

Album reviews



Agnetha Faltskog
Wrap Your Arms Around Me
 Polydor

This is the second solo project by members of the supergroup Abba. But whereas last year's work by Frida was an experiment in new styles, this album by Agnetha Faltskog relies almost

solely on the same type of material that Abba has done for years.

Critics are constantly attacking members of Abba in print for various reasons: they are recording the same songs over and over again, they are emotionless or perhaps they are just too popular to be any good. The only problem that Abba has is its refusal to take chances with songs. The melodies are catchy, but after a few listenings the shallowness of the recordings outstrips them.

Agnetha's album falls into the same mold — when she plays around some it's good; when she doesn't, it is listenable but plain. The title song, "Wrap Your Arms Around Me," is one of the former. A deep string line gives this cut the depth it needs to succeed. Another, "Stand By My Side," gets its extra shot of energy from an added guitar, much heavier than found anywhere else on the album.

I guess in the end this album is similar to meeting the blonde bombshell next door — the one

totally unencumbered by a mind. She is a lot of fun to look at, but a bore to be with. With the music here, we might as well treat Agnetha as the girl next door.



Wham! U.K.
Fantastic
 Columbia

This is the sort of album that I

have no trouble categorizing as Eurodisco. *Fantastic* aims for the dance floor and no more; with that in mind, I would say that it's a great album.

Looking at the cover of this album, I didn't quite know what I was getting into. Although I had heard that their first single was a dance cut, I was faced with two guys in leather and earrings. The image on the cover is the one that is misleading though, lead singer George Michael floats in and out of falsetto with the same ease of any good soul artist.

"Bad Boys" is the first song and probably the best. It winds up to a fast speed and uses some tight horn sounds to push through to the ending. This same style continues for most of the album so that you really have little time to catch that the lyrics actually have some ideas behind them.

The only time the album slows down for an entire song is "Nothing Looks the Same in the Light," a better-than-average-

ballad for a band that tries to appeal to a dance audience. But the real strength of this album is its faster cuts like "Young Guns" and "Wham Rap."

On *Fantastic* we are beginning to see the integration of the British synth-pop and American funk, and although it isn't a great innovation in the music that people dance to, it is a satisfying move forward. I expect that you will be hearing more about this band in the next few months.

— Cary Stegall

***** Exceptional
 **** Very good
 *** Average
 ** Poor
 * Trash

Review albums are provided by Hastings Books and Records.

Upcoming fall films to feature big-name stars

by Cary Stegall
 Battalion staff

I was in the horrible situation last weekend of wanting to go see a movie and realizing that there was absolutely nothing I wanted to see. With classic summer drivel like "Hercules" and "Metalstorm" playing in town, it's not much wonder that I was depressed.

Fortunately, starting today and continuing through most of the fall, there will be a steady stream of new films pouring into the thea-

ters. The fall movies show a lot of best-seller adaptations and many of the big name stars. Of course, we also have some of those probable dogs like the Pia Zadora epic and, even better, *Amityville 3-D*. Some of the better prospects with their tentative release dates are as shown.

Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence (already out) — David Bowie's third time on the big screen this year (*The Hunger, Yellowbeard*) has him cast as a milit-

ary leader in a Japanese prison camp. This got excellent remarks from the audience at Cannes, so it probably will be another good mark on Bowie's screen credits.

Daniel (Sept. 23) — This is the adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel*, a fictional account of two Communist sympathizers who are executed for treason in the days of McCarthy. Tim Hutton (in full beard) plays the couple's son, who becomes a part of the counter-culture a decade later. I am expecting a lot from director Sidney Lumet in this one.

Zelig (Sept. 23) — Apparently Woody Allen has made another financially successful movie. After all, it has been quite a while since *Annie Hall*. Mia Farrow co-stars with Allen in this story of a social chameleon whose life unfolds before us in the style of an antique picture reel.

Giant (Sept. 23) This re-release of the 1956 version may take a back seat to much of the newer fare, but with stars like Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and James Dean it certainly has more than a chance. Although the film was over three hours long when it first came out, more footage has been added. Hopefully not too much.

Never Say Never Again (Sept. 30) We finally get to see if Sean Connery can recreate the original Bond. There has been little talk about the plot, but that has never been a real selling point for any of the Bond films. Max Von Sydow should make a marvelously vile antagonist.

The Big Chill (Sept. 30) — Written by Lawrence Kasdan of *Body Heat* fame, this movie is about the reunion of four couples who were '60s radicals. The stars of this show a lot of promise: William Hurt, Mary Kay Place, Glenn Close and Tom Berenger. After the crowds flock to see 007, hope-

fully they will take a look at this one.

Beyond the Limit (Sept. 30) — This is going to be one hot weekend with five unique movies debuting. Not only do we have Richard Gere in this one, Michael Caine is his co-star. Caine plays an alcoholic minister who is kidnapped by South American terrorists in this version of Graham Greene's *The Honorary Consul*.

