

# Springtime discs: most good, some very bad

Springtime is generally a slow time in the record business. Most vinyl junkies are forced to feed on rumors of soon-to-be-released albums that don't come out til fall. The few albums that do come out are rarely the year's big ones. Established acts who don't have anything on the charts in December might try to get one off for spring and again in late fall. But those who are doing well just hang on til late summer or autumn.

But, of course, there are still plenty of new records to consider. We don't need them coming out of our ears, after all.

The following albums are reviewed for one of two reasons: either a sizable interest in the artist exists or I feel it should. The grades were pretty good, but I tried to accentuate the positive by neglecting most of the bad albums. Therefore, most of this list is recommended. But beware of those albums that received low grades! To be singled out for this column, they must have been *extremely bad*.

**Etta James: Deep in the Night (Warner Bros. \$7.98)**

This is the album that Aretha Franklin fans have been waiting for for five years. Straightforward rhythm and blues with plenty of surprises and not a hint of the dread, ubiquitous disco beat. Perhaps the biggest surprise is Etta's rendering of Alice Cooper's "Only Women Bleed." I don't think Cooper ever understood what he'd written (at least he was never very convincing), but Etta does, and she has taken Cooper's elaboration on a cheap pun and transformed it into a powerful, moving ballad.

This album will not receive much of a promotional push, and hence will not sell well, because it's not a disco album. Aretha Franklin understands this reality which is why *she* can't make a record like this anymore. Thankfully, Etta either doesn't understand or doesn't care.

The most distressing aspect of disco music is its utter lack of feeling. It's not human. It doesn't breathe, it ticks. The title cut on this album says something about love and lovemaking that you won't hear from any of Donna Summer's orgasmic recording sessions. It says something about *soul*. A.

**Michael Franks: Burchfield Nines (Warner Bros. \$7.98)**

Listening to Michael Franks is like reading the personal classifieds in the *Daily Tar Heel*. Although he fancies himself a jazz-poet, a more accurate appraisal might be that Franks represents a fusion between Hallmark greeting cards and elevator music. I'd like to break his cute little popsicle toes. D-minus.

**Brian Auger and Julie Tippetts: Encore (Warner Bros. \$7.98)**

It's called *Encore* because, back in the sixties, these two were the core of a good jazz rock ensemble (it meant something different back then) called *Trinity*.

Auger's Hammond organ sounds dated or nostalgic (depending on how you feel about the Hammond) and Julie Tippetts sings the way Christine McVie would sing if only she could. This is a strangely affecting album — play when you're alone and pensive. B-minus.

## RECORDS

By MARK PEEL

Sounds for the Summer

**Jerry Garcia: Cats under the Stars (Arista \$7.98)**

When you've been around as long as Jerry Garcia, you make a lot of friends. But you shouldn't indiscriminately let them sing on your albums. Some awful vocals prevent the limp material contained herein from accomplishing its only conceivable function (since it does not entertain): that of putting one to sleep. F.

**Ron Carter: Peg Leg (Milestone, \$7.98)**

Ron Carter has no equal in jazz at the upright bass. He appears on hundreds of albums as a sideman every year and his own albums are always thoughtful and substantial. On *Peg Leg* Carter experiments with instrumental tone colors — each selection features a woodwind soloist or ensemble. The music suggests some of John Lewis's post MJQ albums in its sophisticated coloration and disciplined swinging. A.

**Les Dudek: Ghost Town Parade (Columbia \$7.98)**

Dudek is a remarkably versatile guitar player: rhythm and blues, southern boogie, even power chording, all are carried off with a polished edge. Upbeat stuff, put it on if you have to clean up the house but can't get started. B.

**Tower of Power: We Came to Play (Columbia \$7.98)**

The best horns in the business don't always make the best albums. This band is a bit too fond of ballads to suit me: after all, when you've got the goods you ought to use them (and these guys have chops, no question). When they *do* dust off their pieces and go at it, look out. "Loving You Is Gonna See Me Through" is the funkier thing to come along since the electric bass. C-plus.

