SOUNDBITES

Tracy Chapman Matters of the Heart

One thing three time Grammy award winner Tracy Chapman has never lacked is soul. Best known for her single, "Fast Car, and her somber, bluesy, folky sound, Chapman combines social-realist lyrics with her low, soothing voice for her trademark

style. Compared to everyone from Bob. Dylan to Joan Bacz, her-1989 debut album, Tracy Chapman, sold more than 7 million copies



Like Chapman's career. Matters of the Heart starts off with a bang - "Bang Bang Bang," that is. The first track illustrates more depth than any from her second album, Crossroads, But because she's lost in a rut of repetition, her horizons look pretty flat. The overall song variety of her third album has the flavor of an unswectened bowl of cream of wheat and leaves you thirsting for something more

Chapman's routine musical background consists of a guitar, some percussion and occasional background vocals. After a few songs, listeners will be ho-humming and rooting for Tracy to take a risk - maybe hold a note for longer than two counts or add a sax solo or something

Chapman needs to drive her fast car off her plateau and realize she can loosen up without falling into the commercialized trap where most pop artists find themselves. • [ill Laurinaitis, The Review, U. of Delaware

Ride

Going Blank Again

I like my music catchy and meaningful, I demand my tunes have lush, full harmonies, beautiful melodies and stellar musicianship. So last year, when I heard Ride's debut LP Nowhere - well, needless to say I was captivated. The album took me on ethereal journeys through love and hate, hope and angst, and dreams and reality.

When I popped Ride's latest, Going Blank Again, into my CD player for the virgin listen. I wasn't expecting anything nearly as solid as Nowhere What I got, however, was an album so engaging it rivals the debut. Once again, guitarists/vocalists Mark Gardener and Andy Bell reach deep within themselves and bring forth the organized confusion. and guilty innocence of a lost generation.

And Going, like its predecessor, is as solid and powerful at the end as it is at the start.

But be warned, Ride has changed. The quartet no longer relies on the sonic guitar

sound that created a music scene. Instead they opt for chorus and distortion pedals and the end result is impressive

From the American rock riffs of Twisterella" to the keyboard-laden "Chrome Waves" to the dizzy '60s pop of Making Judy Smile," Going proves Ride is a taste of the future of rock on either side of the Atlantic . Fric I. Miller, The Temple News, Temple U

Live

Mental Jewelry

Live - isn't that the band whose current single, "Operation Spirit" contains the ohso-meaningful verse: "Give it up. Give it up. Give it up? Why don't they take their

own advice and call it quits after this album? And why don't they wear shirts on their album cover or in the "Spirit" video: Are they hoping to attract lots of women. What's with these guys, anyway



Basically, Live is an "alternative" Journey or Foreigner - cheesy not-rock for those who don't like their music straight up. Lead vocalist Edward Kowalczyk's mewling sounds like Alvin the Chipmunk on steroids. And the feeble riffs that they pass off as hooks qualify them for the title 'World's Most Monotonous Band.

Yeah, at times they sound like they can play their instruments. But while listening to this album. I am reminded of the saving about putting a monkey in front of a typewriter with the hopes that one day he will eventually tap out a Shakespeanan play.

This is what Live is banking on - random unimpressiveness, hoping for a hit. Their lyric writing is no tour de force, either. Ouite blase, actually Somehow, they have landed a spot on MTV's coveted "Buzz Bin." But one thing's for sure, industry hype aside they're no Nirvana . Geoffrey Kula, The Daily Free Press, Boston U.

Banned box CD long box dies a belated death

By MATT MORGAN

The Daily Tar Heel, U. of North Carolina

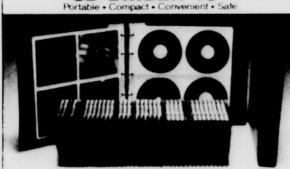
The CD long box, that senseless environmental terror, finally has been banned. After years of pressure from environmentalists and divisive bickering between the music industry's major players, the Recording Industry of America has reached a consensus. By April 15, 1993, CDs will be sold in only their non-disposable, 5 by 51/2 inch jewel box packages.

But most of the credit has to go the musicians themselves, particularly Peter Gabriel, the Grateful Dead, Bonnie Raitt, Sting and U2, who ditched the box on their own. "The artists were pushing the issue due to environmental concerns, which forced us to move," said PolyGram spokesman Larry Hensley. "They just didn't want to be guilty of the long box."

And the effect on you, the consumer? None, really, unless you liked throwing away useless cardboard boxes. "What's the issue?" asked Warren Widener, a senior at the U. of North Carolina. "It's not hard to part with something you never needed.

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