

Pop

SMOKEY ROBINSON—Being With You, Tamla TB375 (Motown). Produced by George Tobin, Smokey Robinson, Michael Lizzio. Robinson's latest LP includes cuts as diverse as "Food For Thought," a lively, rhythmic reggae tune, and "Can't Fight Love," a dance party smoker along the lines of the Jacksons. But most of the tracks are the sort of silky, romantic ballads that are Robinson's specialty. The singer conveys a softness, purity and grace that makes the songs immediately distinctive. The principal producer is George Tobin, who handled Kim Carnes' top 10 remake last year of Robinson's "More Love."

Best cuts: Those cited plus "Being With You," "As You Do," "Who's Sad."

DIANA ROSS—To Love Again, Motown M8-951M1. Produced by Michael Masser. This is virtually an anthology of writer/producer Masser's work with Ross, from "Touch Me In The Morning" through "Theme From Mahogany" to "It's My Turn." Yet the inclusion of previously released material (five of the nine tracks date from 1973-78) must be considered a disappointment, particularly following the singer's "Diana" album. The lush, string-soaked ballads on show here are in striking contrast to the spare, urban contemporary flavor of the Chic-produced package, and that may hinder the new disk's sales prospects, even if it underscores Ross' versatility. The three new songs are "Stay With Me," "One More Chance" and "Cryin' My Heart Out For You," each less than subtle in the orchestrations and the hooks, but not without appeal, largely thanks to the artist's sultry delivery.

Best cuts: Pick and choose.

Country

RAY PRICE—A Tribute To Willie & Kris, Columbia JC37061. Produced by Don Law, Frank Jones. Commerce may have been the inspiration, but art is the winner in this repackaging of 10 of Price's best songs. It has to be when the best work of these three country titans is combined. All the numbers are good, but "Night Life," "Crazy," "For The Good Times" and "Nobody Wins" have the kind of contemplative lyrics that Price excels on.

Best cuts: All.



First Time Around

PHIL COLLINS—Face Value, Atlantic SD16029. Produced by Phil Collins, Hugh Padgham. Genesis' lead singer steps away for his first solo album and it's full of the ethereal progressive rock sounds his fans would expect. There is an underlying commerciality, though, that makes most of these tracks acceptable to a mainstream pop audience. The sound of the LP is immaculate with the Earth, Wind & Fire horn section, guitarist Eric Clapton, Stephen Bishop and violinist Shakkar all contributing. Arif Mardin arranges the string section on several tracks. A Genesis song, "Behind The Lines," is given a more pulsating, upbeat arrangement here. There are many fans waiting for this one.

Best cuts: "This Must Be Love," "I'm Not Moving," "Behind The Lines," "I Missed Again," "Tomorrow Never Knows."

PATRICK D. MARTIN, International Record Syndicate SP70403 (A&M). Produced by Patrick D. Martin. Is the world ready for another eccentric English singer/songwriter? If he likes electronics, will that help his career? How about an ability to write interesting and catchy songs? Will radio like him? Or will Martin find a comfortable niche as a cult artist? Only time will tell.

Best cuts: "I Like 'lectric Motors," "Police Patanoia," "Computer Datin'."

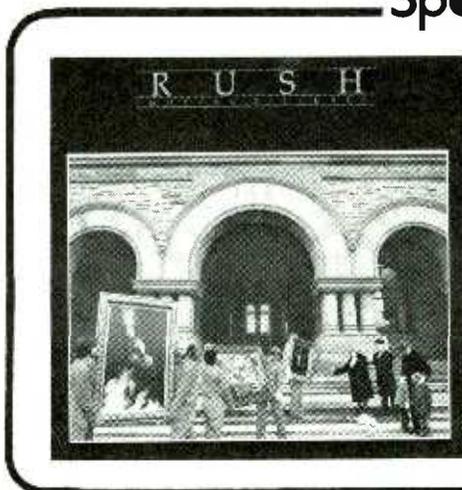
TRAPEZE—Hold On. Paid 2003. Produced by Trapeze, Jimmy Miller. This is a noticeably strong debut LP that takes its strength from the tight vocal harmonies and solid original material. Trapeze is a four-piece British rock group that displays scorching and flashy instrumental pyrotechnics against a framework of affecting vocal work. Several of the songs included here could become AOR staples.

Best cuts: "Don't Ask Me How I Know," "Hold On," "Your Are."

TOYS—Dashboard Music, Sectet Records SR8801. Produced by Jon Maye, Toys. Rochester, N.Y. is the home of both the label and the band. Its debut LP is ostensibly designed to parody the various permutations among current rock radio formats. As it is, this three man, two-woman band plays generally mainstream pop/rock with a few Frank Zappa-inspired surprises thrown in. It's an ambitious attempt for a debut LP, and the band has the chops to pull it off.

