

LPs



Sesame Street Fever
By Sesame Street with Robin Gibb
© 1978 Sesame Street Records
CTW 79005

The new release from the Sesame Street gang, *Sesame Street Fever*, is a multi-faceted classic that is bound for the annals of record industry history.

The album is outstanding from many standpoints. The philosophy to be found in the lyrics is simple, yet profound, and captures the spirit of the Seventies perfectly. The versatility of the performers, who are more accustomed to teaching children to count to 20, is demonstrated through their completely professional vocal efforts, and the production and musical genius put into the compositions — well, let's just say "Get down!"

The only disappointing aspect of the entire record is its brevity — there are only three tracks per side. Still, the intensity of these six songs is enough to wipe any listener out.

The album opens with the title cut, a rollicking, devil-may-care tune to get people up on their feet and boogie-ing right at the outset. Guest vocalist Robin Gibb of the Bee Gees sets the pace with his smooth but not at all showy sing-

ing and is soon joined by Big Bird, Ernie, the Cookie Monster and the Count (who keeps the beat by counting the number of dancers present).

Gibb's other major contribution to the album is a new version of Oscar the Grouch's smash hit, "I Love Trash." Oscar, reluctant to let the spotlight be stolen from him, apparently threatened the Children's Television Workshop with a lawsuit if they used his original lyrics. Consequently, the version Gibb sings is slightly different from Oscar's.

In any case, it's moving to hear this talented musician sing "Trash — it's everything to me." Stick-in-the-muds may growl that those are inappropriate lyrics for a Bee Gee to be singing, but they can just stay in the mud.

Equally heartrending is "Has Anybody Seen My Dog?," featuring Marty, a newcomer to the Sesame Street cast, and Grover, a veteran S.S. actor. The lyrics concern a boy whose dog has wandered off to a disco without first telling his master where he was headed. Anyone — including dogs — who has ever had a similar experience will be deeply touched.

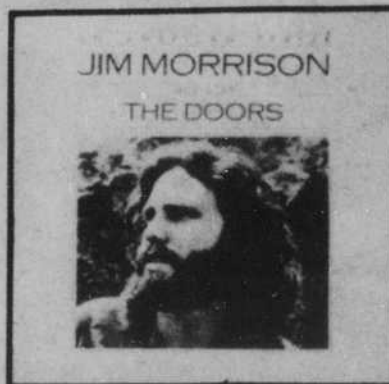
On the lighter side, Cookie Monster does a funky rendition of his old hit, "C Is For Cookie." The beat is infectious, and C.M.'s defiant roar of "C" is for COOK-ie, that's good enough for me!" is invigorating.

The song clearly symbolizes the Seventies' attitude that simple pleasures are indeed the best ones, all the way from disco fever to *coq au vin* cookies (one of the monster's favorites, according to the lyrics).

Bert's lead vocal on "Doin' the Pigeon" is somewhat nasal, but the basic message of the song is encouraging — even Bert, who is

unsure of his dancing ability, can manage to hustle his insecurities away.

Of course, the high point of the disc is Ernie's spruced-up disco version of "Rubber Duckie." Ernie squeaks a fine rubber duck solo in addition to providing a pleasant effort at the microphone. There's even a moment of suspense at the end of the song, as Ernie shouts "Get down, Rubber Duckie!" and the duck, taking him literally plunges to the bottom of the bathtub in stereophonic sound. Those wanting to know if Duckie survives will have to buy the album to find out. **By Steve Rodgers**



An American Prayer
By Jim Morrison/The Doors
© 1978 Elektra/Asylum Records
5E-502

An American Prayer might be the last new work to emerge from the recorded poetry and songs of Jim Morrison. Morrison sang for The Doors, a Los Angeles formed rock group, but his ultimate dreams were in the direction of film and poetry.

An American Prayer is poetry and music. There are snatches of poetry Morrison was working on before he left to begin writing voluminously in Paris where he died

in September 1971. There is also a live recording of The Doors performing "Roadhouse Blues," a few spontaneous Morrison stage raps, and a lot of newly recorded Doors' music from the three surviving members of The Doors.

