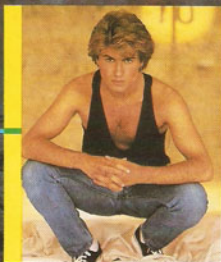


COUNT DOWN

THE MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER '84 No. 15
Volume No. 2 \$2.00
N.Z. \$2.50

POSTERS



GEORGE MICHAEL
PLUS
BONO

BOY CHAMELEON!

&

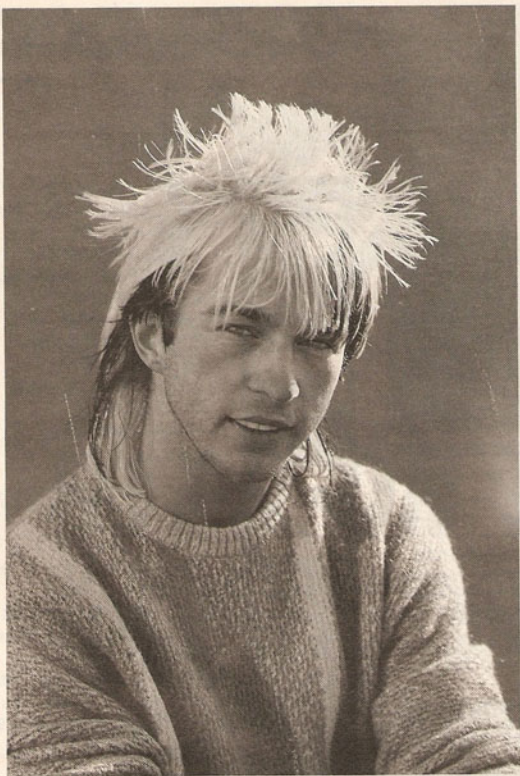
NIK KERSHAW

MARILYN

EUROGLIDERS

MACHINATIONS

MALCOLM McLAREN



NEXT MONTH

Stand by for the December issue of COUNTDOWN THE MAGAZINE! All will be revealed in our special Readers Poll edition. Which band is the best in the world? Who are the most desirable pop stars? What was the event of 1984? All this and more (including comments from the winners and the runners-up) in the December COUNTDOWN! And just wait until you see the posters!

SISTER SLEDGE's current UK hit *Lost In Music* — originally recorded in 1979 — was written and produced by the then Chic team of Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers. The duo were also responsible for their hits *He's The Greatest Dancer* and *We Are Family*. *Lost In Music* has been remixed by Nile with the assistance (on backing vocals) of Simon Le Bon and Andy Taylor, but without the assistance of Debbie, Kathy, Joni or Kim.

After providing the marvellous *Ain't Nobody* for the soundtrack of "Breakdance" and cropping up on everybody's list of favourite singers, **CHAKA KHAN** has released a new single, *Feel For You* was written by His Royal Naffness, sorry, Badness Prince and produced by Arif Mardin (Scritti Politti etc, etc). Also featured

is Stevie Wonder on harmonica.

Speaking of **PRINCE**, apparently the sensitive one has developed a physical disability! The poor thing gets ill having his photograph taken. (What about everyone who's sick of looking at him?)

It was a sweet moment for ABC Managing Director Geoffrey Whitehead when he was presented with a platinum record for ABC Records when the soundtrack of "Sweet And Sour" notched up sales in excess of 70,000 units (that's copies to you and I). The presentation was made by Festival Records' Jim White.

LIMAH and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi? Don't worry, he's not off to India to study sitar! Limahl and company hired part of the Yogi's headquarters to film part of the clip for *Too Much Trouble*

and filled the place up with leather clad teenage punks!

ALISON MOYET seems to have had fun shooting the film for her first solo hit *Love Resurrection*. The Arab Bedouins took quite a shine to her and several actually proposed marriage — despite the fact that Alison is married already. Alison's protests went unheeded — she wasn't wearing enough jewellery to convince them.

Police-man and percussionist **STEWART COPELAND** has been busy writing the score for the San Francisco Ballet Company's production of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, despite never having seen a ballet or read the play!

Speaking of The Police, apparently Stewart and Sting haven't spoken to each other for six months. Sting's been busy buying the home of

World Famous Violinist Yehudi Menuhin for a mere £½million...

