

New sounds from old artists

Contrary to popular opinion, you can teach an old dog new tricks.

While many old popular musicians trudge through revamped versions of their ancient hits, a few of these fossils make attempts to do things a differently. New albums from Paul Simon and Neil Young are good enough to make us believe they aren't sleeping in the studio.

In *Graceland*, Paul Simon employs an exciting array of sounds never heard on his previous 15 albums. The new sounds, which Simon recorded with a number of bands from South Africa, are due to his fascination with the music of the area. Ah, the luxury of being a legend if you like their sound, call them up, fly them to New York and put them in your studio.

Graceland is a wonderful work. Devoted Paul Simon fans will be happy to hear his trademark voice and guitar, accompanied by the likes of the Everly Brothers, Linda Ronstadt, Adrian Belew and Los Lobos. If you have hated Paul's voice and guitar after all these years, you still might like this album.

Admirers of the band Juluka and other South African sounds will find much to enjoy. There's the joyful romp "Gumboots," featuring the Boyoyo Boys and the persistent sound of the accordion. The accordion also leads the way through the final two cuts as Paul parallels the streets of Soweto with cajun Louisiana and Mexican East Los Angeles in "That Was Your Mother" and "All Around the World or The Myth of Fingerprints."

My favorites open side two. "You Can Call Me Al" is pumped up by an energetic, bouncing bass line complemented by a pennywhistle solo and a howling horn section. "Homeless" is co-written by Simon and Joseph Shabalala. The singsong

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Records

lyrics are written in Zulu and English. Good stuff.

Landing on Water, the newest release from Neil Young, keeps his listeners off guard. Through his prolific career with Buffalo Springfield, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, The Shocking Pinks and during his solo career, Neil has played rock and roll, country and rockabilly. This album sees him return to the synthesizer sound he first cranked out in 1982's *Trans*. This time around there are not any hopeful acoustic numbers like "Little Thing Called Love," just a space-aged beat and some distressed messages.

Neil is depressed. *Landing on Water* has the most hopeless lyrics ever written by the former carefree stoner who felt like getting high.

"Weight of the World" finds him meeting a girl who lets him drop the weight of the world off his back. "Hippie Dream" is a tune that could be a eulogy for David Crosby and all the other faded hippies who have

faced a harsh reality in the Reagan years. He chants, "Another flower child goes to seed/ In an ether filled room of meat hooks/ It's so ugly." "Touch the Night" manages to find some spare room for Neil to pick up his electric guitar and play it to full distortion style once more in "Rust Never Sleeps."

"People on the Street with Nowhere to Go" starts off side two with a good 23rd century robot dance beat. He finally picks up the beat with some nervous energy in "Pressure." But still the desperation continues in this tune — "Too much pressure for peace on earth/ One of these days I'm going to go out like a light."

Neil Young purists of the Decade faith won't be thrilled with this album. However, Neil is still writing and singing his painful truths. He's just using a different sound. Look for him to tour this fall with his old cronies Crazy Horse for what promises to be a good show.

Paul Simon's *Graceland* will please old followers and undoubtedly attract a lot of new ones. So give both of these old men's new discs a good listen. You'll be glad you did.

Kevin Gottesman, a senior communications major from Greensboro, is a disc jockey for WXYC.

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