



SOUND TRACKS

by Mark Teehan

FLEETWOOD MAC: "Heroes Are Hard to Find" (Reprise). One of the most bizarre things to happen in the rock world occurred last year when a "group" toured the U.S. and called themselves Fleetwood Mac. Folks would show up at their concerts expecting (naturally) to hear the real thing, but were rudely surprised to find a strange, unrecognizable band on stage. Imposters. It seems as if the real Mac's manager had wanted a tour out of the group, and when they declined he went ahead and "assembled" a phony band, shipping 'em off to the U.S. to rip off unsuspecting fans. Though (somehow) that he had exclusive rights to the name "Fleetwood Mac." Figure that one out if you can. Well, since that time the justifiably incensed real Mac has waged a long successful court battle, obtaining an injunction against the "imposters" touring under the Mac name. They've also dropped their "manager." "Heroes Are Hard To Find" is their first album released since all the legal hassles and is a solid consistent LP with plenty of musical variety.

It's hard to believe that, back in the late 60's with the legendary Peter Green, F.M. used to be one of the top British blues bands that managed (unlike most groups) to retain their musical integrity while achieving commercial success with stuff like "Albatross" and "Man of the World." For the past 4 years, since Green's departure (among the most notable) and the "Future Games" album, they've been into a different trip - much more of a folk-oriented, lightweight pop-rock direction. Since the simple but eminently likeable "Bare Trees" ('72) many reviewers have looked on them as mainstays in the soft-rock field, critically-acclaiming the next 2 LPs "Penguin" and the inconspicuous "Mystery to Me." With "Heroes" though, F.M. seems to be both hardening up sound-wise as well as getting into some more adventurous, jazz-influenced material.

Guitarist Bob Welch has written the bulk of the tunes and all the new-direction stuff, the first sign of which shows up on "Coming Home," a good pace-changer from the more up-beat title track. After an atmospheric intro with muffled vocals from Welch, John McVie's rhythmic bass and Christine McVie's arp ensemble gradually move in and the beat quickens. The subtle but effective melody meshes easily with a funky bottom. "Bermuda Triangle" deals with the disappearing ships and planes in the central Atlantic, and also shows good musical development: some congas and acoustic strumming accompany Welch's vocals, and then the rhythm section joins in to gear things up to a faster pace.

Side 2's "Bad Loser" is the most unique number of the album with its lively reggae-styled syncopation working outa both speakers. The LP's 2 closing tracks, "Born Enchanter" and "Safe Harbour" are in a more spaced-out vein like "Coming Home." The first is a good match-up between title and material, the

vocals sounding vaguely like Steve Miller set to some good, loose funky blues. Welch supplies some stabbing, rhythmic guitar playing while Christine nicely dangles a few piano chords off to the side. Except for a few spoken words at its end, "Harbour" is a haunting short instrumental that owes much to Christines competent arp work for its success. Welch's blues-flavored styling is complemented by Mick Fleetwood's faint, far-away drumming.

If you can get into that stuff, and appreciate more straightforward "upper" material, then the rest of the album's a free ride. Although neither "Angel" or "Silver Heels" are exceptional songs in themselves ("Bare Trees" updated), the band's playing is energetic enough to keep you listening. And while "She's Changing Me" (forward-driving rocker in Eagles mold) doesn't quite live up to the potential it promises initially, it's still an OK cut with some fine guitar work from Welch-sparing but on. The real high points come on 3 of Christine's songs: the title track (mid-paced rocker with smooth gliding breaks and a solid rumbling bass line), "Prove Your Love" (a more laid-back, country-field number with some stunning vocals from Christine) and "Come A Little Bit Closer," a superb ballad featuring an open, spacy sound and more fine singing from Christine.

"Heroes" is the sort of album that'll hold up well over repeated listenings with its rich variety and many mood changes. And Fleetwood Mac are a group that still cares about what they put out - they convey a sense of openness, of honesty through their music that I find appealing. Highly recommended.

