

Pulp Resonates With Glamour, Sound of '70s

■ Pulp focuses on issues of class and gender found in British society.

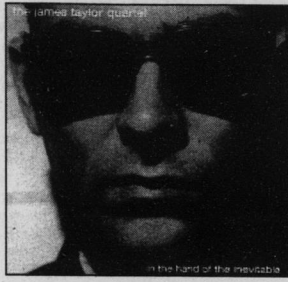
The myth goes that music, particularly "pop," is universal. From Bangalore to Birmingham, the same back-beat reigns. The same "artists" sell by the truckload.

In reality, however, barriers of nationality, race and class—invisible but inscribed across the surface of pop—differentiate and divide. Even between British and American culture, the culture gap looms ominously, demanding possibility.

Two British bands—Pulp, with "Different Class" and James Taylor Quartet, with "In the Hands of the Inevitable"—present both sides of this problem. While James Taylor Quartet (JT4) exemplifies a homogenized pastiche of international styles modulated safely into an internationally marketable package, Pulp bring a distant and critical eye to issues of class and gender in specifically British culture.

Pulp offers music to strut to; JT4 offers music to suck to. While Pulp resonates the swagger and glitz of the seventies, JT4's new three disc compilation of lounge music finds them, with their ubiquitous brand of "acid jazz," on the same wavelength as American purveyors of cool cocktail culture such as the (now-defunct) Coctails and record label Rhino.

AZIZ HUQ
Music Review
James Taylor Quartet
In the hands of the inevitable
(Big Life Music)
C+
Pulp
Different Class
(Island Records)
A



In the hands of the inevitable

JT4 offers a gentrified version of the Nat Adderly school of cool—shaken, not stirred, with a little bit of swank, a la Barry White. They even add, on this album, a sultry female singer, evoking vague echoes of Massive Attack and M People. The band takes a prestigious backlogue of "sexy" music and synthesizes a style which is musically safe and conservative in spirit—and terribly unsexy.

Morever, JT4's appropriation of familiar themes has troubling racial implications. Jazz, as an art form, has always been terribly race conscious, moreso than most other popular Western music forms. So, when the James Taylor Quartet comes along with its emulsified music, drained of any real power or sexuality, one wonders about the question of race: Can white men—particularly English ones—play jazz? Are they "stealing cool" by stealing an art form? Can you steal an art form? What makes such plagiarism theft as opposed to homage? Other, rather good, British jazz groups do exist, but JT4 illustrates the ambiguities inherent in the appropriation of such a racially tinged art form as jazz. And where the hip unites, politics will divide.

In England, Pulp's album was called "A

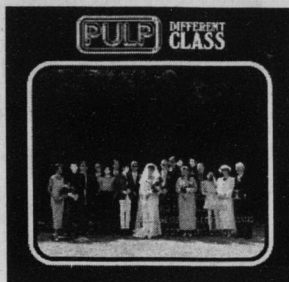
Different Class." Of course, this ain't going to cut the mustard over here in the States, since here we're living in a classless society. Oh, yeah . . .

In fact, Pulp's quintessence hides within the structures and ironies of class. Jarvis Cocker, the sinuous and callow-mouthed lead singer, plays his obvious working class accent and attitude off a flippant and mocking usurpation of upper-class poses. Photographed on its album cover amongst an assortment of upper-class "toffs" at a marriage, the band seems to partake in the glamour of such an informal aristocracy. One might also get this impression from the throw-away riches of their music—glorious Hammond organ riffs scattered like pearls before swine—a carnival of lights and pleasure.

And yet, the substance of the songs is the sordid world of "one night stands in cheap hotels/half muttered retreats and oysters shells." In Cocker's sardonic flashes, a crumbling world both financially and emotionally depraved stands revealed. In "Monday Morning," Cocker sings that "there's nothing to do but stay in bed." The heroine of "Underwear" waits drearily for her prospective lover, knowing a monotony of fluid and flesh will follow.

