

# Album Reviews

Ratings based on a five-star system.  
Five — Excellent; One — Pathetic.



**"Eye of the Zombie"**  
John Fogerty  
Warner Bros. Records  
★★

As leader of Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty was responsible for tons of hits and about a dozen great albums. When the band split up in 1972, the music world became a darker place. But Fogerty seemed ripe for an incredible solo career.

In 1973, Fogerty released an album of traditional country and bluegrass songs under the name of a fictional group called the Blue Ridge Rangers, when in fact he played all the instruments himself. "Blue Ridge Rangers" was technically good, but Fogerty's versions of the old songs were too studious to really jam.

Fogerty's second solo album, "John Fogerty" (1975), was much better and contained a couple of excellent hits.

It took ten years before Fogerty released his next album, "Centerfield." "Centerfield" was a killer collection of songs that brought the Creedence

sound into the '80s. It's too bad that "Eye of the Zombie," Fogerty's newest album, isn't so hot.

"Eye of the Zombie" is the first album since Creedence's "Mardi Gras" in 1972 on which Fogerty works with a band. Drummer John Robinson and bassist Neil Stubenhaus are competent musicians but there is no fire in their playing. Fogerty's guitar and keyboard work is mostly uninspired except for a few brief moments.

The album starts off with an instrumental, "Goin' Back Home." The song is unusually pretentious for Fogerty but he does some excellent work on guitar.

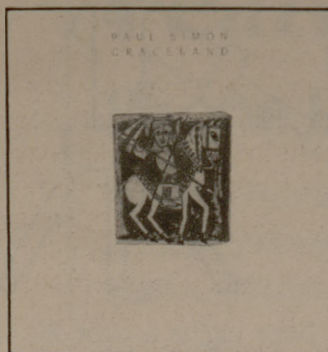
"Goin' Back Home" leads into the title track. The lyrics have the Cajun rock usually associated with Creedence but the music isn't much fun. The same can be said for most of the songs — they're not much fun.

Only two of the album's songs stand out from the rest. "Violence is Golden," a satiric attack on mercenaries who sell weapons on the black market, shows that Fogerty has a social conscience. "Sail Away," with its reggae sound, is a nice, slow tune.

After "Centerfield," it

looked like Fogerty was going to become a musical force for the '80s, just like the powerful force he was during the '60s. "Eye of the Zombie" shows that he is going to have to work harder.

—Review by Karl  
Pallmeyer



**"Graceland"**  
Paul Simon  
Warner Bros. Records  
★★★★

What do Elvis Presley and Nelson Mandela have in common?

Not much, except that Paul Simon has just released an album that combines the rock 'n' roll started by Presley with musical styles of South Africa, Mandela's home.

"Graceland" is Simon's strongest album in years. Most of the album was recorded with South African musicians in Johannesburg. The music incorporates South African styles and rhythms known as

"Mbaqanga" or "township jive" with Simon's poetic lyrics.

Simon was inspired to experiment with South African music when he heard a tape of songs by the Boyoyo Boys, Tao Ea Matsekha, General M.D. Shirinda and the Gaza Sisters and several other South African bands. Simon rewrote "Gumboots," a song by the Boyoyo Boys, and used some of the band's members on his recording. Simon also collaborated with General M.D. Shirinda and the Gaza Sisters on "I Know What I Know." The lyrics are a little weak, but the sound is real cool.

Simon has rarely uses political themes in his music, "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" and "Silent Night — Seven o'Clock News" being two notable exceptions, and the South African political situation is only mentioned in a couple of songs on this album. "The Boy in the Bubble," written by Simon and Forere Motlohe- loa, leader of Tao Ea Matsekha, asks the musical question: since we live in a world where science has made all things possible, why do we have apartheid?

"Homeless," an a-

pella number written by Simon and Joseph Shabalala, is a touching portrait of the life of black South Africans who are not considered to be legal citizens of their own country. The song features lyrics in Zulu sung by Ladysmith Black Mambazo, one of the first South African vocal groups to be recognized internationally.

A few Americans guest star on "Graceland" as well. The Everly Brothers harmonize with Simon on the title track, an interesting combination of the rockabilly sound of the early Sun recordings and the rhythms of Africa. Linda Ronstadt is guest vocalist on "Under African Skies."

The Louisiana zydeco band Good Rockin' Dopsie and the Twisters is featured on "That Was Your Mother." The California mariachi rock band Los Lobos is featured on "All Around the World or the Myth of Fingerprints."

Simon's strength has always been in his lyrics but the lyrics on "Graceland" leave a little to be desired. But the music is so outstanding that the deficiency of the lyrics is almost forgotten.

Review by Karl Pallmeyer

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