

Arts & Entertainment

Steve Skinner's Disc Spin

Reviews by Steve Skinner

Columnist's Note - *There comes a time, as the old saying goes, when a man must kick back and relax - in this case, pretend it's summer all over again. And due to the overwhelmingly strong summer releases that made it big in the progressive music scene, it's time pull the favorites out once again and give them one more hot spin...*

Echo & the Bunnymen
"Echo & the Bunnymen"
Sire Records, Tapes, and CDs

Echo & the Who-men? Bunnymen?

The days of the unknown have taken their last whimsical laugh, as Echo & the Bunnymen now share the lime-light with the best of progressive bands these days. One might ask why as they listen to studio-controlled, unabrasive, lyric-conscious, almost sing-along spectacles of modern rock music. Why, that is, these guys have had such a hard time selling records, in this age of electronic, 80's style compositions - when bands like the Pet Shop Boys, Level 42, the Thompson Twins, and Talk Talk make it on the first come-around. The fact is and remains that they're not in the same league.

Echo and the Bunnymen have always had their own distinctive sound, unlike their mentors who make it big with pop-glazed, sometimes meaningless, lyrical and personal style. The band is stylish. They survive on clever lyrics, foreign vocal distinctiveness, and earnest pleas to not be the next pop favorite.

On their latest release, aptly titled, "Echo & the Bunnymen," the four guys caught in a suburban British zeal, head back to the basics, with tunes that take time to grasp. It's a far cry from the melodic hit of last year, "Bring on the Dancin' Horsemen." Instead, it's a narrow focus on what made them different; the type of sound that could only vaguely be repeated (most notably on the most recent Church release, "Heyday"). It's an echo-filled, hollow, yet on-target release of the Bunnymen's well remembered "Porcupine" and "Crocodile," releases in the early age of modern rock.

The singles favorites from this one include, "The Game," and "Lips Like Sugar" (which repeats itself like a upstage, punk version of a Doors classic). Others worth mentioning include "Over You", and "All in Your Mind", which are chock full of sustained, upbeat guitar-levied rhythms from the band's four-stringed wizard, Will Sergeant. The open-hearted lyrics are sung in a undertone by Ian McCulloch, rather than in a brash, abra-

siveness found on the band's spear-headed concert releases. The live Echo is not the studio Echo, but sometimes I like it when they do it clean, ya know what I mean?

This is a must for Echo fans, especially those from the early releases. It's also one for those who want a crisp edge on the world of modern rock'n'roll releases. Take some time out for this one, it might just reel you into the real world of rock music.

New Order
"Substance"

Qwest Records, Tapes, and CDs

This one undoubtedly tops the list for summer releases that made it big this fall. New Order, a well-noted and highly acclaimed dance band in England comprised of former Joy Division members, released their British remix hits collection only to explode on dance clubs across the United States this fall.

The album which contains their previous eleven best dance cuts, some remixed for the occasion, includes a new cut which has ridden on high testimony these many months of late summer and early autumn. The remix of "True Faith," filled with electrifying gravitational mood swings and zippy base rhythms, is a scorcher this unusually hot fall season. In fact, the 12-inch release has received just about as much recognition by dance clubs as has the album at this point in time. However, the album will journey onwards and outward in months to come. It will, by its simple virtue as "the" New Order collection, survive, if not thrive, on the many sweat glazed, beat intensive dance floors across the country. For those wishing to escape the monetary burden (and heavy search ordeal) of buying (after locating) all their previous releases, this may be the essential cut to grab soon.

On the double dance long-play, you'll find a host of spectacular cuts; some pulsating in a mind-bending frenzy, others thriving on a steady, lush rotation, as sounds surround the entire listening room. It's headphones only if you're lucky enough to behold the compact disc version of the album. Better to the beholder, the CD contains not twelve, but twenty-four milestones in the New Order tradition. In fact, the true collection is found only on CD, as New Order explores the whole realm in laser disc technology. Believe me, this one offers the ultimate for high end systems and enough digits to feed on for the rest of your mathematical career.