Alexandra Palace, the pinnacle of Victorian family-oriented pleasure that rises like a specter above North London, is still burning.

In its desperate light, the scenes of Cocker's songs paint in throbbing reds and vibrant oranges the fullness of despair. Perhaps the pinnacle of drained but ambiguous irony is "Common People," a non-romance which reaches across but fails to bridge the class divide. Sexual tension and class jealousy meet in an style of re-remindation and denial which style mediates. In the fading afterglow of Pulp's fire, England burns, as the welts of the class war



still smoulder.

The tensions Pulp uncovers and delineates are, of course, also present in American society. Class, despite what anybody says, is an undeniable part of America. Other racial overtones, however, often obscure our vision—the example of Spike Lee's "Jungle Fever" leaps to mind. Pulp exploits class tensions in an English idiom difficult to place in an American context. To say "Oh, you wouldn't understand them" is not to denigrate an American empathy or awareness of inequality. Pulp simply strikes chords which are as of yet untapped in the American psyche. This is not to say these chords do not exist; just look at Altman's "Short Cuts" if proof is needed.

The James Taylor Quartet, on the other hand has all that is needed to make it over here—a proficient yet shallow handling of their medium and a glossing over racial lines which makes their music acceptable to that amorphous entity: the record-buying public. JT4 could be a hit; I don't think the same will be true for Pulp. I hope that I'm wrong—what a shame, that bland, commercialized trash can overcome the barriers of nationality, but intelligent, articulate music cannot.

UNC Loreleis Enter Next Round of Competition

Originality proved to be the quality that separated the great from the greatest at the National A Cappella South Regional Championship, which was held in Memorial Hall Friday night.

UNC contributed three contenders to the competition—the Clef Hangers, the Tar Heel Voices and the Loreleis. Also competing were the Duke Lady Blue, University of Pennsylvania's Off the Beat, William and Mary's Gentlemen of the College and the Maryland Generics.

Each team competed for one of two coveted spots in the semifinal competition to be held on March 9 at Johns Hopkins University.

While each group was entertaining and deserved to win, in the end, only two teams could come away with berths in the semifinals. The William and Mary Gentlemen of the College won the championship, with the UNC Loreleis finishing right behind them. The teams were judged on technical merit, presentation, soloists and originality.

The Tar Heel Voices kicked off the evening with Mariah Carey's hit song "Even Though I Try, I Can't Let Go" and then moved into the crowd favorite "Jesse's Girl."

Since THV is a coed group, its range of voices was awesome, and the peppiness of the group was conveyed to the audience through their presentation.

The group finished off its portion of the competition with a disappointing rendition of Alanis Morissette's "You Oughta Know."

The background sounds of the group were so loud that they drowned out the lead many times.

The end turned out to be strong and clear, though, as the soloist managed to overcome the harmony.

Next in the lineup was the Duke Lady Blue who followed the tradition of the great eighties with selections like the Bangles' "Walk Like an Egyptian," "Total Eclipse of the Heart" and "Sweet Dreams." "Turn Around" featured a terrific solo, but it was "Sweet Dreams" that rocked the house with a thrilling chorus.

Alternative music dominated the selections of U Penn's Off the Beat. The opener was a gritty version of Live's "I Alone." Alanis proved to be a popular lady, as "You Oughta Know" was again performed.

This time, the rawness of Morissette shone through in the voice of the soloist, and the amazing mix of sounds won the group an award for Best Original Arrangement.

The fourth group to perform was the ever-popular Clef Hangers. The crowd cheered as the Clefs began their portion of the competition with their famous rendition of "Rawhide."

The resonating voice of the soloist garnered the group an award for Best Solo. The group also sang a group of older songs such as "One of These Days."

After intermission came the all male group from William and Mary called the Gentlemen of the College.

With songs like the Beatles' "Ob-La-Di" and "Desperado," the group showcased its great range.

The real fun came, though, with a comedy skit with a back flip and a split that had the crowd roaring with laughter.

