



# COMPLEMENT FOR ZEPPELIN STRAPPS HEIR TO DEEP PURPLE

(\*\*\*\*) CHICAGO XI - CHICAGO (COLUMBIA)

Chicago has played it safe with their eleventh effort. It sounds almost identical to their greatest hits album, as any of the tunes found here could easily become hit singles. Chicago, and the first single "Baby What A Big Surprise" show little musical progression, but at least they realize the restrictions placed upon a Top 40 band such as they and wisely do not venture past those restrictions. Chicago hit on a successful format seven years ago and have faithfully stuck to it. Once again, Chicago fans should be pleased with Chicago's latest effort.

(\*\*\*\*\*) I ROBOT - THE ALAN PARSONS PROJECT (ARISTA)

Alan Parsons is an engineer who handled the controls for the Beatles, Ambrosia and Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon. Recognized as one of the last in his field, last year he released an album that converted the works of Edgar Allan Poe to music. I Robot is another concept album in which Parsons chronicles the decline of man paralleled to the rise of machines. Lyrically the album holds its own, but its real strength lies in the music plus the various topnotch vocalists

that Parsons recruits to sing the vocal tracks. The album is very accessible and everyone should find something to his or her liking.

(\*) STAR WARS & OTHER GALACTIC FUNK - MECO (MILLENNIUM)

On side one, Meco simply reworks the theme song into 14 minutes of average disco. On side two there might as well be dead silence. Take my word for it and restrain yourself from buying the Meco 45.

(\*\*) PETER MCCANN (20TH CENTURY)

"Do You Wanna Make Love" and "Right Time of the Night" have already established McCann as a Top 40 performer and writer. The rest of his debut album contains the same type of material, with an occasional decent hook line or chorus. None of the songs have any real substance and the listener tends to grow tired of them after only a few listens.

(\*\*) WATERMARK - ART GARFUNKEL (COLUMBIA)

Where's Paul Simon just when you need him!

(\*\*\*\*) IN COLOR - CHEAP TRICK (EPIC)

Cheap Trick is one of the very few American straight ahead rock 'n roll bands that put emphasis on strong harmonies and melodies. Touches of the Beatles can even be heard on this record, something not often detected in the rock 'n roll of today.

All the songs on In Color are propelled by a solid beat coupled with lyrics often bordering on the hilarious. Cheap Trick were one of my favorite finds last January with their debut album and In Color is a welcome follow-up.

(\*\*) DECEPTIVE BENDS - TEN C.C. (LONDON)

"Good Morning Judge" and "The Things We Do For Love" are the only standout cuts on Deceptive Bends. The rest is, in a word, mediocre, and not at all up to Ten C.C.'s past standard of highly engaging material combined with a quality production job. Deceptive Bends took the wrong turn somewhere down the road.

(\*\*\*\*\*) JUST A STORY FROM AMERICA - ELLIOTT MURPHY (COLUMBIA)

I can't really do justice to this record in a short review. Elliott Murphy is the best new singer/songwriter since Bob Dylan, and I realize that means he's better than Bruce Springsteen. Murphy combines contemporary poetry with unforgettable melody lines, delivers each song with precision while sounding natural, and can simply overwhelm the unsuspecting listener. Just A Story From America is an instant classic and you'll hear of Murphy before very long, guaranteed.

(\*) ABSOLUTELY - BOXER (EPIC)

What a clinker! A five piece heavy metal band that promises much more than they deliver, Boxer hits the mat on the first song and is counted out by the eighth.

(\*\*) INDIAN SUMMER - POCO (ABC)

If country rock is your favorite music, then you probably already know about Poco. None of this album is all that thrilling, although "The Dance" is great. It's a "take it or leave it" album,

with the decision being insignificant.

(\*\*\*\*\*) SECRET DAMAGE - STRAPPS (EMI)

With Deep Purple permanently sidelined, and Rainbow reluctant to claim Purple's position the music industry is open for a heavy metal band to complement Led Zeppelin. Strapps is an obvious heir to this position as their first album is on a par with and superior to many of Purple's works. Ross Stagg could easily become the next Ritchie Blackmore, as Stagg plays lead guitar brilliantly, writes all the songs, and even handles the lead vocals. The final output is extremely competent heavy metal, influenced by Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, and even Sparks.

(\*\*\*\*) LISTEN TO THE BUDDHA - OZO (DJM RECORDS)

Ozo would have to be termed the Abba of reggae as they transform reggae into viable Top 40 material. By just the right combination of pulsating beat and catchy lyrics, Ozo has made reggae listenable for me for the first time. Pick it up for a pleasant change of pace.

(\*\*) TWILIGHT ASYLUM - OSCAR (DJM RECORDS)

Oscar is a five member band from Britain led by Brian McGladdery. The album begins with the title cut which lifts Uriah Heep's "Sweet Lorraine" synthesizer track note for note, but it's still the best cut of the record. Also noteworthy are "Three Cheers For The Working Man" and "Kevin's Magic Aeroplane". Most of the album is mellow material that leaves a favorable impression, including the outstanding lyrics.

Next week: BTO, Thin Lizzy, Horslips, Andrew Gold, Fludd, and others.

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