

ALBUM CHARTS

Popular

1. **M.C. Hammer**
Please Hammer Don't Hurt'em
2. **Wilson Phillips**
Wilson Phillips
3. **Jon Bon Jovi**
Blaze of Glory/Young Guns II
4. **Mariah Carey**
Mariah Carey
5. **Poison**
Flesh and Blood
6. **Bell Biv DeVoe**
Poison
7. **Anita Baker**
Compositions
8. **Keith Sweat**
I'll Give All My Love to You
9. **New Kids on the Block**
Step by Step
10. **Graffiti Bridge**
Prince

Rhythm & Blues

1. **M.C. Hammer**
Please Hammer Don't Hurt'em
2. **Keith Sweat**
I'll Give All My Love to You
3. **Anita Baker**
Compositions
4. **Johnny Gill**
Johnny Gill
5. **Mariah Carey**
Mariah Carey
6. **En Vogue**
Born to Sing
7. **Tony! Toni! Tone!**
The Revival
8. **Bell Biv DeVoe**
Poison
9. **The Time**
Pandemonium
10. **Luke Featuring The 2 Live Crew**
Banned in the U.S.A.

— Billboard

Husker faithful will like it

Bob Mould

Black Sheets of Rain
Virgin Records

After the release of last year's brilliant *Workbook*, Bob Mould is forced into the bittersweet position of having to follow it up. His sophomore solo effort, *Black Sheets of Rain*, while a great album in its own right, is a notch below his debut.

To get the inevitable comparisons to Mould's old band, Husker Du, out of the way, suffice it to be said Mould seems finally to have come to grips with the band's demise. *Workbook's* quiet acoustic power has fallen by the wayside in favor of a tighter, more electric sound. Back is the guitar overkill missing from the last album. The songs here rock harder than before, and Mould is again working with a three-piece band. Hell, the cover even looks like a Husker record.

But Mould isn't returning to the thrash pop of his Husker days. The songs on *Black Sheets of Rain* come across like *Workbook* meets *Flip Your Wig*. The album sounds like a million bucks and should finally garner Mould his long-deserved commercial success.

That being said, the core band from *Workbook* returns for *Black Sheets*. Golden Palominos leader Anton Fier lays down absolutely mammoth drum tracks on every tune. Ex-Pere Ubu bassist Tony Maimone holds the sound together with simple-yet-powerful basslines. Over the top, Mould cranks up his guitar and lets loose with razor-edged riffs and squeals of feedback. Mould's incurably melodic voice sounds rougher than on the last

BRIAN SPRINGER

Albums

record, matching the new album's harder sound. Noticeably absent is Jane Scarpatoni's cello, which added so much to the atmosphere of frustrated tension on *Workbook*.

Mould is playing down his image as a solo artist, promoting the "Bob Mould Band" in publicity for his current tour (at Cat's Cradle earlier this summer). The new songs are longer than before, allowing the band frequent jams. What the new songs give up in emotional intensity and quiet power, they make up for with straightforward hard-rock smarts and instrumental virtuosity. Mould is a splendid guitarist, and he weaves his guitar in and out of the Maimone-Fier rhythm foundation effortlessly.

Lyrical, Mould stresses environmental themes more than ever, in addition to his usual looks at pain and emotional suffering. Of course, he has a knack for creating intoxicating pop hooks, and this album proves it.

Black Sheets of Rain opens with the guitar snarl of the title tune. For nearly eight minutes, the band cranks through power riffs as Mould screams "The toxins fill my bloodstream/ As I'm walking through the parking lot ... / It's the black sheets of rain/ Following me again."

"It's Too Late" has an undeniably catchy melody you'll be singing for days, even if the words are indecipherable. This has the potential to be a ... gasp ... hit single. Mould goes pop here, and not in the Iggy sense.

"One Good Reason" and "Stop Your Crying" employ heavy, dinosaur riffs and rhythms directed towards

Mould's own melodic ends. "Stand Guard" twists a heavy-metallish riff onto the grounds of college radio.

Simplification is the name of the game for Mould for a large part of the album. Few tunes employ this strategy better than "Out of Your Life," a simple and stellar melody over a typically noisy guitar riff. He cuts to the quick, singing, "If you want me out of your life/ Now all you gotta do is tell me."

"Disappointed" is jagged and relentless as it motors along while Mould notes "The three years I went to college/ Didn't make much of a difference to me/ Made me feel so safe I didn't have to think/ About the things I really wanna be." This closely resembles the faster songs on Husker Du's *Candy Apple Grey*.

"Hanging Tree" meanders from its acoustic beginnings to a huge lumbering riff, similar to "Whichever Way the Wind Blows" from *Workbook*. "Sacrifice/Let There Be Peace" churns and burns from its simply loud beginning to an anthemic close.

The one acoustic track on the album is "The Last Night," a welcome break from electric fury. The song is good, though not exceptional, and Mould could have pumped the album to the five-blob pantheon (the highest rating in *Omnispeak*) with a few more of these mood breakers. Mould is a natural with the 12-string guitar. He should pick it up more often.

