

Political album asks, 'Where's the voice of America?'

**Little Steven
Voice Of America
EMI Records**



It would appear to be a prescription for failure: Leave Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band at the height of their popularity. Record a political album (horrors) that doesn't tow

the Ron Reagan "nuke first, ask questions later" line (more horrors). Make only one of the album's ten cuts a love song (out and out sacrilege).

Little Steven's **Voice Of America** addresses the Orwellian aspects of our society and bitterly contests the United State's actions in Central America; it comes as no surprise that it has indeed been a failure — commercially. As a well crafted rock'n'roll album,

however, and a stunning piece of socio-political commentary, it is a laudable success.

The title track is an unrelenting musical blitzkrieg, recalling the angry intensity of the Sex Pistols and early Clash, and wastes no time getting to the point: "Can you hear me, wake up / Where's the voice of America? / Somebody help me, we gotta stop a crime / I been betrayed by my own kind / I been quiet, too quiet / While

across our borderline / We die." The final lines are only marginally reassuring: "Can you hear me, wake up / We're the voice of America."

The song "Fear" communicates visceral paranoia, featuring an eerie call and response chorus and some of the disc's most disturbing lyrics: "In this jungle we're slaves to politics / And we call ourselves civilized / If you ain't got the muscle / Fear is gonna run your life . . ."

The LP's saddest song is "Los Desaparecidos (The Disappeared Ones)," in which a Latin American woman must tell her son that his father has been taken away "for speaking his heart out one day," and wonders why the people of the United States "just turn their backs to our shame."

The album ends on a hopeful note with "Believers" ("I see peacemakers coming, I see justice in our time") and "Undefeated" ("Don't call yourself a patriot / Not with that gun in your hand / There's only one way out of here I understand / Undefeated, everybody goes home").

Little Steven's first album, **Men Without Women** (1982), was an homage to 1960s Motown music (particularly Smokey Robinson), complete with a Stax-type horn section. It

featured an impressive array of musicians (including four E Streeters) known collectively as The Disciples of Soul, but was dismissed by many as being irrelevant to the music of the 1980s.

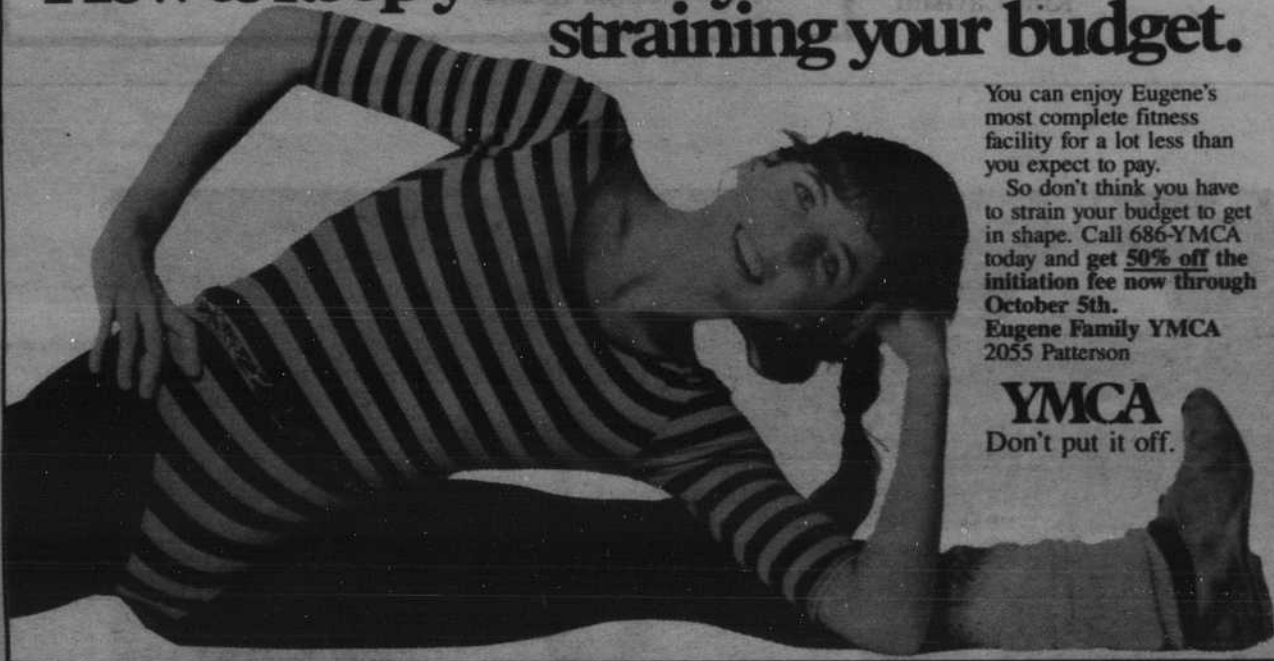
This time around Little Steven blasts his way into the heart of popular music's domain with songs that are exceedingly relevant. Synthesizers, electronic drums and slick, state-of-the-art production are used to maximum effect without sacrificing a spontaneous feel or any of the LP's raw-edged power.

He is again backed by The Disciples of Soul minus the horns and Springsteen sidemen. Ex-Plasmatic Jean Beauvoir provides a hard driving bass guitar and former Rascal Dino Danelli's drumming compares favorably with that of Max Weinberg (the backbone of the E Street Band). Pee Wee Weber's and Zoe Yanakis' potent keyboards are (thankfully) never obnoxious, and Monty Louis Ellison's exotic percussive devices add an amazing degree of subtle rhythmic complexity.

If you buy one album this year, make it **Voice Of America**. Play it on the best stereo you can find, and play it loud. It's that good.

Kevin Frank

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Friday September 28

Main Desk 7:00-11:30 p.m. Free Check Cashing! Free Popcorn! Free coupons good for 10% discount from sales area. And buy a Monster Cookie for only 25¢ while they last.

Recreation Center 7:00-11:00 p.m. Discount Night! Billiards are free (regularly \$2.00 an hour). Bowling half price (30 cents a game), free shoes. Feature Event: Chess/Backgammon Tournament.

Craft Center 7:00-9:00 p.m. We'll have demonstrations in studio areas of the center, the east lobby and the Main Desk area. Sign up for drawings on prizes that include ceramic mugs, two memberships and a workshop. Entry forms available all day.

Club Sports 7:00-9:00 p.m. Watch sports demonstrations and visit with hosts from 18 competitive clubs. 167 EMU

Outdoor Program 7:15 & 8:15 Come see an exciting multi-media slide show followed by a discussion of outdoor recreation available through the program. Outdoor Program Room, basement of EMU

Fishbowl 7:00-9:00 p.m. Refreshments, EMU Food Service. Our EMU slide show will run continuously and will be in the main lobby.

A.S.U.O. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Check out A.S.U.O. programs, find out where your incidental fees are going, and meet your student government. Refreshments. Such a deal!

Entertainment:

Fishbowl - Rock-n-Roll 7-8:30 p.m.

East Lobby - Folk Music 7-8 p.m.

Out to Lunch (Jugglers) 8-8:30 p.m.