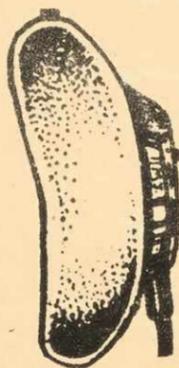


SOUND TRACKS



by Mark Teehan

SHARKS - "Jab It In Your Eye" (MAC). A turbulent British group, Sharks have had more than their share of personnel and management hassles in the short 2 years they've been together. The past summer saw them lose 3 members and for awhile it looked like they were gonna fold, but fortunately things worked out and the reformed band is back on their feet. Recorded this Spring, before all the personnel defections, "Jab" is the group's 2nd LP and furnishes ample reason for looking forward to the next Shark's offering. In the interim, we're treated to some natural sounding, raunchy/raw r'n r laced with some smoldering rhythms, intensive singing and spirited playing that bears a general affinity to Free (sadly no more) and one of its current relatives, **Bad Co.** (simply dynamite). After the critically-acclaimed 1st Shark's album of last year "First Water", legendary bassist **Andy Fraser** (ex-Free) left the group and many folks were skeptical of what Sharks could do without him. Though "Jab" may lack the solid cohesiveness of its predecessor, having been recorded in a hurry amidst all the comings and goings, it generates enough dynamic tension on 5 superb tracks to make the grade.

The core of the group who make "Jab" worth your while are vocalists, **Snips**, (a cross between Joe Cocker and Mike Patto, now of **Spooky Tooth**-real raspy/gutsy voice) and guitarist **Chris Spedding** (former session man and ex-Nucleus, has a very rhythmic style). Snips writes most of the material while Spedding helped out on the production, which is simple and uncluttered. Of the other, now-split musicians playing on "Jab", **Busta Cherry Jones** on bass (from Memphis) stands out the most with his subdued funky style; with more time to get used to the group he would've probably worked out even better. **Nick Judd** on keyboards spices up the sound while **Marty Simon's** drumming is simple but effective.

On the soulful "Baby Shine A Light" (penned by Jones) and "Sun Beat Down" the group sounds a little like Spooky Tooth with extended churning glides, but Sharks display more instrumental virtuosity and a more rhythmic bottom. Snips turns in a real intense vocal performance on the first, while "Sun" has a beat similar to the **Zombies'** classic "Time of the Season". The stuff on Side 2 is even better - "Sophistication" opens with revolving riffs that fade and then wind up to a crescendo as the whole group charges out; shortly after, the right speaker erupts with another guitar and the rest is pure crunchy r&b-styled rock. "Cocaine Blues" transcends its somewhat trite title to deliver some fiery blues-rock, while the progressive "Revolution of the Heart" is a knock-out with its well-developed spooky build-up, crash-chorded peak and anarchic ending. Snips' pleading vocals are incredibly good, and before the muffled swooning at the end he sings in part "My head is like a newsreel/I don't ask you to remember me when I'm gone/All I ask is that you remember my song/It helps me to get by." Yeah, and "We need a revolution of the heart, a re-vo-lu-tion ..." We sure do.

The latest word from England has Sharks back in the studio hard at work on

their 3rd album, **Snips and Spedding** joined by new members **Stewart Francis** (drums) and **Dave Cochran** (bass). If they can stay together, the resulting album should be somethin' to watch out for. Jab it in your eye (feels good).

MAN - "Rhinos, Winos & Lunatics" (United Artists). Man are a Welsh rock outfit with a friendly, snob-less populist image garnered from some lively concerts and a small but intense following - currently 2nd division but with enough artistic potential to move up. They too have that "revolving door" personnel history tidbit (recorded back in Feb.) does show signs of hasty sloppy patching. But it'll grow on you if you give it enough spins, and Side 2 has sufficient dexterous flash to keep you satisfied. Some of their earlier stuff (as contained on the double set "Back Into The Future") struck me as lame and excessive, being generally aimless jamming. Perhaps a brave attempt to fuse the adventurous psychedelicism of the early **Dead/Floyd** with the more down-to-earth rawness of **Chuck Berry** or the **Stones**. Well they may have succeeded on earlier LPs but surely not on "Future." But with the return of guitar hero **Deke Leonard** (with 2 solo LPs to his credit) things seem to have taken a turn for the better. The group are more creatively disciplined on "Rhinos," and although some of the standard-length tracks on Side 1 won't exactly win any awards, the more improvisational (without being too disjointed) material on the flip is quite engaging. "Kerosene" and "Scotch Corner" feature some innovative, sterling guitar work from **Leonard** and **Micky Jones** while the rest of the band chugs steadily along. File under "interesting."

JESSE WINCHESTER - "Learn To Love It" (Bearsville). As a Winchester album, this is a let-down but from a more general stance it's a decent/worthwhile LP. Jesse is one singer-songwriter that's still worth listening too. Aside from the natural problem of measuring up to his first 2 classic efforts, Jesse's choice of material on Side 2 (those 3 chanty ditties) leaves something to be desired. And there's a bland sense of apathy that pokes out in places which doesn't help matters any. But the man who gave us "Yankee Lady" hasn't lost his touch for coming up with moving, melancholic tunes, sung always with a mellow understanding/conviction: "Every Word You Say", "Mississippi You're On My Mind", and "Defying Gravity" with its rolling, gentle melody subtly enhanced by strings and a flute - Jesse admits that "When I do fall, I'll be glad to." **Russell Smith** contributes 2 fine tracks, the delightful single "Third Rate Romance" and "The End Is Not In Sight." Jesse's production is effectively well-balanced and the instrumentation tight but pleasantly restrained. Everything counts-no wasted notes. It's evident that Jesse has settled down in Montreal to a simple but apparently happy family life 7 years after splittin' from the military madness south of the border. But a poem on the back cover shows there are a few embers still smokin'; in part, "It adds up to/Rampant ruggedness...But it's a let down, really, A gradual let down/Course, They say you can/Learn to love it, All the way down."

Sherman Hines

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