Enough culture, already. **MARC BOLAN** returns on video, despite being dead for seven years. The imaginatively titled "Marc On Video" features the notorious elf at the height of his powers performing such gems as *Jeepster* and *Telegram Sam*. The hour long compilation was released in the UK at the end of last month, and hopefully will make it here before Christmas.

TREVOR HORN, shaping up as the producer of the Eighties with his work with *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, *Yes*, *The Art Of Noise* et al is now recording with Earth Wind And Fire's Maurice White. *Senso Hant Ai!*

RUSSELL HANDLEY

BEARGARDEN



THE FINER THINGS

I need a key
I need that luxury
Clearly
With cameras and cages and cars
I follow the lives of the stars

CHORUS

Are you sending out
Or are you sealing in
Some of the finer things
in life

Your ebony rose
Grows where no one goes
A cold road
The shade of the years
That I should know
I should know so well
I laid all I had on a spell

REPEAT CHORUS TWICE

I need a key
I need that luxury
Banshee
Spin with me
Spin with me well
I've laid all I had on a spell

Well are you sending out
Or are you sealing in
Some of the finer thing I know

CHORUS

(Lyrics by Sam Savva. Reprinted by permission of MMA Music Australia.)

BERLIN

TOURING AUSTRALIA OCTOBER/NOVEMBER



Featuring the hit singles
'No More Words' and 'Dancing in Berlin'

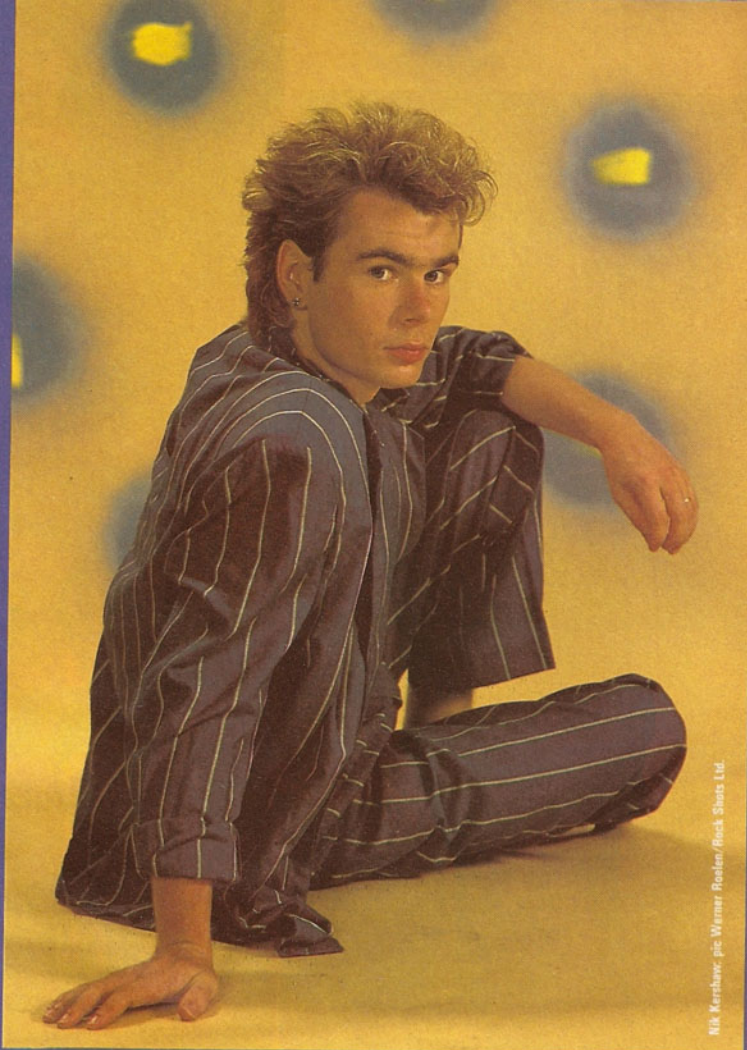
ADELAIDE
MELBOURNE

OCTOBER 26/27
OCTOBER 30-
NOVEMBER 5
NOVEMBER 7-11

SYDNEY



FROM POLYGRAM RECORDS



With Keribane, pic: Warner Brothers/Black Stars Ltd.