Black Sheets of Rain is weakened only by virtue of Bob Mould's previous album. He hasn't sold out, but he has made music for the masses. An audience beyond the Husker faithful will certainly go for this LP. Like *Workbook*, *Black Sheets* takes about three listens to become addictive. Bob Mould has met the challenge of following a sensational album with another solid effort.

MUSIC BRIEFS

The Sundays

Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic

Seldom does a band's debut album shine with such intricate brilliance and musical maturity as this freshman effort by the Sundays. The London foursome spins a web of heavenly melodies laced with celestial pop appeal. The blushing, airy voice of Harriet Wheeler acts in stark contrast to her strikingly creative and ingeniously proverbial lyricism. Guitarist Dave Gavurin strums vigorous acoustic rhythms, borrowing heavily from Johnny Marr's museum of post-modern folk and guitar-pop rhythms. Highlights include the interrogatively insightful "You're not the Only One I Know", and the first single, "Here's Where the Story Ends." "Joy", an appropriately dim closer, reverberates with a darker and calmer solemnity, which brings the album back down to earth in a warm, cyclic fashion. Don't miss this extraordinary album in the midst of Manchester mania.

Jane's Addiction

Ritual De Lo Habitual

Warner Brothers

Jane's Addiction never had to grow up, but they did. Their most recent LP, *Ritual De Lo Habitual*, is a definite departure from any previously released material. The album is harrowing, musically intricate and lyrically haunting. "Three Days," an 11-minute mind warp into song-crafting science that does not bore, proves this record is not for the novice. Despite this, *Ritual De Lo Habitual* is a must purchase, especially if you love original music and want to try to figure out what Jane's Addiction is about.

Aztec Camera

Stray

Warner Brothers

Deep in the heart of modern British pop, heralding a likeness to the Psychedelic Furs, English boy-wonder Roddy Frame weaves driving, spectacle-oriented rock in "The Crying Scene" with spacious, lush tunes like "Stray" and "Get Outta London," to show that his musical intellect penetrates deeper than most youthful pop phenoms. While many tracks initially tend to do what the title implies, the record both soothes and soars, reflecting another British band's further penetration of the modern underground pop market.

Compiled by Layton Croft and Charles Marshall.

Debut strikes a tediously soothing chord

Hummingbirds

loveBUZZ

rooArt

●●●●

Vocals can make or break a pop band, particularly those post-modern 'alternative'-sounding bands notorious for becoming extinct as quickly as they become trendy in college music

LAYTON CROFT

Albums

circles. The late D. Boon's vocals fit The Minutemen's style, but detract from their overall musical aesthetics. On the other hand, the duet-style vocals of X's Exene Cervenka and John Doe are the only interesting aspect of the band's music.

The Hummingbirds' debut L.P. *loveBUZZ* is unadulterated guitar pop

that is instantly likeable yet permanently effective. The male/female lead vocals of guitarists Simon Holmes and Alannah Russack qualify as harmonic genius, and only add to a near-flawless songcrafting quartet.

Released on their native Australian rooArt label, noted for promoting homegrown bands, *loveBUZZ* was produced by North Carolina's Mitch Easter. Easter's reputation as one of the '80s southern-music gurus is evident throughout the album, particularly on the songs "She Knows ..." and "Tuesday," where tediously soothing chord-picking accompanies vivacious rhythm guitar and a steady rhythm section, composed of drummer Mark Temple and bassist Robyn St. Clare.

The Hummingbirds' most striking element is their presentation of thoughtful lyrics. Holmes and Russack not only create silky harmonies, but syncopate their vocal entries to keep fair distance from the expected.

"House Taken Over" is the most extraordinary single on *loveBUZZ*, hinting at psychedelia, with a sweetened chorus that departs from the rest of the tune while maintaining the

zombie-like tempo.

The opening track, "Blush," was voted the debut single of 1989 by *Rolling Stone*. "Three In The Morning" is an insightful tune about unexpected pregnancy, made relevant by its adolescent vocal delivery.

Blatant perfectionism is evident throughout the production of this album. However, after seeing a less-than-lengthy Hummingbirds' performance at London's Marquee Club in late June, I left with more respect for Easter's producing talents. The Hummingbirds' live show was less than polished, with inaudible guitar parts and disappointing vocals.

If anything, their live show confirms the fact that on record The Hummingbirds may be too good to be true. Buy the album, if you can find it.

THE RATINGS

- — miserable, boring
- — mediocre, bland
- — enjoyable
- — insightful, laudable
- — exhilarating, divine

Authentic CHINESE & THAI Cuisine

Fast Lunch Specials Daily MOST ITEMS \$3.45

On Trolley Route • Ample Parking
• Vegetarian Dishes •
Fresh Tofu • Diet Dishes upon Request

Lunch Daily: 11:30-2 • Dinner 5-9:30 • Till 10:30 Fri. & Sat.
503 W. ROSEMARY • 967-8818 • EAT IN OR TAKE OUT