

ALBUMS

SPOTLIGHT Predicted to hit top 10 on Billboard's Top Pop Albums chart or to earn platinum certification

NEW & NOTEWORTHY Highlights new and developing acts worthy of attention and other releases of special interest

PICKS New releases predicted to hit the top half of the chart in the format listed

RECOMMENDED Other releases predicted to chart in the respective format; also, other albums of superior quality

All albums commercially available in the U.S. are eligible for review

Send albums for review to: Fred Goodman, Billboard 1515 Broadway New York, N.Y. 10036

or Chris Morris, Billboard 9107 Wilshire Blvd. Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210

Country albums should be sent to: Ed Morris, Billboard 14 Music Circle E. Nashville, Tenn. 37203

POP

PICKS

PET SHOP BOYS

Oisco
PRODUCERS: Various
EMI America SQ-17246

Dance remixes of all the hits—plus some—by the biggest names in the business: Shep Pettibone, the Latin Rascals, Arthur Baker, etc.

KATE BUSH

The Whole Story
PRODUCERS: Various
EMI America PWAS-17242

Greatest-hits compilation has it all—except liner notes. Nice package does include British chart placement and picture-sleeve reproductions, however. Should prove to be a popular item during the few days left of the holiday gift-giving season.

RECOMMENDED

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

PRODUCER: Bill Krauss
Bar None A-HAON 002

Extremely clever, accessible outing by New York City duo. College radio should jump all over this one—it's got 19 songs to choose from—but first choice might be "Put Your Hand Inside The Puppet Head," a rollicking pop number enjoying a run on MTV. Contact: P.O. Box 1704, Main Post Office, Hoboken, N.J. 07030.

JULES SHEAR

Demo-itis
PRODUCER: None
Enigma ST-73244

Compilation of 8- and 24-track demos adroitly shows why Shear is one of the country's premier songwriters. Includes "If She Knew What She Wants" and "All Through The Night," hits for the Bangles and Cyndi Lauper, respectively. Alternative radio should pick up on "Chain Within A Chain" despite its rough edges.

ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST

Me And My Girl
PRODUCER: Thomas Z. Shepard
MCA Classics MCA-6196

This is the American cast version of the smash musical from London—where it began life 50 years ago—that

introduced "The Lambeth Walk" to the world. British cast star Robert Lindsay (also heard on Manhattan Records' London caster) charms on disk just as he does on stage, as do the Noel Gay tunes, mainly that dance and a wonderful ballad, "Once You Lose Your Heart."

PETE SEEGER, JANE SAPP & SI KAHN

Carry It On—Songs Of America's Working People
PRODUCER: Bruce Kaplan
Flying Fish FF104

Famed folksinger Seeger and activists/vocalists Sapp and Kahn collaborate on a vinyl songbook of songs with labor, civil-rights, and women's-rights themes. An instructive, listenable collection. Contact: 1304 W. Schubert, Chicago, Ill. 60614.

WILD SEEDS

Brave, Clean + Reverent
PRODUCER: Mike Stewart
Jungle JR-1009

Young Austin band brings garage fervor and top-notch songwriting (courtesy bandleader Michael Hall) to this crisp album of straight-ahead roof-raisers. Worth a listen by the majors. Contact: P.O. Box 3034, Austin, Texas 78764.

MANNHEIM STEAMROLLER

Fresh Aire VI
PRODUCER: Chip Davis
American Gramophone AG-386

Davis' charts yield a more full-bodied and dynamic sound than previous Aire dates, which may allow the arty ensemble to build beyond its devoted cult. The timing is right for these improvements because Mannheim's exposure is rolling; even TV sports shows are using the act's music.

SKINNY PUPPY

PRODUCERS: Cevin Key & David Ogilvie
Capitol ST-12545

Moody synthesizer rock driven by pounding rhythm has ominous overtones courtesy of growling vocals. Scant chance for exposure beyond college radio.

COL. BRUCE HAMPTON

Arkansas
PRODUCERS: Col. Hampton & Ricky Keller
Landslide 1012

Multi-instrumentalist Hampton's dadaist vision of rock with duo the Late Bronze Age earned him fans on the outer fringes. This solo album is more assorted weirdness aimed at listeners from the Beeheart school, and it boasts a strong cast of support players, including T. Lavitz, Paul Barrere, and Tinsley Ellis.

