



# MEAT



THE  
PROCLAIMERS  
Sunshine on Leith  
(Chrysalis)

Is this the long feared invasion of nerds from Scotland? Nope! Not when you consider that this is Craig and Charlie Reids' third release in North America (including an extended single) and that the Buddy Holly/nerd-type glasses and appropriate accompanying haircuts are more in keeping with Buddy Holly-ness than with some dreaded geekness affliction. It takes a lot of confidence in your abilities to maintain your identity and still try and make it in the music business. This self-assurance - and talent that merits it - will let you resist the record companies' "molding" (moulding?) process. The Proclaimers are immensely talented which possibly explains why they haven't abandoned their thick accent as have other better-known Scottish acts. On the other hand, maybe it's been noted voices effortlessly stretches their lyrics to greater dimensions. On their first album, the boys were on sure footing by relying heavily on vocals and acoustical instruments (played by themselves). This time around the competition with drums, electric guitar, and electric bass (supplied by guest musicians) seems to have them at a loss for parts of the album.

The all-acoustic songs, in general, seem to lack the confidence that was evident in every song of *This is the Story*. The more subdued songs on *Sunshine on Leith* come across as morose and sleepy - with the exception of the title track. This mood was intended for *It's Saturday Night*, but for the rest of the songs in the subdued category, inexperience with less than boisterous material may be to blame for the results.

The opening track, *I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)*, is arguably the best song on the album and, coincidentally, has the best chance of acceptance by a wide audience. It can be perhaps best described as a love march of the same martial heritage as that of the bagpipes. The Scottish experience is further explored in the nationalistic *Cap in Hand*. Unfortunately, the lyrics are somewhat vague and a pernicious listener adapting them to a Canadian context might hear an argument against immigration. *Them I Met You* picks at the scars of pain and loneliness that sometimes don't become fully apparent until one finds love or sees that most others have.

The final track on the album,



*Oh Jean*, can compete with the opening cut. The powerful sexual energy of the music and lyrics reaches an orgasmic conclusion as the coming of age tale is related. (The title track of *This is the Story* addresses this same subject of first sexual experience in a more humorous,

that you can't reduce the Reid brothers' voice (that's right, voice! - more later) to some homogenized accent-less form and expect it to ring out with the same power and clarity of purpose.

You've probably guessed by now that I'm going to give a rave review to this album. Well, I am impressed with the Proclaimers, but this album is definitely weaker than their previous album *This is the Story*. That album was of such high caliber, however, that falling a little short this time is no disgrace. Do you think Sinéad O'Connor has it easy meeting the standard she set for her debut album?

The Reid voice can match the skirl of bagpipes - if not in volume, at least in emotive capacity and with the same demanding insistence for your ear. The intricately woven voice created from their respective though somewhat cryptic manner).

The Proclaimers have for the most part succeeded with this latest release. It's more uneven than their first album but it does reveal an innovative urge that is not common among many new artists where the pressure is clearly to stay with what has worked in the past.

Peter Ferguson

N.W.A.  
Straight Outta  
Compton  
(Priority records)

The premise is this. Three ex-crack dealers and home boys say to themselves "well, society regards us as psychotic homophobic chauvinist assholes, so lets give them what they want". And they do. For thirteen tracks Ice Cube, E.Z. (muthaf\*ckin') E. and Ram take their turns professing their fondness for causing casual human termination with automatic weapons, telling "bitches to get on their dicks" and their willingness to exterminate anything wearing a blue suit and a badge.

Of course these gentlemen will unashamedly shrug off any criticism like buck-shot off a padded vest "you asked for it you got it" is their message, with the A in NWA standing for attitude: sticking out of their holsters dripping sputinous venom.

But what a shame really. If only such hard-driving sounds from the gutter were used to better effect. God knows the inner city ghettos of North America have enough problems without this sudden provision of extremely dodgy role models. Because that's what they are. *Straight Outta Compton* oozes profane gutter language littered amongst some of the tightest back-ups I've heard in ten years. The sad thing is that the kids listening to this slab of homicidal mayhem will not appreciate any form of irony or historical context interest on the groove. Rather they will see it as a blatant endorsement of a life style that seems as exciting as the inevitability of the system that produced them.

Nevertheless "*Straight Outta Compton*" is an essential addition to any record



Charlie and Craig: the thinking woman's Bros.



"Erm . . . can you tell me the way to Compton?" N.W.A. catch a whitey by his toe.