MY BROTHER WAS A DOLPHIN TRAINER!!!

CHAMELEON BOY

It's OK To Be A Clown In a Circus. But Not In A Supermarket.





As Culture Club prepare to unleash their third album on a waiting world Donald Robertson spends two hours with the Boy, capturing his comments on sex, war, religion, relationships, intolerance, school, drugs . . . The most comprehensive Boy George interview of 1984. Hang onto your hat and away we go!

A lot of songwriters say what they want to or have to through their songs, but you almost seem to say more outside of your songs. You've been cast in that role of having a message . . .

BG: It may not be visible but take a song like *Happily Birthday* by Stevie Wonder. You may not consider that to be political, but it's very political. Mr. Man has its politics. All the songs have heavy statements in them. Mr. Man is a very heavy song. Absolutely. You can do songs in the way that the Clash do them or you can do them in a magical way where everyone starts singing them. Like *Melting Pot* — people say it's frivolous but it's such a great song. There's the line, "You've got the Beatles or the Sun Gods." What's the difference between those kinds of worship? It's the same. There is a message but it should never be blatant. It should never be shoved down people's throats. The next album is much more commentary. Lyrically it's different. It's not so personal as in I'm not singing about myself . . . simply because I've met so many other people since I started this career of mine. Travelling around the world you just learn more. So obviously as a songwriter you write differently. The next album will be very different for us; you know, lyrically, completely. Some of my songs are so subtle and sarcastic that you wouldn't even know — d'you know what I mean?

Yeah — I'm still trying to work out what Karma Chameleon means!

BG: Well, karma is a Buddhist idea. Simply, it's nature's way of paying you back. If you're destructive you get paid back. A chameleon is someone that changes colour. It is really about what was happening to us, in the music industry. What it actually says is "If I listen to your lies would you say I'm a man without conviction?" and "I'm a man who doesn't know" — who doesn't know what sex I am? Of course I know what sex I am. But it's like how to sell a contradiction. I am selling a contradiction.

I mean I put myself on a par with someone like Dorothy Parker. She was a poet from the 1940's. Just the most brilliant sarcastic poet. If I would like to be like anybody I think it would be her. It's . . . clever. You've got to be a little bit clever.

The War Song which is the next single isn't anti-war. The reason I've written it is . . . I'm very interested in history and we should be having a war now. By all accounts we're living in a war period. Why aren't we having a war?

Because the next war that we have . . .

The Bomb.

. . . will be the last war.

You're not saying it but that's what you're saying — The Bomb.

Yeah — the Bomb.

The Bomb is stopping us from having a war. Now everybody wants to get rid of the Bomb, which is quite

logical, but that doesn't mean that's right.

I was inspired to write it by the miner's dispute in England. I saw this piece in the paper where this guy had won so many thousands of pounds, and the headline was "I'm all right Jack". Two weeks before he'd been giving his 5 pounds a week to the union. Which all goes to show we're all the same. We're all optimistic, but it's basically a case of what's mine is my own.

When we wrote the song Roy, he said the same about "Karma . . .", said, "It's too trivial". Because the chorus in the "War Song" is very childish. But because I had a very definite idea of how I wanted it to sound and now it sounds quite moving. We actually got kids to sing on it — but not like Pink Floyd, you know, *The Wall*. People like little Helens. Little fat girls with great voices. It makes complete sense. But I think you'll find the new album different.

Do you think there's anybody left in the world who is still shocked by your success?

Everybody is. People aren't sure about me. I'm a phenomenon and I've had a hit record and I'm successful. Most of that's down to me really. The way I

"There's no point in dressing up if you've got nothing to say."

conduct myself. It could have easily turned into a one man freak show. It could have stopped months ago. It's only because I've worked my bollocks off to make people try and understand. But at the end of the day they haven't understood a thing. They dismiss it.

But all the media agree that you're different because you're intelligent.

But it's like Frances Farmer, the actress. She was intelligent. I get letters from kids saying my father won't let me come to the concert tonight because he thinks you're evil, thinks you're gonna corrupt me. If you're such a good singer why do you dress like that? People don't understand. It's absurd for people to say that I've got a good gimmick. I mean I walked round for five years like this. I went through shit for five years. And at school. I'm not talking about dressing up, I'm talking about my personality.

