

# Monks punk again

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One of popular music's biggest stories last year was the success enjoyed by The Monks. The debut album by this British group, *Bad Habits*, sold extremely well in Canada.

When most music fans think of The Monks, they think of their big single from last year, *Drugs in my Pocket*. Like the first single release from their debut album, *Nice Legs, Shame About the Face*, it characterized The Monks' 'call a spade a spade' attitude.

This carries through to their strong follow-up album *Suspended Animation*. A good example from this album is the first single released in Canada, as well as the opening number on side one, in which lead vocalist Terry Cassidy says in a point-blank fashion *Don't Want no Reds*. This has a disciplined, tight beat established by newcomer Clive Pierce on drums, and features excellent bass guitar, words by Richard Hudson.

The next cut on side one begins with a person shivering. It is the title cut *Suspended Animation*, and deals with the practice of taking people immediately after death, wrapping them in foil, and freezing

them in a liquid gas, with the hope of thawing them out in 100 years or so and curing the disease which brought about their death, allowing them to live again. This is a song with a lot in it.

What follows is an angry rebuttal to hustlers who attempt to milk money from people on the pretences of religion - *Don't Bother Me - I'm a Christian*. In a common Monks tactic, vocalist Cassidy and his back-ups switch to a Cockney accent in this song. In their punkish, energetic, more emotional number, the Monks do this to add to the impact of the lyrics, and it succeeds.

*James Bondage*, the next cut on side one, is about S & M; it takes a jab at the current English ska revival. The sound effects are most effective.

Side two shows a more sophisticated side of The Monks. It opens with a song that seems destined for a top 40 success, *Cool Way To Live*. It seems to have everything - a catchy tune, smart lyrics, and good execution vocally and instrumentally. More importantly, it does these things while being less abrasive than some of the group's other numbers.

What follows, *Go*, might well be the album's top cut. It has a super melody, which

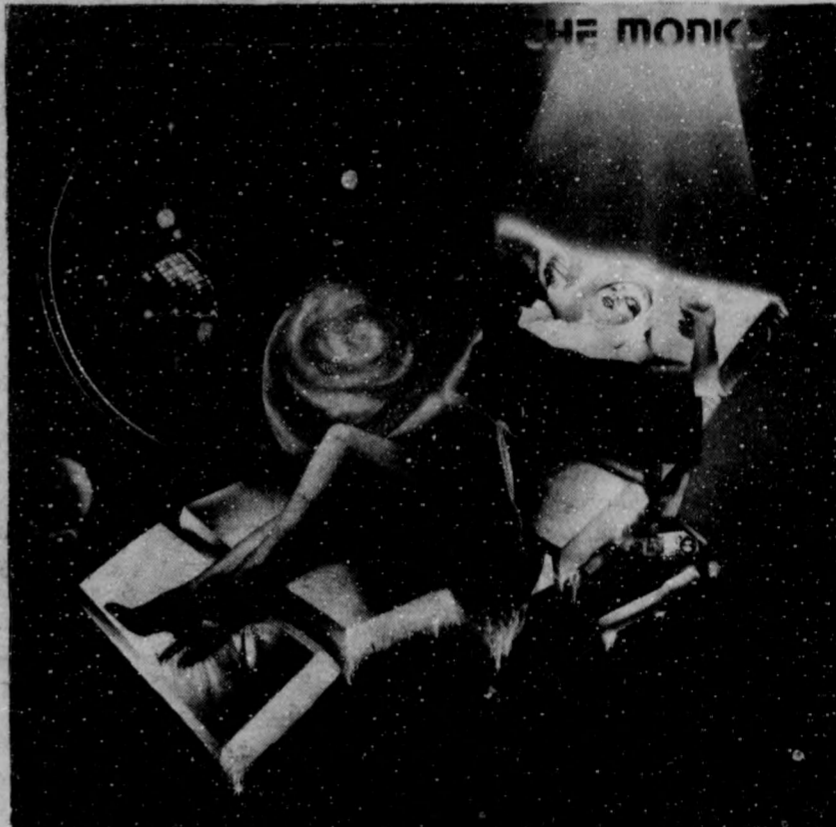
seems well-fitted for vocalist Cassidy. The chorus is particularly pleasing musically, with a pleasing chord sequence which carries through to a mid-song break. The theme is simple: the vocalist is telling a lover to go because he has tried everything to fix their ailing relationship and has had enough.

The next song, *I Can Do Anything You Like*, takes several cracks at the recording industry. A group from India phones a record company and plays their music, an intentionally - monotonous song that takes cracks at the Bee Gees, Barbara Streisand, disco, bubblegum, and much more. The song ends with the man from the record company hanging up in disgust.

*Plastic Max* is the next cut. It is about a man who wears women's clothes, and then turns to other things when that bores him. It is followed by *King Doing*, a slightly reggae song.

The album's final song is a fine instrumental, *Space Fruit*. It is somewhat reminiscent of Santana; it opens with synthesizer followed by acoustic guitar. Later in the song they go further into 'space' the guitar work changes, as Ford and Willougyby take turns in this extremely pretty song which seems uncharacteristic of The Monks.

However, that is what makes *Suspended Animation* a stronger album than last year's *Bad Habits*. The character of the group is maintained, but new elements in



their music, particularly made The Monks a more mature, manifest in side two of diverse, and well-rounded *Suspended Animation*, make group.



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