QUICK TAKES

"The First Class" (UM/London). If you've heard "Beach Baby" on the radio then you've got a good line on where these Britishers are at. Ultra-commercial pop stylists trying to bring back the old Beach Boys, Beatles, and other pop giants. Sometimes it works like on aforementioned hit ("Long Time Gone" and "I Was Always A Joker" surprisingly strong too) but mostly it doesn't. Too ham-fisted and cleverly-calculated for my tastes. Material generally lacks depth, resulting in mediocre pop top-heavy with high harmonies. And sticking a DJ-like come-on between cuts was a bad move. Stick to singles, chaps.

BOBBI HUMPHREY - "Blacks and Blues." (Blue Note). Virtuoso flutist Bobbi Humphrey does her thing accompanied by all manner of expert studio cats. The result: excellent album of funky jazz with full range of instrumentation, from guitars to clavinet, flute, congas. Very subtle and very together. Another Larry Mizell (production, writing credits) package of tasteful quality. This was recorded about 1 1/2 years ago, but better late than never. Positive, pure energy. (She's got a brand new one out now called "Satin Doll" if you're interested).

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that \$3.7 million be spent to expand the university's residences.

The UVIC board asked the provincial government for a grant of \$2.5 million and a loan of \$1.2 million to construct about 300 new single bed dormitory rooms. The university also plans to spend about \$100,000 on special acco-

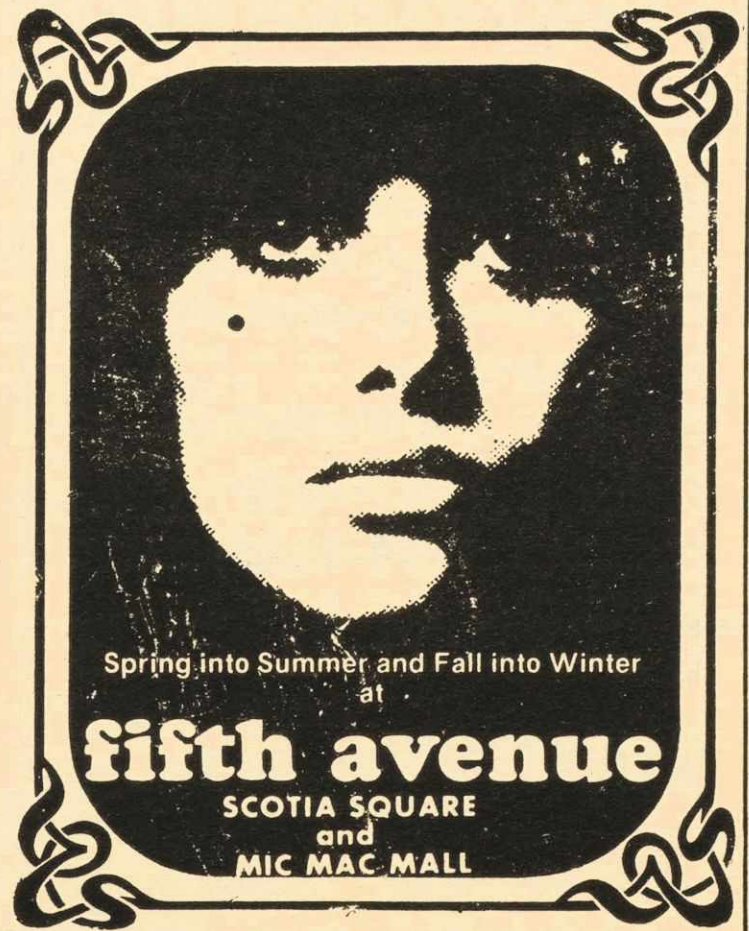
modation for married couples.

Universities Council Chairman William Armstrong said this week the council has initiated a study on university housing at the request of the three universities. The study will be finished and sent to the provincial government by late January, in time for legislative debate of univer-

sity budgets.

Armstrong said the study so far has shown the BC is one of several areas in Canada which seem to need additional residences.

The Universities Council coordinates activities among the three universities and is responsible for dividing bulk government grants among the institutions.



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