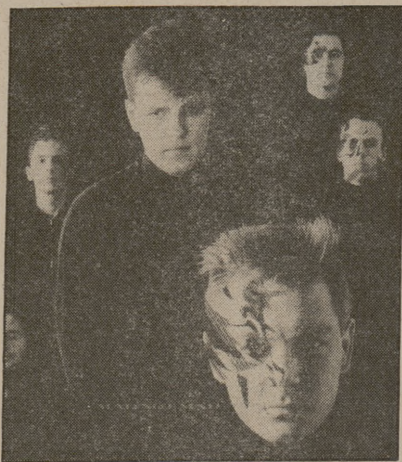


RECORD REVIEWS



**"Mad Not Mad"
Madness
Geffen Records**

The title of Madness' fifth American album, "Mad Not Mad," is misleading. It's true that the album is "not mad" in that it's not as crazy as their earlier albums. And it's also not "mad" because it doesn't show any anger about anything that the band might see wrong with the world.

Madness was one of the best bands to arise out of England's ska and reggae revival of the late 1970's. Unlike some of the other bands that appeared at the time, the English Beat, the Police, and UB40, Madness was basically a fun band. While other bands made social statements about contemporary English society, Madness' lyrics dealt with humorous subjects and their music was up-tempo and happy. Their first two albums on Sire Records, "One Step Beyond" and "Absolutely," were huge hits in England and cult favorites here. "Madness," their first album on Geffen Records, combined ska with a pop flavor that yielded two monster hits, "House of Fun" and "Our House." On last year's "Keep Moving," also on Geffen Records, the band began to drop ska altogether in favor of a more mainstream pop style. "Mad Not Mad" continues the deterioration of Madness.

For the most part, the album is over-produced, over-orchestrated and over-synthesized. The band has stopped using their unique brand humor and tries to make some kind of serious lyrical statement. Their attempts at satire on "Uncle Sam" and sentimentality on "Yesterday's Man" fall flat on their respective faces.

There are only three songs that are even able to be listened to on the new album. "Sweetest Girl" and the highly percussive "Coldest Day" are not too bad and recall the band's earlier style. "Tears You Can't Hide" show that when they want to, Madness can play reggae.

The biggest problem is that the album is neither funny nor fun.

by Karl Pallmeyer

"Frank Zappa Meets the Mothers of Prevention" Frank Zappa Barking Pumpkin Records

On Sept. 19, Frank Zappa spoke at the Senate Commerce Committee's hearing on "porn rock." And in "Frank Zappa Meets the Mothers of Prevention," he gives his musical answer to the question of rock censorship as asked by the Parents' Music Resource Center.

The PMRC, as you all should know, was formed by a group of women who were upset by the lyrics being sung by artists like Prince, AC/DC, Madonna, Sheena Easton, Twisted Sister, Motley Crue, the Rolling Stones, W.A.S.P. and Donny Osmond. These women think there should be warning labels on albums so young, impressionable children won't buy certain albums that will cause them to become rapists, murderers, drug users, atheists and Democrats. These women, like most people who are upset about something, could have written to their senators or congressmen. But these women, unlike most people who are upset about something, happened to be married to their senators or congressmen.

For the past 20 years Zappa has been one of the most innovative and influential figures in American music. In the late sixties Zappa and the Mothers of Invention came out with "Freak Out," the first double-album in rock history, and "We're Only In It For the Money," an audio masterpiece that satirized every aspect of sixties society. Zappa, on his own, has written the music for ballets, orchestras, stage plays and films as well as rock 'n' roll albums. "Frank Zappa Meets the Mothers of Prevention" is yet another masterpiece from Zappa.

First of all the title, "Frank Zappa Meets the Mothers of Prevention," has to be the best album title of 1985. If you don't get the joke it wouldn't do any good for me to explain it to you. The back cover features an excellent drawing of a woman putting the Bill of Rights through a meat grinder — the inevitable result if we, the people, don't keep a close watch on the actions of the PMRC and other pressure groups. On the album cover and liner notes, Zappa encourages the record buyers to register and vote.

Censorship is not a new subject to Zappa. One of his rock operas, "Joe's Garage," deals with a future world where rock music has been outlawed. Last year's "You Are What You Is" album had several songs about the rise of TV evangelism and its threat to free speech. "Thing-Fish," a musical play released earlier this year, is a scathing attack on Broadway, yuppies, TV evangelists, music critics, religion, racism, the prison system, technology and Reagan's America.