**Roomful of Blues: Roomful of Blues (Island \$7.98)**

This is just a note to T. Bone Walker fans out there: these guys have kept the word. The singing is remarkably like T. Bone's, and, although the electric guitar doesn't figure quite so prominently here, the saxes glide and wail as required, and the piano punctuates the horns like a score of repentant ladies at a tent revival. Along with the recent revival in Western swing, Roomful of Blues stands as a reverent but not at all fossilized ode to the forties swing blues

ensemble. A religious experience. A.

**Spyro Gyra: Spyro Gyra (Amherst \$6.98)**

Marvelously inventive jazz, intelligently paced, somewhat extraterrestrial, but we are grateful, possessed of a charming sense of humor. A-minus.

**Stanley Clarke: Modern Man (Nemperor \$7.98)**

One of these days the "jazz" musicians who crossed over to what is called jazz-rock fusion, riding the coattails of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and who have maintained, ever since, that the new form was an evolution towards a more relevant (read accessible) jazz form, will cut the bullshit and admit they're doing it for the money. In the meantime, they won't be getting any of mine. Stanley Clarke's compositional skills have always lagged far behind the extraordinary talent in his long, supple fingers. And his albums are merely exhibitions of technical virtuosity for its own sake. *Modern Man* thumps and twangs along for 37 minutes, saying absolutely nothing with remarkable dexterity. D.

**Al DiMeola: Casino (Columbia \$7.98)**

Ever since his days with Chick Corea, I have tried to pin down the music of Al DiMeola. Was his guitar playing like an M-16 leveled at defenseless listeners? Or perhaps a jackhammer in the hands of a tooth surgeon? Well, the other night I had dinner at Leo's, and, while eating, I finally hit upon the essence of Al DiMeola's music — HEAVY METAL ELECTRONIC BOUZOUKI MUSIC! D-minus.

**Bob Marley and the Wailers: Kaya (Island \$7.98)**

Living the good life in the United States has taken much of the tooth out of Bob Marley's bite. I used to marvel

that a pleasing, warm voice like Marley's could sing songs that threatened to burn my house and wreak havoc on my neighborhood. Well the voice is still there, but the message is considerably watered down. *Kaya* continues a trend that surfaced in *Rastaman Vibration* and was more apparent in *Exodus*: Marley is less and less willing to bite the hand that feeds him. Music that once was intended to stir up the brethren, now anesthetizes them. Songs whose lyrics once rang with conviction now drift into rhetoric. Marley's voice, however, is still a savage yet soothing instrument, and the rhythm section is still a heartbeat. For that, a C-plus.

**Kalapana: Many Classic Moments (Abattoir \$6.98)**

West Coast rock in the late 70s somehow got sidetracked on its way East, made a stop in Las Vegas, and decided to cash in its chips. At least one band, however, is not tooting coke at the record label parties. Kalapana is something of an anachronism — a throwback to groups like Jesse Colin Young's Youngbloods and early Poco — practitioners of an acoustic (soft, if you will) sound. This may be an emotionally naive album, stuck as we are in a jaded milieu dominated by puking punkers and disco automatons, but even if the market isn't right the music is bright and warm, for those who haven't given up on that sort of thing. An album for summer. B-plus.

**Original Movie Soundtrack: FM (MCA \$13.98)**

K-Tel has been doing this type of album for years. It never has made sense to me why anyone would buy a record like this when it's all one ever hears on the airwaves. Tune in WQDR and buy yourself a steak with the money you've saved. F.

## GRADUATING

Don't Forget Your Old Friends!

Subscribe to the  
*Daily Tar Heel*

Third Class  
\$1.00 wk./\$15.00 semester

First Class  
\$2.00 wk./\$30.00 semester

min. 8 weeks

Name \_\_\_\_\_  First  Third

Street \_\_\_\_\_ weeks amt. enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Open 7 days a week  
11 a.m. til 1 a.m.



Just down from  
the Post Office on  
Franklin Street

## SADLACK'S HEROES AND DELI

Try Our New Meatball Sandwich

Now With Apple Juice and Lemonade

## weekender

is a tabloid supplement published each Friday by the *Daily Tar Heel*.

Reid Tuvim  
Editor

### The Daily Tar Heel

Lou Billionis, Editor  
Chuck Alston, Managing Editor  
Leslie Scism, Features Editor  
Mark Scandling, Arts Editor  
Lee Pace, Sports Editor  
Allen Jernigan, Photography Editor