Best cuts: "Lights Of LA," "Heart On Fire," "Jesus Was A Rock'n'Roller."

Spotlight



RUSH—Moving Pictures, Mercury SRM14013. (PolyGram). Produced by Rush, Terry Brown. This Canadian trio uses the same formula here that has worked so well for it in the past: a mix of Ayn Rand-influenced libertarian philosophy and complex heavy rock with a slight jazz touch. As on its last LP, the top five "Permanent Waves," the compositions are fairly short compared to some of the band's earlier works. Thus the seven-song set is fairly commercial and stands a good chance of following in the platinum path of its predecessor. Lead singer Geddy Lee keeps his vocals in a listenable octave, unlike in the past when he would sometimes shriek. The anti-authoritarian "Witch Hung," "Tom Sawyer" and "Red Barchetta" should satisfy the more philosophically-oriented while the instrumental "XYZ" and rocking "The Camera Eye" should go down well with rockers.

Best cuts: Those mentioned.

Classical

BACH: THE SIX PARTITAS—Martins, piano, Arabesque 65013. Brazilian pianist Joao Carlos Martins is able to make Bach speak on a modern piano in very forceful, dynamic and human terms. Collectors will remember his Bach recordings of more than a decade ago, but this three-record set, the first installment in a promised digital recording survey of all solo Bach keyboard music, is the artist's first release since recovering from a soccer injury that halted his career. It contains six pieces made up of many short movements offering a kaleidoscopic view of Bach's musical world. Beautifully balanced and clear piano sound but a pressing not quite up to the same high standard unfortunately.

SHOSTAKOVICH—SYMPHONY NO. 7, "LENINGRAD"—London Philharmonic, Haitink, London Digital LDR10015. This famous war symphony is one of the century's most grandiose works so a digital recording should stir considerable interest. Also, most versions of the piece require two whole disks while here a Shostakovich ballet suite is added for good measure. Haitink has a reputation as one of the most solid and consistent performers on the podium today.

R. STRAUSS: ELEKTRA, SCENES—Borhek, Chicago Symphony Reiner, RCA Gold Seal AGL13879. The incredible intensity and virtuosity of the Chicago Symphony's playing under Fritz Reiner was nowhere more evident than in the opulent Romantic scores of Richard Strauss. Now RCA makes one of the prime examples of this collaboration available again, and for the first time in stereo sound—a superb audio document. The record also shows off one of the great sopranos of the last generation in scenes from the famous opera.

Billboard's Recommended LPs

pop

EDGAR WINTER—Standing On Rock, Blue Sky JZ36494 (CBS). Produced by Edgar Winter. On this LP Edgar Winter continues to mine the blue-eyed rock/soul vein that has been the bedrock of his career, and in "Martians" he returns to the "Frankenstein" theme that provided him with his greatest hit. This is a solid LP for Winter with no frills, but with a tight four-man band behind him. Three songs of love, stardom and rock'n'roll are strictly within the rock mainstream. AOR should love them. **Best cuts:** "Star Garbage," "Martians," "Everyday Man."

FOOLS—Heavy Mental, EMI America SW17046. Produced by Vini Poncia. As the title implies, this second set from the Massachusetts quintet is more hard rocking than its debut LP. Still, there is an element of pop which keeps this from becoming just another hard rock album. "Lost Number" and "Running Scared" even have a slight 1950's flavor. "Mind Control" has an irresistible guitar riff. The music is the type in which AOR radio is specializing in these days. **Best cuts:** "Mind Control," "Dressed In White," "What I Tell Myself," "Running Scared," "Around The Block."

VARIOUS ARTISTS—Dance Craze, Chrysalis CHR1299. Various producers. This is a best of English ska bands, recorded live. Included are selections from the repertoire of the Specials, English Beat, the Selector, and Madness as well as Bad Manners and the Body snatchers. This compilation LP points to the best of the relatively shortlived ska revival in Britain. The energy-spirit and good times are here, but unfortunately the genre is so limited that all the selections here could have been done by one group. **Best cuts:** "Three Minute Hero," "Inner London Violence," "Mirror In The Bath."

VARIOUS ARTISTS—I.R.S. Greatest Hits Vols. 2 & 3, I.R.S. SP70800 (A&M). Various producers. Four sides of the strangest vinyl ever to see the light of the day. This two-disk compilation of acts that have been on the I.R.S. roster ranges from excellent to unlistenable. Police fans may be glad to get the rare "Fallout" track which has not been on any of its

three LPs. Also, Police's Stewart Copeland (under the alias of Klark Kent) has two tracks. Patrick D. Martin's infectious "Computer Datin'" is great rock disco fare. **Best cuts:** Those mentioned plus Oingo Boingo's "Only A Lad," Wazmo Nariz's "Lips" and Flestones' "Cold, Cold Shoes."

