

MUSIC

REVIEW

The Babys—*Head First*

Imperceptibly enough, the Babys have unconsciously released a third album to soil the record charts of the world. Diminutive in stature, this album is not music in any mature form. Instead it contains atonal tantrums of sound, gurgling and spitting up on the listener. It refreshes memories of teething pain and diaper rash.

Head First is not a good album by any stretch of the imagination and rightly should have been entitled *Breach Position*. It contributes nothing but noise and aggravation.

The songs are of minor consequence, arranged for no apparent reason in an increasingly bad sequence. "Not one song is noteworthy and not one note is songworthy," mused the ever-pragmatic David Joost upon overhearing the Babys. The Babys affect different people in different ways; some want to care for them, and others want to commit infanticide. These guys are small potatoes, they're toddling thumbsuckers in a Ted Nugent world. And their new album, *Head First*, should only be the way they fall out of their highchairs.

—Victor Sylvia

Generation X—*Valley of the Dolls*

How many of you remember Ian Hunter and Mott the Hoople? Let's see some hands.

Well, after a few unsuccessful solo ventures, after a long semi-successful career with Mott the Hoople, Ian Hunter has switched to producing new talent. Case in point, Generation X, a run-of-the-mill, rag-clad, obscenity-spewing, two-chord punk band.

Valley of the Dolls kicks off to a better-than-average start with "Running with the Boss Sound," a catchy little nonsense tune that will get any punk-junkies' veins throbbing. However, the remaining eight songs don't cut.

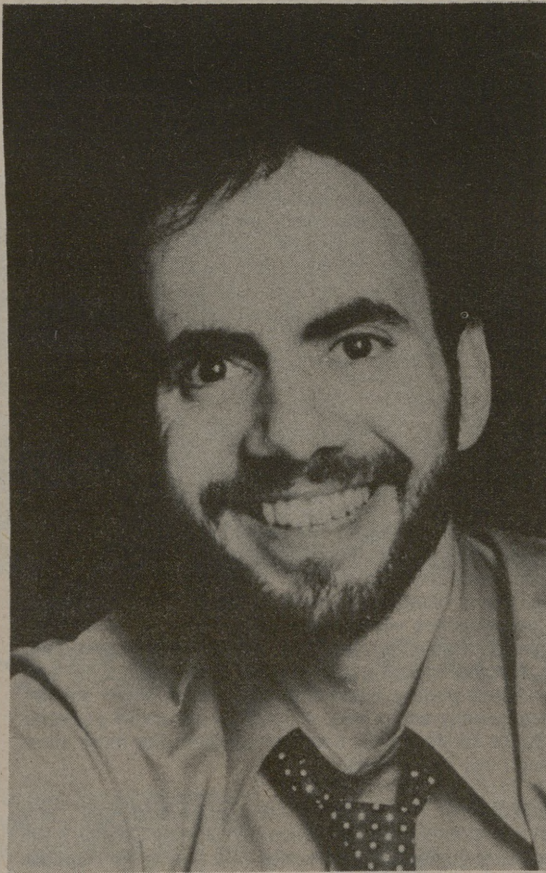
Despite potentially good-sounding titles, such as "King Rocker," "Love Like Fire" and the electrifying "Night of the Cadillacs," this is not a punk album. Not even close. Nor is it a rock album. And despite the fact that it is made of vinyl and has a hole in the middle, I doubt if it is any kind of album at all.

Generation X is second generation punk with less slice and more deceit. So as a public service to punk rock fans, if the real thing is all you'll accept, pick up the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks*, Iggy and the Stooges' *Raw Power*, or even the Dead Boys' *Young, Loud and Snotty*, but leave this one to fade into obscurity, where it came from.

—Victor Sylvia

Steve Goodman—*High and Outside*

Many of you who went to see Steve Martin here last spring may remember his warm-up act, Steve Goodman. He wowed the crowd with his own brand of tongue-in-



Steve Goodman

cheek folk-rock. One song in particular, "Men who love Women who love Men," which is included on this album, got a rise out of the audience.

The short but potent singer is short but not quite as potent on *High and Outside* as he was in concert. The production value and backup is poor. Next time, go with the one-man show, Steve.

One of the better songs on this album is entitled "Hand it to You." Here's a bit of it:

*I kissed the bride, and we settled down
And it wasn't very long before the stork came 'round
He's got three little babies and a mortgage too
When I get my paycheck I've got to hand it to you.*

Or if you have different tastes, how about:

*There are those who make love for pay
There are those who make love any way
Over in the bar with the bottle of Scotch
There are those who'd rather just watch.*

So there you have it, an album of fine songs by an aspiring artist who should follow the example of his friend Steve Martin and release live albums.

