

## records



Rickie Lee Jones—  
*The Magazine*  
(WEA)

Rickie Lee Jones' third lp maintains the consistent standard of excellence she has set since her arrival on the music scene four years ago.

*Magazine* is a mature, well paced collection of bluesy pop gems, colored beautifully by Jones' wistful vocals and poetic lyrics. On the new album Jones seems to have emerged from the more sombre shades of *Pirates* (her 1982 masterpiece) tamping her nostalgia and sadness with a healthy dose of the carefree.

'Runaround', 'The Real End' and 'Juke Box Fury' recall the joyful swing of 'Woody and Dutch' and 'Chuck E's in Love' off earlier albums, and help set off the quieter, richer moods of songs like 'Gravity' and the title track.

Though universal stardom seems to have eluded her thus far, Jones' large cult following is likely to be a more substantial popular support with *Magazine*, an album with a sharper pop sensibility than either of her first two records. Yet here the accessibility is somehow achieved without compromise. Even her whimsical pieces contain well intentioned urban vignettes, while the slower pieces are carried through with a lyrical strength that comes closer to poetry than almost any other pop artist.

One track, 'The Unfinished Painting', is really a poem set to music with Jones' singing replaced by her expressive New York slur.

But, as always, the chief attention here is Jones' vocal velvet. She moves sleepily from a breathy whisper to a heart-stopping wail with effortless precision. The listener is left on the edge of their seat as Jones shifts pace and mood at will,

thwarting aural expectations, and replacing them with something far more satisfying. Highly Recommended.

—Kevin Connolly

The Reds—*The Reds*  
(WEA)

Imagine Iggy Pop and Jim Morrison getting together and writing something for today's pop charts. The result would be something like The Reds. In the tradition of English bands like The Fixx, The Reds, who are relatively unknown in the UK, are attempting to make a name for themselves in the US and Canada.

Their new album, *Shake Appeal* (a title from Iggy Pop's 1972 *Raw Power* LP) appears on the Sire label and is produced by Mike Thorne, who is also responsible for Nina Hagen and Soft Cell.

Guitarist/vocalist/songwriter Rick Shaffer's ghostly droning voice is quite reminiscent of Jim Morrison's vocals. The Doors influence also shines through in the low, slow, echoed bassline of "Till the End."

The Reds attempt to combine pop and punk. They've opened for both Joe Jackson and Public Image Ltd., and they somehow manage to give their upbeat keyboard music a raw sound.

The Reds are unlikely to produce classics, like The Doors, or Iggy Pop. They could, however, with the right breaks, be a good pop band.

—Jennifer Dumpert

General Public—*All The Rage*  
(A&M)

The first offering from Dave Wakeling and Ranking Roger's (both former members of the now defunct English Beat) new group is an attractive blend of ska, rock, and straight ahead dance music.

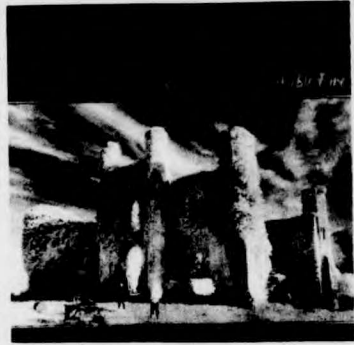
Some of the songs are highly reminiscent of the duo's work on 'Special Beat Service', The Beat's last album, though there are a few fresh ideas as well. Wakeling and Roger create a dynamic vocal harmony, with nice, high pitched twists of emotion. Although there is nothing to compare to the emotional power of later Beat songs like 'I Confess', their songwriting talent is still much in evidence on *All The Rage*. 'Tenderness', with its sweetbreath backup vocals, and 'Never You Done That' are both magical, while the title track and 'Burning Bright' with its abnormally prominent guitar (played,

incidentally, by ex-Clash member Mick Jones) add texture to the song.

Lyrical, the new band retains the mildly political edge of The Beat, though the 'boy meets girl' theme shares equal time with the mild social comment of 'General Public' and others.

Wakeling and Roger have departed only slightly from their previously successful formula, and though saxophone and reggae rhythms are suppressed on most of the tracks, songs like 'Are You Leading Me On?' and 'Hot You're Cool' would have been equally at home on any Beat album. Though General Public takes very few risks *All The Rage* is still a satisfying debut.

—K.C.