BABATUNDE OLATUNJI

Dance To The Beat Of My Drum
PRODUCERS: Mickey Hart, Babatunde Olatunji & Airto Moreira
Blue Heron BLU-706

Current interest in African music ignited by Paul Simon and Peter Gabriel should—hopefully—produce attention for some of Africa's better instrumentalists. Drummer Olatunji has been a lone voice for the music in the U.S. since the '50s, and who more than he deserves to get some of the acclaim?

TIN STAR

Somebody's Dreams
PRODUCER: Dan Fredman
Wrestler WR1586

Promising L.A. country rock quintet's recording bow alternates between old-fashioned country laments and newfangled drugstore cowboyisms. Contact: No. 443, 6520 Selma Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90058.

MATTHEW SWEET

Inside
PRODUCERS: Various
Columbia C 40417

Nebraskan popster's major-label debut is a remarkably cohesive effort considering that no two songs share the same producer and musicians and that 12 studios were used to record the album. Breathy first single, "Save Time For Me"—co-written by Jules

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

THELONIOUS MONK

The Complete Riverside Recordings
PRODUCER: Orrin Keepnews
Riverside R-022

Just in time for Christmas, the ultimate package for the jazz collector: an immaculately produced 22-album set of the great pianist-composer's 1955-61 output for the Riverside label. Set features 14 previously unreleased tracks and crucial alternate takes; sidemen include John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Coleman Hawkins, Gerry Mulligan, and Johnny Griffin. A terrific sequel to Fantasy's Miles Davis and Bill Evans sets, and unadulterated listening pleasure.

Shear—should find a home on college radio, at least.

ROBERT HAZARD

Darling
PRODUCERS: Robert Hazard & David Bianco
RMA-1186

Despite songwriting supersuccess, including Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want To Have Fun," Hazard's own releases have failed to click. This one, which he has put out on his own label after being dropped by RCA, seems unlikely to change things. Contact: 617-784-5912.

BLACK

PICKS

NEW EDITION

Under The Blue Moon
PRODUCER: Freddie Perren
MCA 5912

A promising idea—mating sugar-soulsters New Edition with classic doo wop and r&b material—misfires slightly because of mechanical production and dry singing. First single, "Earth Angel," slowed quickly, but the fans are already going for this one.

READY FOR THE WORLD

Long Time Coming
PRODUCERS: Ready For The World & Gary Spaniola
MCA 5829

RFTW seeks to shake off Princely comparisons and settle into its own groove, and, based on chart-topping ballad "Love You Down," band is indeed ready. Hints of Prince hover in spirit, but youthful, rock-flavored tunes reflect teen romance in more trad terms.

BOBBY BROWN

King Of Stage
PRODUCERS: Larry White, Larry Blackmon, John Luongo
MCA 5827

Former New Edition member strikes quickly with "Girlfriend" and should repeat even stronger with "Seventeen," which could drive solo debut past gold. Brown's special teen appeal crackles with unmistakable strength and style—and with new slants. Quality production signals launch of an explosive talent.

RECOMMENDED

RAY, GOODMAN & BROWN

Take It To The Limit
PRODUCERS: William Rhinehart, Al Goodman & Gene McFadden
EMI America ST-17235

Vocal trio's roots extend deep into the soul movement—before scoring in the early '80s with singles on Polydor, Ray, Goodman & Brown were members of the Moments. The group's return to a major label bodes well for the classic soul sound, and its

album, like the recent entry by the Manhattans, could score well with older listeners.

COUNTRY

RECOMMENDED

WANDA JACKSON

Rock'n'Roll Away Your Blues
PRODUCER: Kent Larsson
Varrick/Rounder VR-025

Jackson returns to her roots for this one; album features bang-up versions of "Rave On," "Stupid Cupid," and "Breathless," among others, and proves that even after 30 years, Jackson can rock with the best of them. What a voice.

THE NASHVILLE BLUEGRASS BAND

Idle Time
PRODUCERS: Bela Fleck, the Nashville Bluegrass Band
Rounder 0232

As befits the impeccable musical taste of producer (and banjo wizard) Fleck, the sound here is bright, clean, and vibrant; the songs themselves demonstrate bluegrass themes and licks at their best and most varied.