BOSTON INCEST ALBUM—Sounds Interesting Records SILP005. Various producers. There's a variety of rock on this LP (14 cuts and nine different groups, some with overlapping personnel) and it's mostly bubbly pop rock with off-beat lyrics. Best groups are the Peytons, the Sidewinders and Professor Anonymous. **Best cuts:** "Matter of Time," "Streetwalker," "AM."

THE GOOD RATS—Great American Music, Great American Records GAR8003. Various producers. The "Rats" are back to manufacturing their own records. The group is good, and they won't give up. The strictly AOR fare served is polished and professional, and the vocals are fine. The songs approach the upper echelon of rock, and some succeed. The band has a loyal following. **Best cuts:** "New York Survivor," "Rock And Roll Point Of View."

SNOPEK—First Band On The Moon, Mountain Railroad MRS2795. (Jem). Produced by Stephen Powers. A most eclectic band. Snopak is popular in parts of the Midwest. The material here ranges from pure pop to jazz to Zappa-styled humorous rock. The best cut isn't on the LP itself but on a bonus single which is part of the package. Titled "If You Love Me, Kill Yourself," it is a witty, pointed look at love. This band could attract a large following if exposed. **Best cuts:** "If You Love Me, Kill Yourself," "Dr. Alles," "The Armpit Shuffle," "Living Out Loud."

VARIOUS ARTISTS—Green Bullfrog, EGY Street Records EGY16. Produced by Derek Lawrence. This LP, recorded in 1971, is a loose rock-blues jam featuring the talents of Ritchie Blackmore, Albert Lee, Ian Paice Roger Glover and Jim Sullivan. The LP features some flashy guitar playing though in keeping with the informal quality of the production, this is a jamming, not a hard rock LP. It's obvious the musicians here had a good good time playing and the tape machine was secondary. **Best cuts:** "My Baby Left Me," "I Want You," "Bullfrog."

soul

BILLY PRESTON—The Way I Am, Motown M8941. Produced by Paul Jabara, Bob Esty, Billy Preston, Hal Davis, Arthur G. Wright, Marty Paich, Berry Gordy, David Shire, David Paich. Preston's latest is a from-the-vaunts grab-bag mixing up-tempo danceable numbers in a funk groove with intense, passionate ballads. Among the more interesting cuts are covers of Van McCoy's "Baby I'm Yours" and the Eddie Kendricks' hit "Keep On Truckin'." **Best cuts:** Those cited plus "A Change Is Gonna Come."

MYSTIC MERLIN—Sixty Thrills A Minute, Capitol 12137. Produced by Alan Abrahams. Funky rhythms and catchy beats dominate this LP, whose most appealing uptempo cut, "Goddess Of The Boogie," contains an innovative percussion arrangement as part of the hook. Impressive vocals highlight the smooth ballad "Searching For The Meaning Of Love" and horns pace the title track. **Best cuts:** Those cited.

UNLIMITED TOUCH, Prelude, 12184. Produced by Raymond Reid, William Anderson. The repetitious beats and catchy melodies of disco music are used extensively on this seven-song album. "Feel The Music," "Private Party" and "I Hear Music In The Streets," all uptempo, are dominated by riveting guitar. Fluid vocals on the ballads "Happy Ever After" and "Searching To Find The One" make both appealing. **Best cuts:** Those mentioned.

country

BURRITO BROTHERS—Hearts On The Line, Curb JZ37004 (CBS). Produced by Michael Lloyd. This LP bears only faint resemblance to the witty, manic, rock-influenced days when the group was called the Flying Burrito Brothers, Gib Guilbeau, Pete Kleinow, Skip Battin and John Beland have come down to earth since then, and are not producing very good country MOR. It would have been nice to include some of the old flash for old fans, but such is not the case. **Best cuts:** "She's A Friend Of A Friend"

jazz

WARREN JAMES & FRIENDS—Floating On A Dark Wind, Waja JRC80864. Produced by Warren James. Seven-piece group with Carol Hedges, pianist, and the leader playing three different flutes produces pleasing sounds throughout its six-song program. The Ohio group rates kudos for its originality and musicianship. **Best cuts:** "Gymnopedie No. 2," "Pensive," "If I Love Again"

TED HARRIS PRESENTS—Five Giants Of Jazz, HD label unnumbered. New Jersey firm headed by saxophonist Harris presents Charles Williams, Richard Williams, Bill Edwards, Vernel Fournier and Tommy Flanagan in a seven-track program of modern small combo fare. The music is pleasant, if unspectacular. The charts are by Wilbert Dyer and Bill Lee. **Best cuts:** "Polka Dots And Moonbeams," "Bug's Delight."