People have accepted 'Boy George', but they haven't accepted that 'Boy George' is George O'Dowd. They accept that I am a gimmick. What they say is "It's OK to be a clown in a circus, but not in a supermarket," that is the basic analysis of 'Boy George'.

Do you think that the young fans you have do accept that? Do you think that's one of the real important things about Culture Club?

There are people who remember D-Day and there are people who remember the Second World War and there are people who remember when a man was a man and wore a vest and had underpants. The basic problem with a lot of people, like the older generation, is that they think I'm going to inspire a nation of conscientious objectors. They think that because you dress in a certain way you are against being a man. But what is being a man? Like in the French Revolution men wore powdered wigs and make up, they still shot each other. They still had wars. In England King Henry VIII wore drag.

These days you don't see people walking round England dressed like Henry VIII. But in Japan you do see people wearing Kabuki, traditional costume. That's the difference. We've rejected our culture completely. We don't want that. We want something new. Because that is what Western Civilization is all about.

It's almost like American civilization.

Yeah, because America takes most of their culture from the TV. People there are like the TV. There really isn't any distinction.

I'm famous but have I made it any easier for the people standing outside the back door with pink eyebrows and Mohican haircuts? No.



pic. Andre Csillag

"My job's very hard, but that's because I'm a good pop star."

that doesn't mean that everybody in Russia feels the same way. They're just as scared as we are. I think the reason there isn't a war is because there is a bomb. It's a horrible, horrible symbol. It's almost like a policeman having a baton to hit people when they get out of control. It's like something really evil sitting there.

The bomb is like the most relevant thing about the eighties. I mean hopefully I'll come in there somewhere, but when we write our history books it'll be the most relevant thing.

We live in a free society. We're very lucky. It's very easy to sit in England and lecture other people. In India people are starving. They could eat the cows but they won't. That's their option.

Religion — it's such a personal thing, an internal thing. We all pray. Even those of us who are atheist. I'm not atheist. But I believe God is creation. I think it is true that the sins of our fathers will come back on us. Everything that has gone on before dictates the future.

I think that God did give us the world and that the world is what God is. I think God is creation. And I don't think we are that clever.

You can think things are changing but if there was a hanging in the local square, how many people would be there? I think a lot of people would go. And that's what you have to think about.

I'm not into revenge at all. Donny Osmond said I was going to go to hell for my sins.

He said what?

I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe how anyone could say that. Glenn Campbell said if I had any talent I wouldn't have to look like this. I'm not trying to change people's mentalities. I'm just expressing an opinion. There's a difference between preaching and saying what you think. You can say Boy George doesn't look very good without ripping up my picture. But everyone can see that that's a case of sensationalism. That priest (Fred Nile) is like not really a priest, is he, he's just someone who wants to get famous. It's pathetic. I am a figure of cool to kids. I'm in a magazine so it's like cool and hip. If I don't wanna take drugs then I just tell them I don't wanna take drugs. That I think they are boring. They are a substitute for reality. I think it's like running away and I think that in your life you have to face reality. You have to face what goes on around you. That's life and it's very tough. It's OK for a pop star to take drugs, fair enough but they don't have to cope with getting up for work the next morning. My job's very hard, but that's probably because I'm a good pop star.

I'm a successful pop star and if I want to stay that way I

"I think Michael Jackson's world ended twenty years ago, when he entered showbusiness."

won't do those things. I won't indulge. I won't smash up hotel rooms. Culture Club's idea of smashing up a hotel is like undoing the soap wrapper (laughs).

I see trendy people with their mohicans and their make up looking at me like, eugh, he's really sold out. But what they're doing is like shallow terrorism. They're not educating anyone. It's like Marilyn in a way. I mean I think Marilyn's brilliant and everything. I really like him, but if he comes into Australia and says to a reporter, 'What would look good on you? Me.' Alright, we can all have a good giggle about it, it's like Dame Edna's level. That doesn't make other people think 'ooh yeah. I understand him'. It makes people think — that guy's a joke.

That does a lot of damage. Particularly for me. Because then people think — they're all like that. One person can ruin it for everyone else.

I don't represent anyone.

