

Album Charts

Rock Pool Top Ten

1. Red Hot Chili Peppers
Mother's Milk
2. Rolling Stones
Steel Wheels
3. Pixies
Doolittle
4. B-52s
Cosmic Thing
5. Various Artists
The Bridge
6. Fugazi
Margin Walker
7. Hoodoo Gurus
Magnum Cum Louder
8. Pogues
Peace And Love
9. The The
Mind Bomb
10. The Cure
Disintegration

WXYC

1. Soundgarden
Louder Than Love
2. Bad Brains
Quickness
3. Shellyanne Orphan
Century Flower
4. The Fluid
Roadmouth
5. Camper Van Beethoven
Key Lime Pie
6. Half Japanese
The Band That Would Be King
7. Various Artists
The Bridge
8. Red Hot Chili Peppers
Mother's Milk
9. Various Artists
Mashing Up The Nation
10. House of Large Sizes
One Big Cake

Soulful Belle explores new depths

Regina Belle

Stay With Me

Columbia
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The spotlight shines again on rhythm-and-blues vocalist Regina Belle with the release of her latest album *Stay With Me*, a collection of sultry after-hours tunes, can be heard on the "Quiet Storms," and "Mellow Madness" periods of nighttime radio.

All By Myself, Regina's debut album, received rave reviews from mesmerized audiences when it was released in April 1987. Her first single, "Show Me The Way," became a pop hit and went to No. 1 on the rhythm and blues charts. Her follow-ups, "So Many Tears," "How Could You Do It To Me" and "After The Love Has Lost Its Shine" kept the album on the charts in both the U.S. and Britain for more than a year and a half. Today *All By Myself* is still a strong and steady seller.

Maintaining the tone set on her debut album, *Stay With Me* utilizes Regina's distinctive and expressive vocal style. The opening bars of this week's No. 7 hit on the rhythm and

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albums

blues charts, "Baby Come to Me," have a hypnotic and intriguing sound which invokes an intimate mood. Regina has already placed a second tune on the R&B charts, her duet with James "J.T." Taylor, former lead singer of Kool and the Gang, called "All I Want Is Forever." The duet is from the soundtrack of *Taps* and was No. 1 earlier this year.

On *Stay With Me*, Regina continues her romantic theme with "This Is Love," "Make It Like It Was" and "(It's Gonna Take) All Our Love." For those who like to dance, "Good Lovin'" and "When Will You Be Mine" are two upbeat selections for a party mood.

She decided to take a bold step by covering two veritable soul classics, and combining them in a medley.

"I've always loved Marvin's Gaye's 'Save The Children,' and Donny Hathaway's 'Someday We'll All Be Free,'" Regina said. "They are two of my all-time favorite singers. I actually got the idea to do the medley in a dream, and I do feel that the track is important because it contains a message for today."



Regina Belle is back, inviting us to 'Stay With Me'

Regina admits that this second release is an exploration into new depths.

"The songs on this album were harder for me vocally, more of a challenge. Yes, it was hard work doing this record, but I think I achieved a higher level quality on this album," she said.

The Ratings

- — lame
- — just O.K.
- — workable
- — quite good
- — excellent

Not-so-new album catches on

Sidewinders

Witchdoctor

Mammoth/RCA
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The Sidewinders' most recent release has been around a while — since April, to be exact. But this tasty little slab of college radio vinyl is finally achieving mainstream notice. On *Witchdoctor*, the Sidewinders solidify their image as the leading voice of the "Tucson sound." As singer/songwriter/guitarist Dave Slutes has said, "Everything about us is desert."

The architects of the Sidewinders' spacious sound are Slutes and guitarist/songwriter Rich Hopkins. The two started the band in 1985, but the first incarnation lasted only two years.

The Sidewinders reformed later in 1987 with a lineup consisting of Slutes, Hopkins, drummer/vocalist Andrea Curtis, and bassist Scott Garber. Slutes owns a recording studio and Hopkins owns a record label, so the band started working on an album right away. Garber's departure and his replacement by Mark Perrodin complicated the release of *iCuacha!* (slang for "chicken excrement"), but it was met with an almost universally warm response by critics.

One year later, the band's follow-up, *Witchdoctor*, was picked up by RCA Records. Personnel difficulties marked this album also, with Curtis leaving to have a baby. Diane Padilla was hired as a replacement, finishing the remaining half of the album.

