



MUSIC

An Attitude Adjustment

The Psychedelic Furs regain their musical edge

The history of the Psychedelic Furs is a tale of attitude adjustment. This London band started in 1977 under the clear influence of the Sex Pistols. On their first two records, "Psychedelic Furs" and "Talk Talk Talk," the Furs put their sneers in an intriguing variety of angry musical contexts, all held together by Richard Butler's raspy vocals. Then came "Forever Now" and "Mirror Moves," with a lighter, more polished instrumental approach and songs that were actually *sentimental* about love. "You could only get so far being negative," explained Butler at the time.

Now the Furs have seemingly decided that you only get so far being positive, as well. Their fifth album, *Midnight to Midnight* (Columbia), darkens the outlook on romance considerably. "I tell myself that I'm all you need / It's like torture," Butler sings on "Torture." But this is not the snide mind-set of the early albums. What we hear is a jaded world-weariness, as on "Heartbreak Beat": "And it feels like love / But it don't mean a lot / And it feels like love / And it's all that we've got." The Furs believe that love is worth screaming and fighting for, but that you can't always get what you want.

The Furs have also re-

trenched musically. The careful arrangements on "Midnight to Midnight" show what they've learned after nine years and four LP's. Originally a sextet, the Furs are now essentially a studio trio—vocalist Butler, bassist Tim Butler (Richard's brother) and guitarist John Ashton—with sidemen used to fill in the cracks. On this record they sound a lot like later Roxy Music albums, with arrangements driven by guitar and saxophone that sound alternately hard-edged and ethereal. The catchy melodic hooks that dominated "Mirror Moves" have been enlivened by a new instrumental



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Serious boogie: Music for your feet and soul from Los Lobos



GREG GORMAN (PHOTO LEFT)

The lessons of nine years and four records: A jaded look at the darker side of love

forcefulness, and Butler's voice, once softened to a burr, has regained its harshness.

There's an irony in the Furs' harsher sound. It comes after the group scored its biggest hit last year with a cleaned-up re-recording of "Pretty in Pink," a song from their second LP. Despite impressive sales of the new version, Richard Butler now says he prefers the "urgency and intensity" of the original. On the new album, he adds, the band tried very hard not to sound "like a band playing in the studio." The music on "Midnight to Midnight" benefits from the Psychedelic Furs' attitudinal lesson.

RON GIVENS

Good Rocking

On their second album, *By the Light of the Moon* (Slash/Warner Bros.), Los Lobos continue to sparkle with the lean-and-mean boogie that made their 1984 debut, "How Will the Wolf Survive," so special. Again, we hear the flinty, spare guitar work, the freight-train rhythm section and the just-right flavorings of Mexican folk-music accordion and Stax/Volt R&B sax. On the flat-out "Shakin' Shakin' Shakes," singer-guitarist Cesar Rosas tells of a dancing woman: "She shakes it through the mountains / She shakes it through the night / She shakes it like a hurricane / She gives the blind man sight." "Light of the Moon" offers a new, more spiritual side than its predecessor, particularly on songs by singer-guitarist-accordionist David Hidalgo such as the profoundly religious "Tears of God." Yet for the most part, the music barely slackens, even on serious songs. David Hidalgo may have found God, but Los Lobos haven't lost the beat.

R. G.