The new album begins with "We're Turning Again," a song that de-

scribes the rise of the new right. Zappa attributes this change to the same "Plastic People" who tried to be liberal in the sixties because it was the fashion and are now trying to be conservative because it has become the fashion of the eighties.

"Yo Cats," sung in scat-jazz style by long-time Zappa collaborator Ike Willis, is an attack on the senators and congressmen who are more interested in getting re-elected than protecting the rights of all people.

Side two is dedicated to a musical impression of the "porn rock" hearing that is similar to Paul Hardcastle's "19," John Lennon's "Revolution 9" and Zappa's own "Return of the Son of Monster Magnet." "Little Beige Sambo" and "Aerobics In Bondage" act as the overture and finale to the "Porn Wars" suite.

"Porn Wars" features audio excerpts from the hearing mixed in with music performed by Zappa. It's funny to hear PMRC president Tipper Gore ask Zappa about the toys his children used to play with, or to hear Sen. Albert Gore, Tipper's husband, tell Zappa he's fan of his music.

It's not very funny, however, to hear Sen. Ernest (Fritz) Hollings say: "If I could find some way constitutionally to do away with it ('porn rock') I would."

The only thing that came out of the hearings is that the committee *hinted* they might take action if the record industry didn't clean up its act. Stanley Gortikov, president of the Recording Industry Association of America, gave in to this blackmail and pressured the record companies to put warning labels on albums that may contain "offensive" material. Zappa has put the following warning label on his new album:

Warning/Guarantee:

This album contains material which a truly free society would neither fear or suppress.

In some socially retarded areas, religious fanatics and ultra-conservative political organizations violate your First Amendment Rights by attempting to censor rock and roll albums. We feel that this is un-Constitutional and un-American.

As an alternative to these government-supported programs (designed to keep you docile and ignorant), Barking Pumpkin is pleased to provide stimulating digital audio entertainment for those of you who have outgrown the ordinary.

The language and concepts contained herein are GUARANTEED NOT TO CAUSE ETERNAL TORMENT IN THE PLACE WHERE THE GUY WITH THE HORNS AND POINTED STICK CONDUCTS HIS BUSINESS.

This Guarantee is as real as the threats of the video fundamentalists who use attacks on rock music in their attempt to transform America into a nation of check-mailing nincompoops (in the name of Jesus Christ). If there is a hell, its fires wait for them, not us.

by Karl Pallmeyer



**"The Rhythmattest"
Stewart Copeland
A&M Records**

Sting has been highly visible during the year. With his solo album, "Dream of the Blue Turtles," an American and European tour with his new band, his latest film, "Bring on the Night," about his new band, and acting roles in "Dune" and "The Bride," Sting has eclipsed the popularity of the Police.

"The Rhythmattest," the new album from Police drummer Stewart Copeland, is a study in music instead of popularity.

"The Rhythmattest," is Copeland's attempt to trace the rhythms of rock 'n' roll back to their African origins. The album, recorded in various studios and villages during Copeland's trip through Africa, features tribal drums, instruments, chants and dances alongside 20th century electronics. Copeland plays drums, percussion, guitar, bass, piano and synthesizer to add a new dimension to the primitive sounds.

A videocassette version of the album, available through mail order, documents Copeland's musical experiment with African music in much the same way "Bring on the Night," documents Sting's experiment with jazz/pop music.

Copeland worked with lyricist Ray Lema on the songs "Koteja (Oh Bolilla)," "Liberte" and "Kembra." The lyrics, sung by Lema, are a mixture of African dialects and English. The music is a similar mixture of African and Anglo styles. Although Copeland doesn't sing on the album, his narrations for "Serengeti Long Walk" and "African Dream" help tell the story hidden in his music.

Copeland's music away from the Police includes the soundtrack for Francis Ford Coppola's "Rumblefish" and the music for the San Francisco Ballet's production of "King Lear," but they, as well as "The Rhythmattest," are not destined to top the music charts. "The Rhythmattest" makes the listener become a part of the musical landscape. Unfortunately most listeners don't like an album if it makes them think or feel.

by Karl Pallmeyer