Witchdoctor tempers its basic rock sound with country and power-pop touches. The title track fuses three killer hooks in an electric guitarfest of voodoo mysticism. "Bad, Crazy Sun" is a powerful acoustic-tinged number, noting the fate of illegal aliens left to die in the desert. As Slutes sings, "Your worn-out tears and your precious sweat/I haven't drank them at least not yet/But the bad, crazy sun will make you think like that." The jangly "Cigarette" offers up the interesting comparison, "Ain't gonna live my life like a cigarette."

"What Am I Supposed to Do?" is the song which most invites the obligatory "Athens sound" comparison, with exquisite vocal interplay and crunching guitar. With "Solitary Man," the Sidewinders give a brooding cover of the Neil Diamond tune. "Tears Like Flesh" is a rip-roaring rocker not far removed from the Jesus and Mary Chain. Metallic guitar and relentless drums make up in energy what the song lacks melody-wise.

Evidently, the centerpiece of *Witchdoctor* is "What She Said," a nine-minute-plus epitaph to a relationship. The constant breakdown and rebuilding of sound help to keep the song interesting until the accelerating finish.

It's not difficult to see why this album has shown some staying power, waiting for the music public to catch up. Almost everything here could be a hit single. Although the album is comfortable and somewhat familiar, to the Sidewinders' credit it is also distinctive, due in large part to the pervasive crunch guitarwork of Rich Hopkins. On both albums, the band has displayed a knack for intelligent, irresistible rock without resorting to the riff-retreads of most commercial hits. We can hope that the critical success of *Witchdoctor* will motivate the band to move further on, although we'll probably see a new Sidewinders' product before *Witchdoctor* finishes its sleeper commercial course.

— Brian Springer

Guitarist rules band's sound

Sister Ray

No Way to Express

Resonance
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On *No Way to Express*, Sister Ray spins 17 twisted yarns, all draped in a furious guitar assault. Though taking its name from a classic Velvet Underground tune, Sister Ray doesn't attempt to recreate the white noise of *White Light/White Heat*. Instead, the band takes a cue from the Ramones, packing melody and guitar crunch into concise two-minute packages.

Sister Ray hails from Youngstown, Ohio, where the members reportedly still live with their parents. *No Way to Express* is the band's first domestic release, although the acclaimed album *Random Violence* was released last year in the Netherlands.

Guitarist Mark Hanley rules Sister Ray's sound, running a complete range from brain-melting riffs to soothing harmonics. Sam D'Angelo proves equally versatile as a vocalist, whether screaming or crooning. Drummer Vince Colucci and bassist Joe D'Angelo provide a solid foundation for Hanley's riffing. Just after the album was recorded, however, Joe D'Angelo was replaced by Michael Fabian. Even on the most intense cuts, the band never sounds sloppy, which is more than you can say for many of today's leading underground groups.

No Way to Express fittingly opens with a whining guitar solo. This leads into "Fire," in

which D'Angelo sounds like a young Iggy Pop, over a manic tempo. "I Don't Want Your Sex" earns points on the title alone, but it's also a killer tune that manages to overcome the sex/disease cliché. In "God + Me," D'Angelo searches for a worthy companion, singing "I wish I could find someone as perfect as I am." "Mommy's Gone" is an Oedipal anthem, with D'Angelo complaining that "I never tried to meet no girls/Cause my mom's the best girl in the world."

"Miss America" is one man's search for the "perfect bod." Some might consider this tune sexist at first, but it ends up being a cutting description of the Miss America concept. "Just One Night" contains a haunting melody, with the chorus, "I didn't mean to cause you pain." Sister Ray succeeds, even when not covered by the fuzz guitar curtain. "Beef Pud" sounds like a mild Black Flag, D'Angelo screaming mildly obscene phrases throughout. "Sex" has a rock-abilly flavor, offering the rather pessimistic view that "Sex is death."

Sure, there are two or three throwaways here, but virtually everything has redeeming value. "Sick of Skulls" is initially generic, but lines such as "Skulls suck!" are funny enough to prevent the song from being a total waste of time. "A Day in the Life" (not the Beatles' song) is another that is saved by virtue of its humor. "Hey Hey Hey" seems too directly drawn from the band's influences until a key tempo change allows Sister Ray to snatch the song back as its own.

As Sister Ray's press release says, "All good rock 'n roll should damn well make you uneasy, and the sheer pleasure of this stuff is undeniable." That seems an apt description, as even those not grounded in the underground scene can enjoy this album. *No Way to Express* may not be easy to find in record stores, but it is definitely worth your time and effort.

— Brian Springer