An American Prayer is the most kaleidoscopic Doors album and probably their best. Much of the poetry on this album was work that Morrison had printed privately and distributed to friends. It shows that Morrison, like a few other Sixties rock stars was more than the teenybopper rock idol many adolescent fan magazines made him out to be.

Side One is about Morrison's youth in Florida. On the first listening a mass of word images seems to dominate the music. But on subsequent hearings, the music emerges in subtle harmony with Morrison's voice. Morrison's moody spilling of words becomes a mesmerizing and entrancing writer's notebook. He was a "word man" whose tough but vulnerable voice thrust him into stardom.

Morrison's obsessions with film and sex recur throughout the album. Every word is backed by Ray Manzarek's calculated, ethereal organ music and the exotic guitar of Robbie Krieger.

Side Two is Morrison's life as a star. In a live recording of the Doors' "Roadhouse Blues" Morrison's harsh voice belts out abrasive drinking lyrics. "I woke up this morning/Grabbed myself a beer/The future's uncertain/The end is always near." Existential philosophy is brought to a practical, but dismal, level of uncluttered clarity. Morrison wanted to have a good time before time ran out.

In one long piece entitled "An American Prayer," Morrison goes back in time. A primitive rhythmic beat of words is joined by percus-

sionist Densmore's beat beat beat drumming. Morrison asks for a re-inventing of the world's myths, the "great golden copulations" he so desperately longed for. Morrison asks, "Have you been born yet and are you alive?" and passionately suggests, "Let's reinvent the gods, all the myths of the ages/Celebrate symbols from deep elder forests."

But by the end of the album, Morrison's decree becomes a mockery of worded illusion and he shows his horror through tricky rhymes and the way he breathes while reciting some of his poetry.

For instance, he asks, "Did you know madmen are running our prison/within a jail, within a gaol/within a white free protestant maelstrom?" and then continues reading in the reserved, frigid restraint of refined WASPs: "We're perched headlong on the edge of boredom/We're reaching for death on the end of a candle," and though Morrison mocks these flabby-assed people, he finds a part of them in himself and says with self disgust, "Wow, I'm sick of doubt/Live in the light of certain/south/Cruel bindings."

The last verses on the album are Morrison's epitaph. His singing away is not the pathetic death so many associated with the fat cheeked, whisky drinking rock star refugee.

The album is Morrison at his best. The poetry may seem to be composed of disjointed images, but there is an inner structure meant to cast light on Morrison's life in an autobiographical sort of way.

His beautifully phrased verses show a pet who died too soon. "Death makes angels of us all/& gives us wings/where we had shoulders/smooth as raven's claws/No more money no more fancy dress/This other kingdom seems by far the best." **By Dave Steinman**

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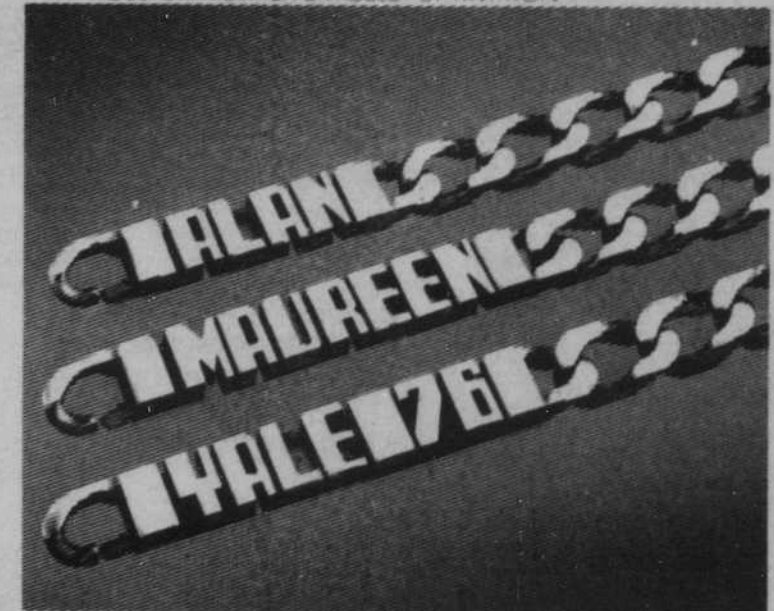
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