U2—*The Unforgettable Fire*  
(Island)

U2's eagerly awaited follow-up to the immensely popular and critically acclaimed *War* is apt to disappoint most fans. This transitional album offers a rather uneven collection of songs, many of them musically deficient and lyrically excessive.

As always, U2's blend of politics and humanism is attractive; there is no question that the subject matter almost automatically draws a sympathetic response from the listener. Yet lead singer Bono's improvised rap on songs like 'Promenade' is a little irritating, particularly when placed in its flat, nebulous musical context.

Still, the news is not all bad. Songs like 'Pride', 'A Sort of Homecoming' and the title track are vintage U2, with the resounding work of innovative guitarist 'the Edge' set off by strong bass lines and Bono's passionate vocals. The best song on the album is probably 'Wire', a feverish layering of synthesizer, guitar and bass.

On *The Unforgettable Fire* U2 has abandoned previous pop commodity Steve Lillywhite in favor of the

more eclectic talents of producer Brian Eno. Though it sounds like an intelligent idea on paper, the move has some uncharacteristically lacklustre effects on the finished product.

Eno, who contributes some rather invisible synthesizer to a few of the songs, also seems to have overproduced the whole album: the immediacy of the guitar work on the harder songs is overpowered by the vocals and muffled keyboard, while the slow songs are left vague and formless.

Except for the four tracks mentioned earlier, the rest of the album is rather bland, the last thing one would expect from a group of this calibre.

—K.C.



Gerry Cott—  
*I Left my Hat in Tahiti*  
(Polygram)

This is guitarist Gerry Cott's first appearance on vinyl since he left The Boomtown Rats over a year ago; and with only one song credit on five 'Rats lps it's not hard to guess what might have initiated the split. What's more, the dance-oriented pop on this five-song mini-lp is a far cry from the satiric, socially conscious rock of Geldof and company.

From the funky 'Alphabet Town' with its naive melody and pleasant repetition to the quietly mesmeric 'Some People I Know' the record radiates soft pop. Strong bass and a sparse blend of horn and guitar set off Cott's thin but appealing vocals with a large measure of success.

'Some People I Know' is an absolute gem. The song's powerful bass line and clever lyric highlight a sweet melody and all of it is given depth with a tasteful dab of synthesizer. This track alone suggests that Cott may be on his way to a bright solo career, while the early popularity of 'Alphabet Town' is likely to accelerate these good fortunes.

—K.C.

The Danse Society

*Heaven is Waiting* (Polygram). An above average collection of synthesized existentialism. While most of the tracks here have strong rhythms, it's hard to imagine anyone wanting to dance to them. By and large the songs are sombre and depressive. The only virtue of Steve Rawling's rangeless staccato is that it fits the subject matter.

While the rhythms are all strong, and the synthesizer sharp and tastefully sparse, the lyrics and melodies are an uncomfortable mixture of melodrama and neurosis. Still, 'Wake Up,' 'Red Light,' and the title track are all interesting, as is the band's cover of the Stones' '2,000 Light Years From Home.'

The Church

*Remote Luxury* (WEA). This Australian band is testimony to just how odd old-fashioned acoustic guitar can sound in a new wave-saturated market. The songs here are lyrically clever with attractive melodies, but they seem to lack the power and emotion of the best of their more trendy peers. The album suffers most from an annoying sameness; the rather dull familiarity that develops from song to song is punctuated only by 'Volumes' and '10,000 Miles' where lead vocalist Steve Kilbey gives way to the more expressive Marty-Wilson Smith.

Spoons

*Tell No Lies* (Ready). This two song EP from Burlington's new wave darlings is a further drift into the sugary realm of the cute and commercial. Once notable for their music rather than their hairstyles, the once-promising band seems lost in the mire of top 10 trivia. Although they may be attracting droves of teeny boppers, they are probably losing a large measure of their original following.

The title track is catchy enough, but it is once again muffled by *Talkback* producer Niles Rogers. He has worked commercial wonders with this band, as he did with David Bowie, but he has also managed to eliminate any originality the Spoons once had. Instead of Gordon Deppe's controlled guitar and Sandy Horne's Kate Bush-style back-up vocals, we are greeted with an endless spew of drum machine and the insipid "toot toot" of David Bowie's so-called "horn section." "Romantic Traffic," the B-side, is only marginally better.

—K.C.

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