—Victor Sylvia

Michel Colombier—*Michel Colombier*

Impressive. Tom Scott, Herbie Hancock, Larry Carlton and the London Symphony Orchestra have collaborated with Michel Colombier to create one of the best jazz albums in recent years. Colombier's style is consistently fresh and innovative. Every note hits the mark and reaches new heights in jazz expressionism.

Two highlights are "Do It" and "Spring." The first features Hancock on clarinet and captures all we've come to expect from him. "Spring" has Carlton on guitar, Jaco Pastorius on bass and Colombier on piano and synthesizer.

Words (or at least my words) can't describe its intensity. The joyous awakening after darker times is the theme, of course. But you'll have to experience it for yourself. I suggest that you buy as many jazz albums as you can, and you can start with *Michel Colombier*.

—Victor Sylvia

Badfinger—*Airwaves*

I recently read in Rolling Stone that Warner Brothers will soon start decreasing the number of albums they release. It seems that they're wasting too much money by releasing any old thing. If other companies take up a similar attitude, performers might see this as an incentive to polish their product before unleashing it on the unsuspecting fans. And many groups would vanish completely. Such would be the fate of Badfinger.

Do you remember when Badfinger's sound was compared to that of the Beatles? Initially the group disliked comparison and strived for an individual sound. Well, now they've got it, and no one likes them.

So far I haven't said anything about *Airwaves*. That's because very little can be said about it. One song, "Lost Inside Your Love," a formula hit, might get a response from the public, but I doubt it.

What is happening? Is disco the best we can do? With today's technology and expertise, one would think that music need not be so primitive. In the 1960's, even with the drugs and violence, music was often pure and meaningful. But those days are gone forever, and as the sterile 1970's slowly slip away, the manure continues to hit the fans.

—Victor Sylvia

Police blends reggae and pop for 'original' sound

By Bruce Meyer
United Press International

In the formula-oriented, get-on-the-bandwagon world of rock 'n' roll, any artist who comes up with something original — even a new synthesis of existing forms

— is assured of considerable notoriety, if not success in the marketplace.

Only a handful of suchnd groups appear each year, but the crop so far this year is showing a lot of promise. Among the most promising is a unique Anglo-

American trio who call themselves The Police.

Distinct from most recent three-piece rock bands, the Police rely not on thunderous power-chord riffs to give their music depth, but on a deft blend of spare, driving New Wave snarl and rhythms borrowed from Jamaican reggae and other West Indian pop forms.

It's a powerful combination, and The Police make it all work with precision playing and clever lyrics, as demonstrated on their debut album, "Outlandos d'Amour."

The tunes include a bizarre reggae-punk love song, "Roxanne," a tongue-in-cheek suicide note from an unrequited lover, "Can't Stand Losing You," and an outright farce about a bright young fellow who marries his inflatable lover, "Be My Girl."

If all this sounds strange, it is. But it is also very good music from a band with more than a few really original ideas and enough talent to make them work.

"We started out in London with a real punk guitarist," says

drummer Stewart Copeland, the American in the group. "He could only play three chords, but he loved them and I loved the way he played them. But Sting (the bass player-lead singer) and I, who have been playing longer, we really wanted to explore — to look for something. And while I don't regard musical proficiency as being very important, you have to be able to do what you want to do."

The result was the addition of Andy Summers, a highly proficient guitarist, to The Police — and the end of the band's pure-punk image. With Summers offering the ability to handle even the most complex demands of Sting's writing, The Police blossomed into one of the best British exports since Elvis Costello was first heard from a couple of years ago.

The album, good as it is, scarcely scratches the surface of

the band's abilities. It's basically a record of The Police stage show, performed in the studio; anyone who has seen their riveting presence on stage will know just how much potential they have, given a bit more production experience and a shot of money.

But Copeland says the band will never relinquish its determination to keep shoving at the musical boundaries.

"Philosophically speaking, it's always been important to me — the idea of making music that just gets me off. Taking chances is important. But when you spend a fortune in the studio, you have a commitment to produce a commercial product. We don't want those kinds of limits."

That's a good rock 'n' roll attitude, whether it holds up over the years or not. And with rock now looking its fourth decade squarely in the face, attitude can be very important.

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