

ON THE RECORD

Squeeze



Babylon and On

Squeeze offers gripping lyrics

By Carolyn Lamberson

Squeeze is a band with great stories to tell. These are stories told in the same sense as Bruce Springsteen, John Cougar Mellencamp, and to a certain extent Bryan Adams. These men tell depressing stories about the farm crisis, the economy, and loneliness. Squeeze takes a different road.

The British sextet's stories are about many of these topics, but the tone is vastly different. Whereas Springsteen et al look in a dreary manner upon the plight of the everyday working class Joe and his middle-American problems, Squeeze is lighthearted about the whole situation. This is clearly evident in the band's most recent release *Babylon and On*.

As in past hits like "Tempted," "Up the Junction," and "If I Didn't Love You," Squeeze's infectious melodies and lyrics are instantly appreciated. Chris Difford, Glenn Tilbrook, Julian Holland, Gilson Lavis, Keith Wilkinson, and Andy Metcalfe have created an album that takes monumental leaps beyond their last release *Cosi Fan*

Tutti Frutti; a commercial and artistic disappointment.

Babylon and On begins with the highly listenable "Hourglass." The chorus here is what catches the listener *Take it to the bridge—throw it overboard see if it can swim—back up to the shore no one is in the house—everyone is out all the lights are on and the blinds are down...* Purely frantic in nature and hard as hell to figure out without a lyric sheet.

The following song, "Footprints," is about what a drag it is getting old. Using the classic summer and winter images to symbolize youth and age, Squeeze, whose members aren't the youngsters they used to be, knit a laid-back, easy-going tale. *Now the summer is over I can count the cost;*

footprints on beaches are now footprints in the frost.

These are not the most original lyrics in the world, but they effectively convey the intended message.

"Tough Love" is one of the truly great story songs about a drunken slob who hits his wife and she eventually

wises up and leaves him. In typical soap-opera manner, he realizes now how much he loves her after she's gone. Even though it's a bit sappy, it's not oozing of maple syrup as many of today's songs are. It's realistic, or as realistic as a pop song can be.

As side one finishes with "The Prisoner," "853-5937," and "In Today's Room," the members of Squeeze have proven themselves to be skilled musicians. The integration of vocal harmonies and a well-balanced musical backing add a rich layer to *Babylon and On*.

Holland's keyboards ring out with boogie frenzies during "Hourglass" and side two's "Trust Me to Open My Mouth." Metcalfe shines on his horn performance in "The Prisoner." Difford and Tilbrook are equally talented guitarists and vocalists, and the rhythm section, Wilkinson on bass and Lavis on drums, sets a solid tempo for the album.

Side two is as good as side one. From the bouncy "Trust Me to Open My Mouth" to the sardonic "Some