

many Prince classics, including the Curtis Mayfield styled title track, "U Got the Look," "I Could Never Take the Place of Your Man," "If I Was Your Girlfriend" and loads more. (10)



Lovesexy (1988)

Released after the ultra-rare *Black Album* was pulled, Prince's music lost something after this; never since has he captured the freshness, vitality and exuberance of this recording. Contains two tremendous songs in "Eye No" and "Alphabet Street" and the rest has lots of pizzazz, despite some paste. (8)

Batman (1989)

Despite being his first number one album since *Purple Rain*, the crassly commercial *Batman* soundtrack is largely filler, redeemed only by three very good songs ("The Future," "Electric Chair" and "Batdance," a number one hit). The Sheena Easton duet is easily the lamest thing he's ever recorded. (5)



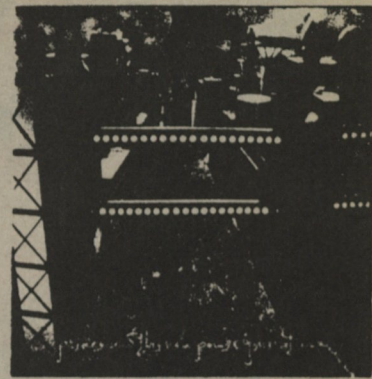
Graffiti Bridge (1990)

A convincing artistic rebound, but this soundtrack to the truly horrible movie is muddled by cameos from the Time, Tevin Campbell and the embarrassing Mavis Staples. It also features a sizeable amount of junk, like the bathetic title track. This is his most successful work utilizing rap rhythms and is generally pretty brilliant, but it also marks the beginning of a lack of tunes and heart that has marked his work since. (9)



Diamonds and Pearls (1991)

This one's plenty of fun and contains the rib-shaking, bass monster "Gett Off," but the ballads are vacuous, "Push" is an "It's Gonna be a Beautiful Night" retread, and the rap's belong on someone else's album. (7)



"The message is clear: Prince does it a lot and he would like to do it with you, please."

David Sinclair

Symbols

Prince
(Warner Bros.)

Prince's latest, *Symbols* (5), continues in the same vein as *Diamonds and Pearls*, but is an even weaker album than its predecessor. Spiked with funky grooves, some jazzy big band arrangements and his usual unidentifiable rhythmic devices, *Symbols* weakness is in the songwriting. Prince's work is always fascinating if only to listen to the complexity and depth of his creations. Still, there's loads of filler here: "Three Chains of Gold" is horrible and can't hide its Queen influences, lots of chants like "Sexy motherfucker, shakin' that ass" or "More fuck for your buck," and the ballads are vapid-- songs like "When Doves Cry" and "If I Was Your Girlfriend" were crucial to adding another dimension to these adolescent sex fantasies.

His worst album since the *Batman* soundtrack, *Symbols* degenerates further into the hyperactive sonic cuts that mark his recent work. At long last, Prince is the machine his critics have always claimed he was.