I just think this illusion that drugs are like interesting ... it's the same as people thinking if you dress up you're interesting. Drugs affect people in different ways. Some people die taking drugs and some people live for sixty years taking them. But it's not reality. I mean I hate getting drunk. I used to get drunk. I think it's just really embarrassing. They say that your real self comes out when you're drunk. Yeah. You know what I mean? Please. We'd better finish. I'd better go and collapse in my room. Anything else you wanna know?

No, that's fantastic, thank you very much.

SOME LIKE IT

HOT!



Marilyn's just been to the West Indies. Jamaica? No, he went of his own accord! Gabrielle Sneddon Pike and Marilyn talk turkey. Photos Andre Csillag.

Do you get up very early or do you stay in bed late?

The phone always rings at 8 o'clock. It's the most infuriating thing, especially when you only get in at 5 a.m.. Sometimes, like last night I was doing vocals so I did not get in till 3 o'clock in the morning and the phone rang at 8 o'clock this morning 5 times. I just go mental, because I did not need to get up till about 12 noon. I could have stayed in bed.

What sort of thing do you eat for lunch?

I try and eat very healthy foods like whole grain stuff, fresh vegetables and fruits, but I do have binges of chocolates and chocolate mousse.

Are you vegetarian?

Not really — but I don't eat red meat — kind of — I eat fish.

If you don't go for dinner at night, what else do you do, do you go to clubs?

I used to go to quite a lot of nightclubs, but I've tried to stop doing that now, because after doing it for such a long time it gets very boring and it's the same people over and over again and mainly the club scene is a very bitchy atmosphere, 'oh what's he wearing' and I've had enough of that — I like to concentrate on my work and my music, because that's what excites me at the moment. There is no real thrill to go out and meet people that are going to, as soon as you walk

away, say things about you. — You stand and talk to 4 people and you go away and 3 of them are saying things — oh isn't he stupid... — just can't be bothered with that, so just stay at home. My friends call and I call them and it's removed from that social scene. I don't like to be part of that.

Do you have anybody special in your life at the moment?

Yes I do.

And do you want to talk about it?

No, not in the slightest.

You are quite a happy person at the moment?

I've always been happy. It's very rarely that I get depressed for more than half an hour or something. I get depressed when

people say nasty things in magazines, but after a while you think — oh well, you know, let them say what they want ...

Does that bother you a lot?

The problem is when I go to places like Italy — someone translates this thing in the magazine saying: "Marilyn who goes into trances and talks to Marilyn Monroe" — well what's that all about — you think they must think I am a complete idiot in Italy if they read things like that in a magazine, because I have never said anything like that in my life — I don't go into trances.

But I read, correct me if I am wrong, you were born the day Marilyn Monroe died — is that true?

No, I was born the year she died. It's little things like that. I was born the year she died, I am her re-incarnation — they say things like that but it's utter nonsense, I am nothing to do with Marilyn Monroe apart from the year she died when I was born.

But in the past you did actually dress up like her.

Yes, I did — it was good fun!

Did you like Australia?

It's one of the best countries I have been to apart from England. I really enjoyed it. I was working 24 hours a day, doing TV, a complete promotional tour, I didn't have 2 minutes to myself, but I really liked that because I met as many people as I could possibly meet in 8 days or

something. I had a really good time.

What sort of things did you do?

I don't know, I did lots of chat shows. I did a thing like the Oscars, called the Logis, the Australian Film Industry. I met the Prime Minister. No popstar has ever been to one of these award shows before — all the interviewers kept mentioning my name — a bit like living in fantasy land.

Did you go all over Australia or just Sydney?

I went to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

Which one did you like best?

It's very hard to say, because they are all quite different. I liked them all, there was something good about all of the places. I enjoyed nearly every single moment of that trip.

Did you have a good reception from the kids?

I got off the plane and you know, when you get off the plane — oh God — 24 hrs. later — I walked off the plane and every time the doors opened from where you get your luggage checked I heard this screaming — so I thought, oh, what's going on out there — there were flashbulbs, so I thought — Ok, someone must be arriving and I looked around and walked towards the doors and when they opened there was this deafening screaming — like hundreds of children outside and taking pictures — it was amazing.

Wonderful!

And all for me — little old me!!!!!!

Did you get pursued a lot while you were there?

