

Rhythm Review with Alan English

GOLDEN DISCS

The records reviewed in this column are available at Golden Discs, downstairs in Todds.

MY TOP TEN

This week Tuesday Blue guitarist Dave "Kid Dynamite" Keary selects, in no particular order, his ten favourite albums. Catch some mean licks at The Cartwheel this Thursday late night.



- 1: IGGY POP: "Blah Blah Blah"
- 2: PETER GABRIEL: "So"
- 3: STEVIE WONDER: "Songs From The Key Of Life"
- 4: JOHNNY & EDGAR WINTER: "Live"
- 5: STEVE WINWOOD: "Arc Of A Diver"
- 6: STEWART COPELAND: "The Rhythmist"
- 7: RORY GALLAGHER: "Photo Finish"
- 8: DIRE STRAITS: "Dire Straits"
- 9: ALBERT LEE: "Hiding"
- 10: ROBBIE ROBERTSON: "Robbie Robertson"

Your choice

Send your Top Ten albums of all time to Rhythm Review, 54 O'Connell St., Limerick. Publicity shy readers need not enclose a photograph if they so desire.

RECORD RATINGS

**** Magnificent
*** Excellent *** Good
** Weak * Abysmal

KEVIN ROWLAND OF DEXY'S MIDNIGHT RUNNERS "The Wanderer" (Phonogram). "The Wanderer" is the LP of the year, no question about it. Someone might be able to equal it but no-one will beat it." So spoke the ever immodest Kevin Rowland some weeks ago. He made a similar pronouncement around the time of his last offering, "Don't Stand Me Down" in '85 and most likely said likewise about the one before that ("Too-Rye-Ay") and the one before that ("Searching For The Young Soul Rebels"). Such has been the brilliance of much of Rowland's previous work that only an idiot would dismiss his latest opinions without investigating their validity. Personally, I was half inclined to believe him. As it turns out, "The Wanderer" doesn't come close. True to form, Kev has changed direction once more, though not as



alarmingly as last time around when he dumped his dungarees, dressed up like a dummy in Billy Higgins' window and produced a record that was as over-indulgent as it was underrated and as over-budget as it was under-purchased.

ALBUM REVIEW

Searching for the Young Soul Rebel

"The Wanderer", it seems, was two years in the making. Long may Rowland continue to exercise loving care over his work but surely he and his patient record company are in some financial need of a return on their investment. With the first and most obvious single "Walk Away" disappearing without trace the pressure is well and truly on.

For me, what makes this just a very good record and not a brilliant one is its "niceness" and its absence of the Rowland fire of old. The first, immortal words he spoke on the Dexy's debut were "For God's sake, burn it down". Most recently on the excellent "Don't Stand Me Down", he had long, spoken conversations with his now departed sideman Billy Adams about "scumbags", "so called socialists" and "newly wealthy peasants". Here, apart from a swipe at Guardian readers, we get love songs by the number and lyrics devoid of special interest.

Another claim Kev makes is that his singing has improved significantly. This is quite true, it's near faultless. One of the reasons this reads like a harsh review is that "The Wanderer" is pleasant when I'd prefer it pompous. I still like it of course and I'd recommend it to anyone. But I'd sooner be listening to the angry young man that was.

Rating: ★★★½

PATTI SMITH "Dream Of Life" (Arista). For the benefit of younger readers (though I'm not exactly ready for the free bus pass myself yet, me being a mere slip of a lad) who may not be aware of the legend of Patti Smith, the lady was, more than a decade ago, the poetic punk goddess from New York City who gifted the rest of us two acclaimed albums called "Horses" (1975) and "Easter" (1978), the second of which contained the classic "Because The Night", co-written with Springsteen and played by The Boss at the RDS last week.



After a nine year absence Ms Smith is back and back on form. Always a fine songwriter, she's had a long time to come up with the eight tracks here and only rarely do they disappoint. Judging by the sleeve notes, the key track here is the rousing single "People Have The Power" ("The power to dream, to rule/To wrestle the world from fools/It's decreed the people

rule") which is essentially an optimistic anthem of well turned phrases and stirring vocals. Better still is the powerhouse rocker "Up There Down There" which is a bit more vague lyrically, but I wouldn't be too concerned about that when she delivers it so confidently and beautifully.

All in all, a poet in the rock tradition with an unusually sharp ear for a tuneless melody and the wherewithal to capitalise on it. A welcome return.

Rating: ★★★★★

PAT BENATAR "Wide Awake In Dreamland" (Chrysalis). In all likelihood, the song I've heard most over the last six months has been "Love Is A Battlefield" by Pat Benatar. This is no shaming reflection of my own supreme taste in music since I didn't have much



choice in the matter. It was one of my pleasant neighbours who seemingly felt the compulsion to hear the track at every available opportunity. Or perhaps they were getting equal for having to put up with the first Jesus & Mary Chain LP. Surprisingly, I can still listen to the Benatar anthem without throwing up.

Amongst the company she's keeping in this week's column, Pat Benatar is more your lightweight contender. To her credit, she clearly doesn't regard herself as such if we are to judge by her impassioned performance on "Wide Awake In Dreamland". She doesn't write any of the songs herself but sings them convincingly against arrangements that took a lot more than ten minutes to dream up. "Too Long A Soldier" aims for the sentiment echoed on Dire Straits' "Brothers In Arms" and gets away with it.

Of the three solo artists featured this week, hers is the only single that has made an impression, the passable "All Fired Up" sitting pretty at No.30 in Britain this week. "Wide Awake In Dreamland" isn't dramatically different from her previous work so if you're already a fan I guess you'll want to add this to your collection.

There's nothing as catchy as "Battlefield", for that I'm grateful.

Rating: ★★½

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GOLDEN DISCS

Top 20 Albums

- 1: TRACY CHAPMAN "Tracy Chapman"
- 2: VAN MORRISON & THE CHIEFTAINS "Irish Heartbeat"
- 3: BROS "Push"
- 4: HOTHOUSE FLOWERS "People"
- 5: MILLENNIUM ALBUM "Dublin Songs"
- 6: MICHAEL JACKSON "Bad"
- 7: INXS "Kick"
- 8: JIMMY PAGE "Outrider"
- 9: VARIOUS ARTISTS "Dublin Street Ballads"
- 10: WET WET WET "Popped In, Souled Out"
- 11: THE CHRISTIANS "The Christians"
- 12: Nanci Griffith "Lone Star State Of Mind"
- 13: AHA "Stay On These Roads"
- 14: GEORGE MICHAEL "Faith"
- 15: PRINCE "LoveSexy"
- 16: Nanci Griffith "Little Love Affairs"
- 17: MARY BLACK "By The Time It Gets Dark"
- 18: VARIOUS "ARTISTS" "Dirty Dancing"
- 19: SOMETHING HAPPENS "I Know Ray Harman"
- 20: DEEPER SPOUT "From I anolev Park To Memphis"