

Dixieland jazz break to the middle of "Dixie Chicken," these arrangements aren't drastically different from the originals — they're just more energetic. This is what a live album should be but all too rarely is: a chance for the musicians to loosen up and play in what's at least supposed to be their natural habitat, the concert hall.

But not to worry. Even when the Feat loosen up, they're still one of the tightest rock bands to be found. A quick listen to the live "Rocket in My Pocket" should convince non-believers. With musicians of this band's caliber, loose isn't the same thing as sloppy. These guys just sound like they're having a much better time on stage than they do in the studio. (Though, I'll admit, they never used to sound too bad there, either, until I heard this record.)

As might be expected, there are various solos throughout the record, and they're intelligently and articulately done within the context of the songs. Nobody resorts to mere flash or spotlight-grabbing, which is one of the band's main strengths. Each member seems to understand that he is just that, contributing his part to the total sound. As a result, the solos work at least as well on record as on stage, a rarity indeed when a concert is transferred to vinyl. Lowell George, once considered the "leader" of Little Feat, makes his presence known just often enough to let you know he's still a vital part of the band, but he seems more than content to share the spotlight with others, most notably Bill Payne on keyboards and Kenny Gradney on bass.

The Tower of Power horn section adds fine backup on several cuts, while never intruding at all.

And if all this isn't enough to convince skeptics to get hold of the record, it's also got some of Lowell George's by-now-infamous liner notes. What more could a person want?

Ah, what the hell. Why should I be nervous? I'll say it. Maybe Little Feat is the finest band in America. One of them, at least. Now I just wish this crazed hipster would put his gun away.

Ken Beegle

#### Jimmy Buffett:

**Son of a Son of a Sailor (ABC)**

On the album cover, Jimmy Buffett looks pleased; his songs sound it. His record company has given star packaging to this traveling club-band-made-good, and Buffett is freer now to enjoy sea, sun and drink. Production is appropriately lively for ditties, slow western and barroom tunes. Three songs especially — "Fool Button," "Livingston Saturday Night" and "Cheeseburger in Paradise" (an ode to the carnivorous life) — exude an atmosphere of raunchy fun.

"The Coast of Marseilles" and "African Friend" are, above all, romantic. "Marseilles," one of the two cuts on the album not written by Buffett, is a simple song which could have been thrown away because it's so short. However, the arrangement builds it into the type of gently pleasant song you'd want to put on again.

Looking for something to begin where "Margaritaville" left off, I didn't really find anything. "Son of a Son of a Sailor" sounds the closest. But then there's "Mañana," the hippest song on the album. Don't let the references to Steve Martin and Anita Bryant stop you from listening. "Son" or "Mañana" could be on the radio a lot.

Maybe it's incongruous to have a happy musician. Maybe Buffett's paid his dues and deserves to enjoy himself and indulge his love for the sea. Whatever it is, the record sounds like he's in control of a seasoned band in one of his favorite bars.

Becky Sue Epstein

#### Richard Torrance: Double Take (Capitol)

When "Runaround Girl" pops out of the speakers, it pops. There's no Aphex Aural Exciter, but the band still sounds like it's doing a session in the next room. Torrance has obviously put a lot into this album with John Carter, a new producer for him on several selections, and the performer's new confidence shows up. You can tell that he's heading in the direction he wants to be going — toward a good, hard, rock band. (The remaining selections were produced, uncredited, by John Haeny and remixed by Carter.)

The first two cuts on the album are the strongest. "Runaround Girl" and "I Can't Ask for Anything More Than You" both use some elements of early Motown production, which also helps by association with what we remember as the more carefree era of rock. Blending disco with an early Sixties sound, "I Can't Ask" could be Torrance's "Stayin' Alive."

Torrance has written or co-written 6 of the 9 tunes on the album. Though he doesn't hold back on any of the cuts, several should sound better live. Torrance sings particularly hard on "Got No Shadow" and on "Long Lonely Nights." "Get Into the Music" is rock and roll not heavily done, and very listenable.

But after hearing the whole album, the first two cuts still stand out. They're bright, uncomplicated, and they'd get you moving on a dance floor and humming to the radio. They're hot.

B.S.E.

## Dissolution Jazz

#### Ubiquity:

**Starbooty (Elektra)**

**Dee Dee Bridgewater:**

**Just Family (Elektra)**

**Lenny White:**

**The Adventures of Astral Pirates (Elektra)**

Now, I know that there are many mansions in the house of music. I know that music has many styles and many purposes and many widely, wildly different guises. I know that taste in music, like taste in anything, is highly subjective — and that there is, ultimately, little to be gained by disputing tastes with which one, as an observer or a reviewer, has no sympathy.

I know all this, and know it well. But I still feel honor-bound to report that I have the feeling, way deep down in my music-loving little heart, that there is something less than sublime going on here. That, for example, a small complement of slightly unsynchronized voices chanting in a loud r & b whisper the words, "I'm a star, you're a star; Starbooty. I'm a star, you're a star; Starbooty" against a conventional electric rhythm track is not among the highest achievements of contemporary artistic or intellectual civilization.

So what? you may ask. So what, indeed.

The three albums considered here are the first releases in Elektra's new, informally linked "fusion" line. The "fusion" referred to is that between jazz and rock and/or R&B — which is to say that it's the sort of music that results when good jazz players (accomplished or promising) decide that they want a house in the hills just like Herbie Hancock's. And no two words describe "fusion" better, in my way of thinking, than . . . So what?

I have one main objection to fusion music:

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