This one is for night people as cuts like the commercial spinster, "Shell Shock," the labor-intensive, "Sub-Cul-

Ray Charles to Perform

Jill Stricklin

"Genius of Soul," Ray Charles, will be performing at the Givens Performing Arts Center at the Pembroke State University campus on Friday, November 13. Charles's renowned style of gospel and blues has won him over 20 Grammy Awards. He will be playing at Pembroke with his 17 piece ensemble, "The Ray Charles Orchestra," and the four "Rayletts".

Charles has been on the road doing concerts for at least five months a year for the last 35 years. Although no two concerts are alike, the format is consistent. The concert consists of three acts: a band instrumental, Ray and the band, and Ray,

the band, and the Rayletts. Charles has never been known to perform an encore, so you can leave your lighters at home. A musician since before he lost his sight at age 7, Ray Charles considers himself a singer and pianist rather than a songwriter, an odd view for a man who composed such classics as "I Got A Woman," "What'd I Say," and "Hallelujah, I Love Her So".

Ray Charles will play two shows at 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. on Friday, November 13, at the Givens Performing Arts Center at Pembroke. Tickets are \$12.50 and can be obtained at the Quick Copy in Holly Square Plaza in Laurinburg or reserved with a charge card by calling 521-0778.

Swansea Debates Pound

Jill Stricklin

Charleen Swansea, nationally renowned writer and educator, read her newly published *False Teeth* at the Writer's Forum on October 29. The manuscript of Swansea's third book, a semi-autobiographical novel describing her experiences with poet, Ezra Pound, was destroyed in a fire. Swansea has since rewritten and published the first section of this novel, the title of which, *False Teeth*, has a double entendre. Not only does the novel involve literal false teeth, but Swansea deals with the human problem of striving with false courage to become the image which we set for ourselves.

Swansea's writing is wonderfully frank and endearingly human. Swansea develops the story of a fanciful

and idealistic college girl on a quest for fame with often hilarious insightfulness. Swansea's viewpoint of Pound's persona is unique, providing a new facet to the knowledge of the life of Ezra Pound which is at once informative and entertaining.

Concluding Swansea's presentation was a discussion of the nature and implications of insanity. The debate, which Swansea initiated by questioning the sanity of Pound, instigated many thought-provoking and occasionally heated opinions from both the speaker and the audience.

Next week's Writer's Forum will feature President John Casteen of the University of Connecticut, who will read from his fiction.

ture," and the British cult fave, "Blue Monday," explode after-hours when the evening dusk arrives so soon. With well over an hour of blazing, ear-ringing club notables, try this one with a vengeance!

The Silencers
"A Letter From St. Paul"
RCA Records, Tapes, and CDs

It's time for a new band to break on the scene, and break on the scene they have, as these Scotsmen show in their major label release for RCA. The band's leaders, Cha Burns and singer-guitarist Jimmie O'Neill, landed the band recently after eight years of American silence (they were last team-mates in the band, Fingerpritz, which received little notice here in the States).

This song-writing duo chooses to focus on Christianity and issues, therein, extend forth throughout this fine release. It's a pop-standard sound, with out-lined and heavy-laden keyboard accompaniment. The raw edge relies on electronic

guitar-work which ravages on in soft-strum technique throughout the works. I like the extended, yet solemn vocals which stretch for something they never seem to achieve, but like a stream seem to flow toward. Vocally, it's fun to listen to and spiritually it makes you feel good - honest lyrics that might have a smooth edge on the rock'n'roll scene present today with hard-line viewpoints and unfocused heady projections of what's in store around the corner.

"I See Red," takes a gallant step forward, and as a cut, should see lots of radio airplay throughout the season. "Painted Moon" is the cut that more than seems to move. This humming beauty takes a load off the world today as it poetically strives for mutual partnership in a outlandish, almost impossible world of extremes. Take a listen to "God's Gift" and "Blue Desire" for the spiritual side. It's a ride well taken and close to an hour of smooth, melodic splendor often vacant from the types of music that ring around the world these days.