DAVID OLNEY

Eye Of The Storm
PRODUCERS: Thomas Goldsmith, Joe Fleming
Rounder 3099

Olney's intermittently off-key voice is distracting, but his all-seeing, all-knowing lyrics more than make up for it; instrumentation is mostly acoustic and country-sounding.

JAZZ

PICKS

NAJEE

Najee's Theme
PRODUCERS: Rahni Song, Charles Elgart & Najee
EMI America ST-17241

Alto saxophonist is far from a heavyweight on his instrument, but the intent here was to create an album that could cross to urban radio's quiet storm format—Najee and company succeed admirably. Look for the cover of Anita Baker's "Sweet Love" to turn the trick.

GEORGE HOWARD

A Nice Place To Be
PRODUCERS: George Howard & George Duke
MCA 5855

Relaxed soprano saxophone aided by vocals produces an album that, like Najee's, is designed to cross over. Artist has already enjoyed some success on the independent tba label and should get greater exposure via the new MCA association.

RECOMMENDED

JOHN ZORN

The Big Gundown: John Zorn Plays The Music Of Ennio Morricone
PRODUCER: Yale Evelev
Nonesuch/Icon 9 79139

Enfant terrible of the alto sax and veteran of New York's downtown scene finds fertile material for improvisation and arrangement in the work of spaghetti Western soundtrack composer Morricone.

KENNY BARRON

What If
PRODUCER: Matthias Winckelmann
Enja 5013

Crystal-clear digital recording of an exceptionally strong quartet. Pianist Barron's own material is exquisitely propelled by trumpeter Wallace Roney and John Stubblefield's tenor sax, aided by rhythm team of Cecil McBee and Victor Lewis.

YANA PURIM

For A Distant Lover
PRODUCERS: Yana Purim & Arnaldo de Souteiro
Pausa PR-7203

Much in keeping with work of sister Flora, set by Brazilian singer Yana Purim has some distinguished guest stars—including brother-in-law Airto, bassist Steve Swallow, and Brazilian legend Luiz Bonfá. Best track: new rendition of Bonfá's own "Manha De Carnaval" from "Black Orpheus."

GOSPEL

PICKS

STEVE GREEN

For God And God Alone
PRODUCER: Greg Nelson
Sparrow SPR 1120

Green is the consummate male choir soloist, and producer Nelson captures him perfectly, with grace and majesty; album is geared toward the church, and Green's track record has shown that its consumers respond in numbers to high-quality material. This album has got the goods.

SAM COOKE & THE SOUL STIRRERS

Gospel In My Soul
PRODUCER: Uncredited
VJ VJS-18013

To say Sam Cooke is a legend is a gross understatement—but many don't realize he was a gospel superstar before he conquered the pop world. This collection of previously unreleased tracks was cut in the midst of his pop success; Cooke sings lead only on four of the tracks, but, as Michael Och's liner notes point out, this album is an important chapter in the history of his career.

JIMMY SWAGGART

It's Beginning To Rain
PRODUCER: Joe Huffman
Jim R03645

Jimmy Swaggart sells a lot of records because of his high visibility. But Swaggart has been underestimated as an artist; these eight songs, on which Swaggart proves he is an adept piano player, will turn the ears of those who listen. An excellent array of songs in the traditional, mostly ballad, realm.

CLASSICAL

RECOMMENDED

CHOPIN: WALTZES

Vladimir Ashkenazy, Piano
London 414 600

London has pulled 19 waltzes out of past Chopin recital disks and reassembled them chronologically in this handy and comprehensive album. Sound is compatible despite intermix of digital and analog sources and diverse recording dates and locations. Good catalog stock.

ELGAR: INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO; SERENADE FOR STRINGS/VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: "GREENSLEEVES" & "TALLIS" FANTASIAS
Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
Deutsche Grammophon 419 191

Beautifully played by the conductorless ensemble, even though it can't quite match the interpretive insight delivered by a master directorial hand, as in the recent reissue of Barbini readings of the very same repertoire.

SCHUBERT: QUINTET IN C FOR STRINGS

Orford String Quartet, Ofra Harnoy
Fanfare DFL 9025

A lyrical and expressive reading without the intervention of competing personalities, which can only enhance the growing reputation of the Canadian group, partnered here expertly with young cellist Harnoy. Will repay dealer recommendation.