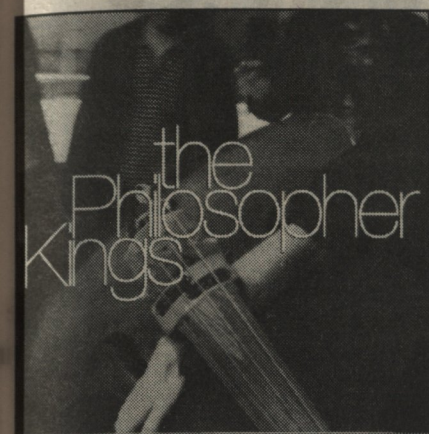


MORE MUSIC



The Philosopher Kings
Self-titled
(Columbia)

Despite their chosen name, the Philosopher Kings do not offer anything earth-shattering or even original in the lyrics of their first album. Almost all the songs tell the story of a man who has loved and lost, and is trying to regain his love yet again. (Sigh.....) Heart-wrenching as it may be, this topic is over-done in modern pop music. Lyrics aside, this recording is very good. The Philosopher Kings are a rather talented rhythm combo (piano, percussion, bass) embellished by trumpet, saxophone, guitar, and keyboard. Their mellow jazz and funk fusion was perfect for the cool, rainy, October afternoon on which I first gave the disc a spin. Gerald Eaton, lead vocalist, has a voice that warms you up inside like a steaming cup of hot chocolate or a crackling fire in the hearth. This recording is very versatile in that it can perfectly fit any listening occasion. It's soothing to play when you are curled up reading a good book, but could also create a romantic atmosphere or serve as great background noise for a relaxed party.

(4)
-- Steve Ellis

Robert Palmer
Honey
(EMI)

I took this CD home 'cause, I admit it, I sort of like Robert Palmer; however, the best thing I can say about this CD is that it has a really neat sleeve graphic. It also gave me the opportunity to see if the fast forward button on the player worked. I can't name any songs that were at least minimally better than the rest, because they all sounded the same. Most of the songs follow the typical "love the girl, lost the girl" theme. The problem seemed to be that slow, sappy songs were put into a rock format, and it just didn't work. The title track was an interesting mishmash of digitalized noise. Oh, wait! Some of you may find this CD's redemption in the fact that Nino Bettencourt is a guest artist. Then again, maybe not. Do not buy this CD unless you are masochistic or you really enjoy Robert Palmer. Same thing, I guess.

(2)
-- Aldera Chisholm

Pato Banton
Collection
(IRS Records)

Pato Banton and the Reggae Revolution: if this name sounds familiar-- you're right. Pato Banton has shared his talents with UB40 and opened for Ziggy Marley's North American tour. This collection of reggae is light, entertaining and has a great dance beat to it. This CD also has a song with a message "Don't Sniff Coke." I give Pato a 3: good beat, strange lyrics.

(3)
-- Jennifer Caseley



Nine Below Zero
Hot Music For A Cold Night
(Pangea/EMI)

A superb modern blues album. Nine Below Zero is a rare commodity in the blues community, a completely original band. Their sound is defiantly unique. The guitars are heavy, the harp is wailing and the groove ranges from hard rock to funk-blues.

The only song not penned by the band members is the classic R&B standard "I've Never Loved A Man (The Way I Loved You)" with sensational guest vocals from Alannah Myles. There is no mystery as to why Eric Clapton had this group open his Royal Albert Hall dates this spring. *Hot Music For A Cold Night* is a winner for any fan of progressive blues-rock.

(4)
-- Mike Beagan

Mark Curry
Let The Wretched Come Home
(EMI)

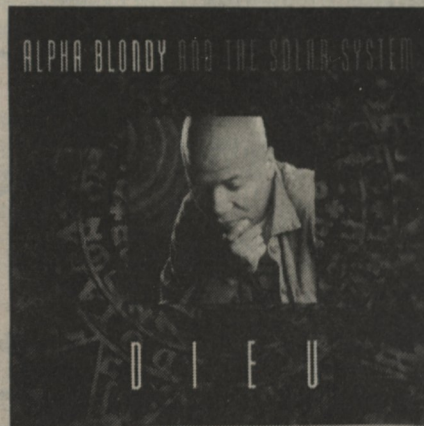
This is one of the most original releases I have heard in a long time. The style is a cross between acoustic punk and rootsy folk rock. All of the instruments are well-played, and they combine for a soulful, multi-layered sound. Curry is a very competent songwriter. The melodies are simple, yet not derivative, and the lyrics are realistic reflections of hard living in a tough time. This album's major flaw is Curry's tendency to sing incredibly fast, occasionally getting ahead of the melody and ruining many potentially beautiful tunes. Unfortunately, this vocal trait mars the entire disc with very few exceptions.

(3.5)
-- Mike Beagan

Alpha Blondy and the Solar System
Dieu
(EMI Music)

France's Alpha Blondy, lead singer and producer of this album, has his own unique reggae style. His opinionated songs address serious issues like abortion and war, while his raspy voice and bilingual vocals combine with a Bob Marley sound to make this a very original album. I recommend it for French speakers and reggae lovers alike.

(3.5)
-- Jason Roberts



Larry Norman
In Another Land
(Solid Rock Records)

Originally released in 1975, *In Another Land* was re-released in the US last year but only now made it to Canada. The wide variety of songs on this CD is startling. The sound runs from blues-based rock to quiet acapella melodies, but it all flows smoothly together. The lyrics are excellent and meaningful, but you have to listen carefully to understand them. On the whole, the CD has a solid message; however, it's not for everybody since many would be annoyed or even deeply offended by Larry's words. You either love him or you hate him. In the '70s they said he was ahead of his time. Today, few people know what to make of him. This is music you can't judge until you listen to it.

(4.5)
-- Marko Peric

Smashing Pumpkins
Pisces Iscariot
(EMI)

"...This here is an assemblage of, well, stuff. Songs never meant to come out, some written with such high hopes...all special to the heart." That pretty well sums up this compilation of B-sides, outtakes and covers. Most of the songs have a special meaning to the band which may be lost on the listener. Not exactly a bad idea, but it pales in comparison to *Siamese Dream*. Had this album been released first, it would have been phenomenal, but now it's just more Smashing Pumpkins.

The songs are filled with the same angst-ridden, angry, ferocious lyrics found on their other albums, but a sentimental side

emerges (especially on "Blew Away" and the Stevie Nicks cover "Landslide"); however, this is no CD for wimps. The bottom-heavy guitars abound and often drown out the aforementioned trademark lyrics. For those of you who don't necessarily want a change from *Siamese Dream*, this is an equitable supplement and a worthwhile purchase.

(4)
-- Joel Gillespie

Ian McNabb
Head Like A Rock
(Polygram)

Ian McNabb plays vocalist, songwriter, and guitarist on this album and serves up some quality tunes with great, dripping slabs of ragged guitar sounds. Unfortunately, *Head Like A Rock* manages to leave the listener unsatisfied.

There are no bad songs on this album, but with an average track length approaching seven minutes, many seem too bloated to be fully entertaining.

The musicianship is top-notch and there are a few diamonds in the rough. The guitar-drenched "Child Inside A Father," for instance, is exceptional.

This disc is worth a spin, but listen before you buy.

(3.5)
-- Mike Beagan

