

Entertainment

GENRECID

I desperately wanted to write about Portishead's album *Dummy* last week so I could tell you that it was my favourite album of the year and plead that you all go out and buy it. But then I was informed that it wasn't released in Canada until this week, so my enthusiasm had to be postponed for a week. But now, I'm afraid, you should brace yourself for some rather extreme gushing.

It's hard to believe that *Dummy* is Portishead's debut as it is, quite simply, one of the most gorgeous albums I have heard in a long time. It's also rather hard to describe too, but I shall try my best. It's a collection of torch songs, the sort that were so dearly loved by such sirens as Billie Holiday - Beth Gibbon's voice is so vulnerable, tender and just plain haunting. And add to that a musical accompaniment that sounds as if it could have come from just about any sixties spy television series or film - think "Mission Impossible" or "The Third Man". Lots of keyboards, a minimal amount of guitar (just enough to get by) and a subtle beat in the background that never threatens to intrude on the intimacy of the music.

This 'soundtrack to an imaginary movie' thing has been done before by the likes of Barry Adamson, but somehow this album is something very special. Although the album weaves this alluring web, the overall mood remains dark as if something threatening lurks just around the corner. But in the most gor-

geous way - words just can't do this justice. I really can't recommend this record enough. It may not have made last year's list, but it will definitely be one of the best of 1995.



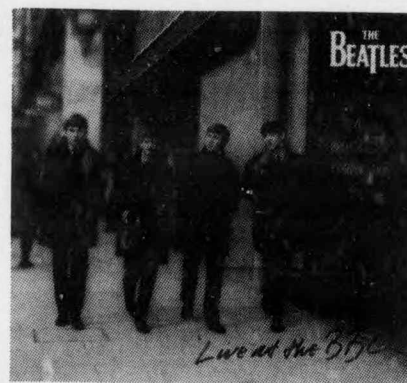
It was almost impossible to escape from all the media attention that was given to the release of the Beatles' *Live At The BBC* at the end of last year. But for once, you should believe the hype, if only to remind you how important the Beatles were in changing the course of popular music. If you happened to catch last year's film *Backbeat*, then you will have a good idea of the type of music that they performed in those early days - straight forward, good old fashioned rock and roll. Yet among all the cover versions are the signs that something more ambitious was just waiting to happen, something that becomes obvious when John and Paul began their writing partnership.

The double album collects 56 songs that the band recorded for

various BBC radio programmes between 1962 and 1965. And an incredible thirty of these songs were never officially recorded during the band's residence at EMI records (although most have turned up on bootlegs since then). As I mentioned earlier, most of the songs here are cover versions - this is hardly surprising as most people would be hard pushed to name a great British songwriter in the days before Lennon and McCartney. John's writer of choice is Chuck Berry; Paul's favourite is Little Richard while other familiar names also turn up such as Carl Perkins, Phil Spector and Buddy Holly. On the second disc, their original songs begin to turn up in force with plenty of your favourites. There is only one Lennon/McCartney composition which has never appeared elsewhere - "I'll Be On My Way"; it's hardly a gem, but it is still worth its place in history.

So what makes this album so damned exciting? All the performances are live, recorded straight to tape in glorious mono. And like all live performances, there is a certain urgency and spontaneity to it all (which I am sure has something to do with George Martin's excellent production job), something that show on moments such as when John tries to sing a bit too loud and his voice cracks just that little bit. Or when they don't quite get the riff from "I Feel Fine" right. It all goes to show that the Beatles were human after all. There is also plenty of examples of their sense

of humour too; snippets of interviews, conversations and silliness punctuate the songs periodically. Such moments show the Beatles at their most relaxed, and give a small insight into their personalities. But the one thing that really shines through on these recordings is that the band are having fun, and that is the one thing that can make any performance captivating. Combine this with packaging that includes extensive sleeve-notes, lavish photography and you have the perfect time capsule of the early days of a band whose likes we shall never see again. Ever.



The Stone Roses have been gone so long that most people have forgotten about them. Their 1989 album was indeed a classic - the combination of jangly guitars and Ian Brown's vocals worked so well and evoked memories of such bands as the Byrds. The subsequent singles didn't live up to the early promise so when they disappeared amidst court cases and multi-million dol-

lar contracts, most people just yawned apathetically. Over the past five years, the occasional report of musical differences between the band and numerous producers filtered out which led to the rumour that their second album would never appear. But it did. And it's not very good. I suppose that the problems lies in the fact that after five years I expected *Second Coming* to be something special, and it's just ordinary.