Yeah, but I enjoyed it. It was good fun, because unlike England they are very polite and civil and they are genuinely interested in you, they're not interested in who you know and all that kind of stuff — they've got the record and they want you to sign it and they're really nice, they're not offensive or pushy in any way. I really enjoyed meeting the Australian people.

Do you want to go back again?

I'd love to.

Where are you going to start your tour?

In Poole which is somewhere in England. It's 13 dates and it ends up in London.

So it's just a UK Tour.

Yes, to start off with. I'm going to do three dates in Israel beforehand to get warmed up — so that should be quite good fun.

Why Israel?

Because I've never played live before — and this is being completely honest right now — and it's very nerve racking. So I'd like to play to an audience that does not basically understand English and are quite chuffed (pleased) that someone has actually bothered to come over to play to them. Hardly anyone ever plays Israel, so I want to go over and practice, using them as a testing ground.



"That one's Marilyn," says George.

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HIP



Malcolm McLaren has managed the New York Dolls, invented the Sex Pistols and Bow Wow Wow, handed Adam Ant his image on a platter, run a handful of London's most influential clothes shops, had his fashions exhibited on the catwalks of Paris, brought breakdancing to the world via *Buffalo Gals*, popularised the Hip Hop culture of New York's South Bronx and now he wants to make opera you can dance to. Oh, and a film...

Russell Handley rolls the tape recorder as Malcolm McLaren raves.

What are you doing in New York at the moment?

"Bloody recording, would you believe it. ... I'm finishing off my contract, thank God. My final involvement with the music industry for the moment is finishing off this album. I got involved with this idea of opera, sometimes I think it'd be better if I hadn't. If I'd have just made a simple Christmas record, you know, *Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer Goes Rapper*, I'd have been all right. Doin' all this stuff with opera singers, choirs and marrying it all with these R&B guys — Jesus, I've been here already a month. It's a slow haul."

What are you doing on this album?

"I've just been working on a track from Carmen. Do you know that opera at all? It's coming together and sounding pretty good."

Are you doing this album with Stephen Hague and Walter Turbit, the two

responsible for the *Madame Butterfly* single?

"No, they got fired. They couldn't handle it in the end. There were too many problems — they wanted about six months. I thought I ain't hanging around here for that long. They lived in Boston as well, and if you've ever been to Boston, it's a terribly boring town."

"It was good fun doing *Madame Butterfly*. That seemed a lot easier because it was very linear. I did that track as a kind of test piece, just for a bit of a wheeze, to see if it was OK, cause I was thinking of doing this Christmas album. (laughs) But the bloody recording company didn't want me to do a Christmas album — they thought it would date too quickly and if some geezer in your part of the world or somewhere didn't get the record out in time, they'd be mucked up. The persuaded me to do an

opera album. I went back to Boston to meet those guys and they'd obviously got very precious and hung up with the fact that they were now going to be doing the *Piece de Resistance* and competing with my last album. They got very precious and were taking like three weeks over one rhythm track. I said, 'A', I haven't got the time, 'B', there ain't no budget for such indulgences and tell you frankly, I just couldn't live in Boston for that length of time. So I just came down to New York — which is a lot livelier, as you can imagine, and got involved with a more mercenary force of characters from the Bronx and Times Square. I'm in a real funky house-that-Jack-built-type of studio right on the corner of Times Square, and pulling kids and various characters off the street here and there, and using local musicians. I've started to crank things out. I've been here about five days, I guess and we've maybe just about

OPERA

cracked the first track and we're on to the second. I've got five more to go."

Whatever happened to your association with Trevor Horn?

"I guess he's sitting in London rather envious because at the moment he's probably recording that sort of Sex Pistols parody/mimic kind of group — you know — Frankie Goes To Hollywood boys. That being part of his record label, I suppose it seems as if that's more important. Well he would probably really love to be doing this album, but I guess if I was doing it with Trevor, I'd probably also be here for six months. Maybe I wouldn't mind doing it with Trevor. I could do other things — Trevor used to never like me hanging out in the studio too much 'cause I used to go a bit mad. He being a bit 'muse'-ish, I would be able to take off for about five days. I probably wouldn't have minded that. But here I got to sit in those awful chairs. You know what these recording guys are like. Huge bellies sort of slung over the console desk. They're very unattractive characters; it's not as if I'm looking at beautiful women all the time. It's not that interesting."