FULL FAITH & CREDIT BIG BAND—Debut, Palo Alto PA8001. Produced by Dent Hand. Odd collection of California businessmen and musicians are presented here on seven highly contemporary charts by Ray Brown and Paul Potyten. It's powerful jazz, reminiscent of Stan Kenton's 1970s book. Herb Wong's notes are commendable. **Best cuts:** "The Song Is You," "Fast Bucks."

LAWRENCE WELK—Plays Dixieland, Ranwood R8194. Producer unlisted. This reissue from about 20 years ago brings together a super group including Van Eps, Fatool, Thow, Stephens, Schneider, Schaefer, Hurley and the late Stanley Wrightsman. And Peter Fountain on clarinet. It's a generous concert with 12 swinging evergreens cooked to a P (for perfection). Welk's accordion is missing—he knows his limitations—but credit him for assembling an extraordinary gang of two-beat experts and choosing the right tunes to show it off. **Best cuts:** "Sweethearts On Parade," "Should I," "S Wonderful."

VARIOUS ARTISTS—On Stage, Concord Jazz CJ143. Produced by Carl E. Jefferson. The producer and label chief mixes the talents of Red Norvo, Tal Farlow, Hank Jones, Jake Hanna and Ray Brown neatly through six lengthy tracks, taped live in 1976 in California. The dependable Norvo and his vibes and Farlow's guitar are the stars of this session. Both weave wondrous patterns with delicacy and taste. Tunes are all choice evergreens. **Best cuts:** "My Romance," "The Very Thought Of You."

WOODY HERMAN—Presents A Concord Jam, Concord Jazz CJ142. Produced by Carl E. Jefferson. A forceful live LP, taped last August at a California Jazz fest. Herman and a selected group of highly regarded jazzmen knock off eight cuts, and it's all hardcore swinging. Shining on their horns, with Herman, are Warren Vache, Scott Hamilton, Dave McKenna, Cal Tjader, among others. Another volume of this inspiring jam is due later in 1981. **Best cuts:** "Rose Room," "Apple Honey," "Just Friends."

PAUL ROBERTSON—The Song Is You, Palo Alto 8002. Produced by Paul Robertson. Northern California flutist and alto saxophonist is backed by a rhythm section, sans guitar, as he flies through six superior standards. Some of the tracks run too long (nine minutes of "Autumn Leaves") but Robertson maintains interest doubling on the two instruments. A model example of intimate, moving chamber jazz. **Best cuts:** "You Are Too Beautiful," "Here's That Rainy Day."

RAY LINN'S CHICAGO STOMPERS—Empty Suit Blues, Trend DS823. Produced by Albert Marx. Twelve well-selected titles comprise this dixieland entry by the veteran trumpeter, surrounded by Mary Ann McCall, singer, and Eddie Miller, Gary Foster, Bob Havens, Dave Frishberg, Dick Berk and Jim Hughart. They make for a convivial, coherent combo with solos by Miller and Foster (reeds) particularly musical. Good notes by Harvey Siders. **Best cuts:** "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry," "What Is There To Say," "Empty Suit Blues."

Spotlight—The most outstanding new product of the week's releases and that with the greatest potential for top of the chart placement; picks—predicted for the top half of the chart in the opinion of the reviewer; recommended—predicted to hit the second half of the chart in the opinion of the reviewer, or albums of superior quality. Albums receiving a three star rating are not listed. Review editor: Ed Harrison; Reviewers: Paul Grein, Douglas E. Hall, Kip Kirby, George Kopp, Roman Kozak, Irv Lichtman, Ed Morris, Richard M. Nusser, Alan Panchansky, Sam Sutherland, Robyn Wells, Adam White, Gerry Wood, Jean Williams.

Capitol Promo

LOS ANGELES—Capitol has sent 6,000 copies of A Taste Of Honey's "Sukiyaki" to Hot 100 and r&b radio stations—die-cut in the shape of Oriental fans. They're the first special promotional disks issued by the label since a series of colored vinyl LPs in 1978-79.

In January the same stations were serviced with ornamental Oriental fans, with an attached four-inch by four-inch card featuring the LP graphic. It depicts group members Hazel Payne and Janice Marie Johnson crossed in traditional Oriental costume, standing on a wooden bridge surrounded by foil-age.