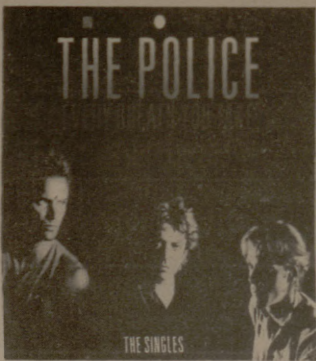


Reviews



"Every Breath You Take —The Singles"
The Police
 A&M Records
 ★★☆☆½

"Every Breath You Take —The Singles" serves two purposes: it is a fantastic collection of the greatest songs from the Police and it provides an retrospective look at the way the band has changed over the years.

It was almost 10 years

ago when the Police rose out of the post-punk/new wave movement in England. The band consisted of former English teacher Gordon Sumner, who adopted the name "Sting" for stage purposes, on bass and vocals, former Curved Air member Stewart Copeland on drums and Henri Padovani on guitar. Andy Summers, a session guitarist with impressive credentials, replaced Padovani shortly after the band released its first single "Fall Out."

The band's music was a wonderful combination of punk, reggae, jazz and rock 'n' roll. The band's lyrics, mostly written by Sting, were more intelligent than those of other bands.

While most bands were

singing about sex and drugs, the Police made allusions to Homer and Goethe (in "Wrapped Around Your Finger"), Vladimir Nabakov (in "Don't Stand So Close to Me"), Arthur Koestler (for the album title "Ghost in the Machine"), and Carl Jung (for the album title "Synchronicity"). Despite the scholarly lyrics, the band's music was still fun.

The Police released five great albums that were extremely successful on both sides of the Atlantic. That much success caused Sting to make the most fatal mistake a rock star can make: he began to take himself too seriously. Aside from being over-prominent in Police videos, Sting started taking roles in films such as "Quadrophrenia," "Dune" and "The Bride."

In 1985, Sting released an album, "The Dream of the Blue Turtles," with a band formed out of an impressive collection of jazz musicians. The album received great critical and popular success, so Sting went on tour with his new band. The tour spawned a

live double-album set and a full-length feature film that included footage of rehearsals before the tour, scenes of shows during the tour and Sting's wife having their baby.

Currently Sting is tied with Phil Collins for the title of "Most Egotistical Man in British Music." The Police have suffered as a band due to Sting's growing pretentiousness and interest in outside projects.

"Every Breath You Take —The Singles" shows how much the band has changed over the years. The band's early songs were fun. "Roxanne" and "Can't Stand Losing You" from the 1979 debut album, "Outlandos d'Amour," "Message in a Bottle" and "Walking on the Moon" from the 1979 "Reggatta de Blanc" album, and "De Do Do De Da Da Da," from the 1980 "Zenyatta Mondatta" album were hot, danceable, and for the most part, light in tone.

When the band released "Ghost in the Machine" in 1981, the songs became darker and

more serious. With the exception of "Every Little Thing She Does is Magic," the songs from "Ghost in the Machine," "Invisible Sun" and "Spirits in the Material World," are not much fun. That's not to say the songs are bad, they are just not as much fun as the older stuff. The songs from the 1983 "Synchronicity" album, "Every Breath You Take," "King of Pain" and "Wrapped Around Your Finger," continued the trend.

The only thing wrong with "Every Breath You Take —The Singles" is the inclusion of "Don't Stand So Close to Me '86" instead of the original version of the song. The original song, from the "Zenyatta Mondatta" album, was a humorous song about a tense situation done in an upbeat fashion. The remade version has all the excitement of a funeral dirge. It's sad when a band has to resort to butchering their own material.

—Review by Karl Pallmeyer

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