The philosophy on this new album seems to be to let John Squire play his guitar as loudly as he possibly can for as long as he wants with as many effects pedals as possible. There are the usual funky rhythms in the background which are very reminiscent of such earlier singles as "Fool's Gold", but there is also that much-touted Led Zepplin influence which appears to mean that the guitars get cranked up to '11' on the amplifier. It works quite well on "Love Spreads", but over the duration of a seventy minute album it gets a little on the boring side. The most obvious highlight is "Ten Storey Love Song" - a rare tender moment that is the only thing that harks back to those glory days of old. And as for the 'hidden' track at the end - I imagine that's what the Stone Roses sound like when they don't have five years to rehearse. You can't help but wonder why they both-
ered at all.

MICHAEL EDWARDS

If We Are Women

"We Look back through our mothers if we are women."

Virginia Woolf

By Eky

"Passionate and humorous, If We Are Women is a beautiful exploration of mothers and daughters and their frustrating, perplexing and above all, loving relationships."

Three generations of mothers and daughters are brought together: the result? A dramatic, funny, insightful and passionate exchange. "Written by Joanna McClelland Glass and nominated for this year's Governor General's Award for English language drama, *If We Are Women* is set in the Connecticut beach house of writer Jessica MacMillan Cohen." (TNB's writer in residence Jenny Munday)

Realistic and intimate, the

narrative unfolds around relationships between the sexes while cementing the relationships of four women. Ruth (Maralyn Ryan), Jessica's illiterate Saskatchewan mother and Rachel (Rita Howell), her urbane New York ex-mother-in-law share the task of offering condolence and advice following the sudden death of Jessica's common law husband. Add to the mix Jessica's teenage daughter Polly (Ann Bagley) embarking on an all night expedition accompanied by a vehemently defended pledge of love.

Provided with passionate performances by an all female cast in combination with such a potentially dynamic situation - and we have the feminine mystique demystified - well, at least presented in a

boldly uncensored and humorous fashion. Women chat candidly about love, men, pain, lessons and perspectives, offering wisdom and wit perspicuously.

Take your mother. The scenes will rouse memories of the past that link you together. Beautifully written, the material creates a lingering sense of implicit familiarity. This dramatic piece is the equivalent of looking through an old photo album with your mom. Nostalgic - and incensing in all the same ways of remembering - *If We Are Women* brings us closer to our mothers and ourselves.

INTERNATIONAL FILMS: BARAKA AND THE SCENT OF GREEN PAPAYA

To celebrate the festival of cultural diversity week, UNB offered two international films last Tuesday: *Baraka* and *The Scent of Green Papaya*.

Baraka was an intense hour and forty-five minutes of footage covering areas in twenty-four countries. Directed by Ron Fricke, this film was without dialogue, but as they say "a picture says a thousand words." The music by Michael Sterns was a powerful complement to the film's content.

The film started off showing clips of natural wonders across the globe and then began to integrate people from throughout, praying, chanting, and carrying on with everyday activities. This film could only be truly appreciated on the big screen, second to actually being there.

The film eventually moved from the tranquillity of nature's own clock to the fast paced hustle and bustle of New York City and Japan. The film then moved on to the slums in Brazil and saw abject poverty in South America and India.

At first my friends and I commented on the fact that it would be nice if we knew where some of these areas were, but later I realized that the whole point of the film was to show the common elements of the world's disparate ways of life. Rather than being separated by borders set by humans, this film showed a mosaic of beauty that ties both the globe and its people together.

This film is a must see for all. Just ask the projectionist, who obviously wanted to contribute to the film with some avant garde focus changing.

The second film, *The Scent Of Green Papaya* was directed by Hung Tran Anh and was nominated for the best film at the Cannes Film Festival in 1994. The film took place in Saigon, Vietnam in the fifties and centered on the life of a young servant girl. The film turns into a romance that started with her having a crush on a man since childhood. I found the film enjoyable, but once the guy was introduced, I felt the outcome was predictable. However, there was enough distractions in between girl meets boy to man falls for woman. This predictability could have been a subconscious plea for it to end because after sitting in those chairs for almost three hours, your ass tends to get sore.