combined.

That's too bad if it makes you pass up *Pack Up the Plantation*, a double, live, greatest hits album Petty recorded in 1985. Rock 'n Roll doesn't get any better than that.

And it makes *Full Moon Fever* sound like a whiney ol' dog.

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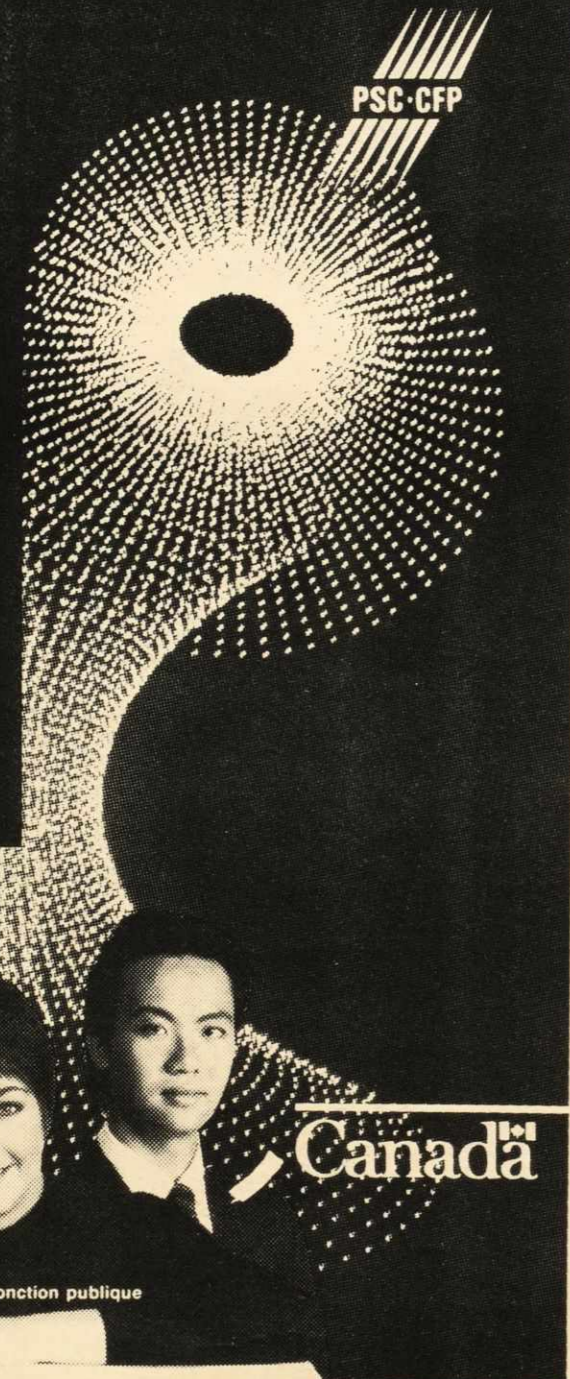
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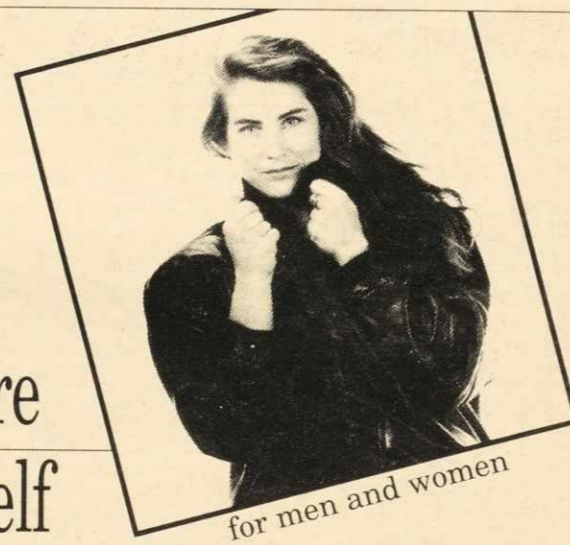
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Traditional African sound

by Munju Ravindra

Aswad — *Crucial Tracks*

Salif Keita — *Ko-Yan*

The cover on the latest Aswad album, *Crucial Tracks*, is enough to possess even the most faithful to throw it in the two-for-99-cent bin. Appearances, however, are often deceiving and, despite Aswad's acid-wash look, *Crucial*

'house' flavour. Other tracks include the dance favourites "Don't Turn Around" and "54-46 (Was My Number)," and two instrumental pieces, "Dub Fire" and "Warrior Charge."

Crucial Tracks provides a good overview of Aswad's music, from their 1976 number one single "Back to Africa," to last year's hit "Don't Turn Around." For long-

streets, rejected by society. With his music and his voice, he gradually earned acceptance and, after joining the Rail Band in 1970, became the area's most popular singer.

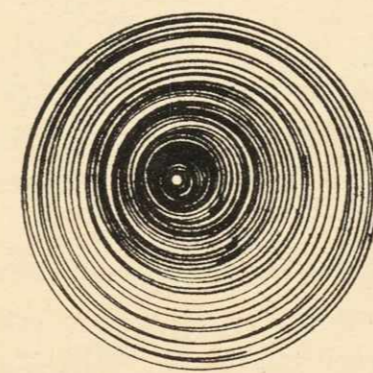
Since 1984, Salif Keita has spent much of his time touring Europe and *Ko-Yan* is a wonderful indication of his ability to integrate modern technology and

synthesizers into his music without losing any of its original African sound.

This album features 17 musicians, including five backing vocalists and three percussionists. The polyphony and questioning vocals made possible by the number of vocalists gives the album its rich African texture. The three percussionists' inter-

mingling African rhythms produce an amazing depth of rhythmic sound.

For those unaccustomed to African music, *Ko-Yan* may seem slightly repetitive, but anyone interested in rhythm or traditional African sound will find it an intriguing album and, in this case, one whose beautiful cover does reflect its contents.



Arrow's party message

by Joey Goodings

Arrow — *O'La Soca*

*Everyday should be a holiday
Come on let's party, let's go
out and play
Forget all your frustrations
We're gonna have a celebration.* OK, so he's not a great

poet, but with songs like "Crazy Mama," "Dancin' Mood" and "Pump It Up," you are not going to buy this album for intellectual stimulation anyway. Almost every song sends out Arrow's party message over a steady

calypso beat laced with brilliant horn licks.

Unfortunately, only the title track stands out as a powerful dance tune. The rest are fun but forgettable. For a spoonful of variety, there is one ordinary reggae track which drags on too long.

I doubt that I'll wear out the grooves on this one, but probably sometime during one of these pissy Halifax winters, I'll put on some sunglasses and shorts and spin a few tunes off *O'La Soca*.

On the other hand, I may wear out the grooves on some tracks n Ray Lema's *Nanga Deep*.

Lema combines a variety of

influences, from the traditional usic of Zaire to Western Pop. Two songs, "Pongi" and "Af Couer" are sung in his native tongue and in the traditional style of Zaire. They are, without a doubt, the album's strongest tracks. The rich backing vocals and simple instrumentation deliver more power than the bland keyboards and studio drums heard on most of the other tracks.

You may want to buy this album for the few great songs it offers. If you are a student who is truly starving, you can try to offer your services to a university newspaper and maybe get it free!