The group ended their selections with a jazz tune called "That Cat is High," which earned them an award for runner-up for Best Original Arrangement.

The Loreleis performed next with a portfolio of songs that included "Hit Me With Your Best Shot," "Smooth Operator," "I Need a Hero" and a stunning rendition of Prince's "Kiss."

The soprano soloist reached high into the rafters for the spine-tingling finale of the song and earned a runner-up award for Best Solo.

The last group to perform was the Maryland Generics.

With dance moves inspired by the Four Tops, they mixed and merged songs like "21st Century Digital Boy" and "Twist" together and also took the song "Oh What a Night" and gave it an introduction that centered around Spam. The group finished off with the popular theme song "I Would Walk 500 Miles."

While the judges tallied the votes, each group returned to the stage to sing one more song.

The Clefs obviously won this unofficial round with the school favorite "Carolina On My Mind." After the winners were announced, the Gentlemen of the College took the stage one more time to perform the song "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz."

Both of the winners will compete at Johns Hopkins on March 9 with the hope of winning a space at the final competition on April 14 at New York's Lincoln Center.

Guest Soloists Accompany UNC Jazz Band in Concert

In front of a packed Hill Hall Auditorium, the UNC Jazz Band put on a thoroughly entertaining free concert Saturday night. With guest soloists Steve Wilson on alto saxophone and Scott Wendholt on trumpet, the band swung their way through a diverse yet consistent two-hour program.

The Jazz Band, under the lively and masterful direction of James Ketch, played three numbers to start off the evening before the guest soloists joined them. First was the standard, "Just Friends," which displayed the well-balanced and powerful sound the band has been especially striving for since Wynton Marsalis's visit and master class earlier this month. "I Just Found Out About Love," a Count Basie tune, was the only appearance of Amy Kirkum's confident jazz vocals.

The last number was actually three movements from Duke Ellington's "Queen Suite," one of which, "Single Petal of a Rose," contained a gorgeous Paul Johnston piano solo, and another of which, "Apes and Peacocks," featured overlapping rhythms handled adeptly by the ensemble.

Allegedly a draw to keep people around for the second act, the guest soloists came out for two wonderful numbers before intermission. On "Who Knew?" and "Lady

bird," alto saxophonist Wilson displayed his quick-fingered, coherent and melodic style, sounding firmly in the new tradition of saxophonists drawing on many different styles, such as Charlie Parker and funk, for their own sound. Fashionable trumpeter Wendholt also gave some technically proficient solos during these two songs, although it seemed as though he began to stretch out and bring more passion to his solos during the second half, perhaps as he became more comfortable with the musical setting. Through both the first and second halves, many members of the band also exhibited their impressive, and still-improving, talents, including Johnston on piano, Akiva Friedman on guitar, Matt Van Hoose on tenor sax, Rob Tanzola on alto sax, and a particularly rousing solo by drummer Mark Skains on "Who Knew?"

Although the guests were really the highlight of the show, no less impressive were the band's strong accompaniment and soloists. Only occasionally did the band tend to drown out the soloists with their backup, proving the dictum that it's easier for a big band to play loud than softly.

The second part of the concert consisted of Wilson and Wendholt featured on three songs each, plus the outstanding "Impressions" by John Coltrane, with solos from both, to finish out the evening. Both soloists used an up-tempo number, a ballad and a blues to showcase their refined and versatile styles, and the high level of intensity and musicality was consistent throughout. In their brief remarks, the soloists expressed appreciation to UNC and the

band for hosting them and stressed the importance of supporting the arts on all levels in our community. As Wilson said, it was necessary so that the great musical tradition could be carried into the next generation. As both are involved in jazz education, they know that concerts like these are not only great entertainment but also a form of education about the rich jazz heritage that is integral to 20th-century American culture. As the full auditorium illustrated, interest in jazz is high on this campus, and it was greatly appreciated that Ketch and others presented such an exciting, enriching evening of free music.

JESSE TAMPIO
Concert Review
UNC Jazz Band
Hill Hall Auditorium
the evening before

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