All the Right Moves (Sept. 30) — Tom Cruise, star of this summer's *Risky Business*, plays a high school football player trying to get a college scholarship. Considering that Cruise didn't want to go to college himself, this certainly is becoming a recurring plot.

Fanny and Alexander (Sept. 30) — Supposedly this will be the final film directed by Ingrid Bergman. The title characters are two children in a large family with an unusually cruel step-father. Early word reports that Bergman has decided to retire on an "up" note.

Windy City (Oct. 7) — One more film about a menage a trois (this is becoming one of Hollywood's favorites) with John Shea, Kate Capshaw and Josh Mostel (even kinkier than most). It is not a comedy, however, and looks like one of the shakier titles so far. This is probable sleeper material.

Brainstorm (Oct. 7) — It will be interesting to see if a cohesive movie results when its star dies halfway through production. Of course Natalie Wood is that person in *Brainstorm* and I assume much of the end product will depend on the performances of Christopher Walken, Louise Fletcher and Cliff Robertson.

Romantic Comedy (Oct. 7) — Will Dudley Moore finally be able to redeem himself to theater owners? Some of the advance word on this one is not very positive, but Dudley certainly has thrown a few curves in the past.

Rumblefish (Oct. 14) — This may be one of the best sequels we will ever see, mainly because it has such loose ties to Francis Ford Coppola's *The Outsiders*, released earlier this year. Two of its stars, Matt Dillon and Diane Lane, are repeats, but not in the same roles. This one is based on an S.E. Hinton book also.

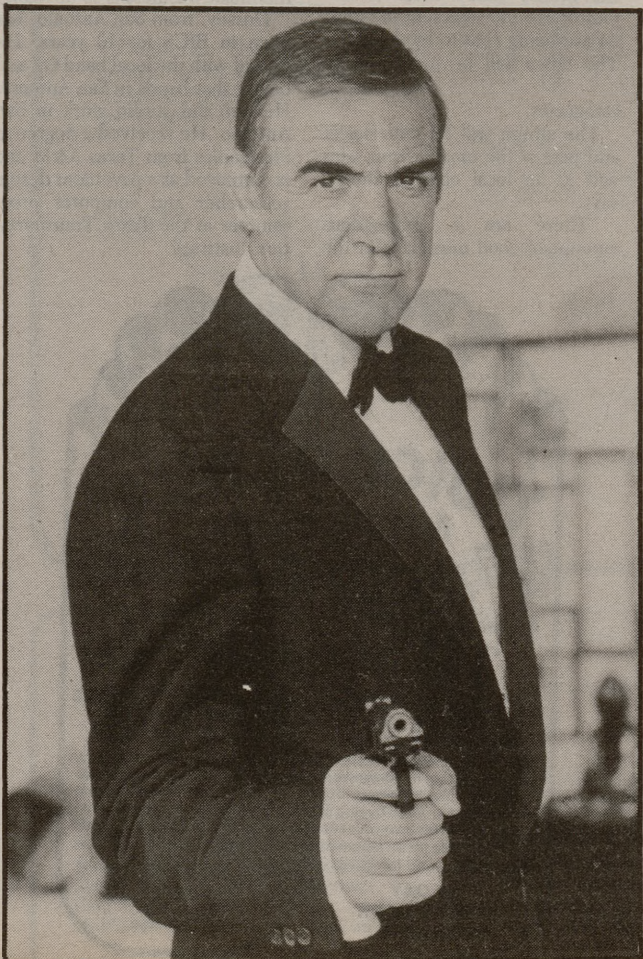
The Right Stuff (Oct. 21) This is the story of the American space program, both its technological steps and the personal lives of its celebrities. The book by Tom Wolfe was a bestseller, and an impressive cast could make this movie into the "leader of the pack" for late autumn. A few of the cast members are Barbara Hershey, Levon Helm, and Dennis Quaid.

Crackers (Oct. 21) All I know is that it's a comedy, it's based on a totally original idea and it stars Sean Penn. Apparently Penn is expected to carry the movie by himself. We'll find out.

The Dead Zone (Oct. 28) Just in time for Halloween we have the latest movie adaption of a Stephen King novel. The story concerns a man named John Smith who gains the power of precognition after an auto accident. This should be the best King work yet with Martin Sheen starring.

Deal of the Century (Oct. 28) Chevy Chase tries again. Hopefully, co-stars Gregory Hines and Sigourney Weaver can help Chase destroy his recent streak of box office bombs. William Friedkin is the director, and he, too, could use a hit to his name.

Richard Pryor Live on Bourbon Street (Oct. 28) If there is any city in the world that can handle Pryor better than the rest, New Orleans is probably it. Pryor is at his best when he gets really raunchy and I expect that is what we'll be getting.



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