You sound as if you're about to at least have some kind of rest from the music business.

"I don't know if I'll have a rest, but I'd just get out of those situations where I'm caught between two stools, you know — I don't have a band, right? I've got to promote this record, and I'm thinking, gee I haven't got to go all 'round the world again, have I? Sitting on some chair and doing an interview and then getting up and miming a couple of bars from *Madame Butterfly* — I thought, no God damn it, I can't do that. Luckily, my contract says I don't have to promote the album (laughter) Would you believe it? It was a lucky break! I have had a few lucky breaks in this business, but I tell you now, that was the luckiest break of all (dissolves into laughter). . . Upon my delivery of an item such as this, my contract terminates. So I'm constantly looking forward to the day when I can say farewell and think about doing something else."

What would you like to do next?

"Well, I'd love to make a movie, I really would. I do have offers of sorts — particularly here in this country, not so much in England, because in England, they're all terrified of me. But here, they've got a lot more respect. They think I could pull something off, I guess."

"The funniest thing in America is, everybody thinks I'm on the verge of becoming one of these brilliant, left field, unsuspected recording artists, suddenly verging on cracking through the

mainstream — on the heels of Barry Manilow etc, would you believe?"

That doesn't appeal to you?

"I guess it would appeal to me if I was closer to Liberace and I was doing a couple of shows in Las Vegas. I kind of wouldn't mind that. Maybe for about six months and then, you know . . . make a few bob. I guess that would be rather good, actually. I think that after the Sex Pistols, I never quite resolved this whole problem — here, particularly."

Are you surprised to find yourself a 'solo artiste' as such?

"No, not at all, it was planned that way. I'm afraid. I thought they would have had enough by 'Duck Rock'. Having really cased the record company by going 'round the world and spending a quarter of a million, I'd have thought that they'd have, you know — we've got to do two albums with him, we don't have to, but if we do let's do this one very cheap. But they've damn well got me at it doing this opera thing. I wish I'd have shut my mouth and never thought of such an idea. I wish I'd said listen you guys, the best thing is me doing a hip hop version of *Silent Night*! This is a hard project! Did you like *Madame Butterfly*?"

Yes, I did.

"Oh good! I think that's a very fine record. I think I like it probably more than anything I've ever done. I guess because it's the first love song I've ever recorded. Usually I'm talking about ropes and jumping up and down and Buffalo girls up in the mountains and Zulus on the war dance and all that sort of stuff. . . Anarchy In The UK or C30, C60, C90, GO! and all that. It's the first love song I've ever actually done and all those operatic tracks I'm doing' are all love songs. And they're all about these distressed young girls who get mucked over or end up killing themselves. They're either ardent and trustful or they're passionately jealous and get involved in various intrigues. Incredible, these stories out of opera. What I find about them is they're so true to life! I know all those girls!"

How long have you had this interest in Opera?

"It's just recent — I didn't have anything else to do, to tell you the truth, and I just had this thought that I'd create something magical in a song. I didn't want to follow down the paths of doing just a straight forward R&B track — I was trying to think what could I do? And I guess also I had a very passionate love affair with a girl in London, and I was just looking for something that was going to be magical and not practical. I didn't want people to put

their trousers on, get a rope out, bounce up and down, dance on their head. I thought no, I can't do that again. I wanted something a lot more passionate. Opera just happened to make me cast my eye that way because I was doing a fashion show about a year ago in Paris and I was doing a soundtrack for it and when you see women on the catwalk — I wanted to put something behind them which would feel very dramatic, but the clothes being very 'streetwise', they obviously had to have an updated sound with it. I married an album of Puccini's Greatest Hits — arias from his various operas then mixed them in with these Hip Hop New York records like the Salsa Smurf and it had a marvellous effect on the models and on the audience. I thought Jesus, I'll look in on this idea, so when it came to recording this album for this record company, I decided I'd do that (*Madam Butterfly*) as a test. I wasn't thinking of doing ten of them, I thought I'd just do one and my favourite was *Madam Butterfly*. That started the ball rolling and when I delivered the tape, this record industry went completely beserk, they went completely mad! I got myself caught up in this whole thing like here I am breaking new ground. Opera, Hip Hopera . . . In America, nobody believes I could write anything so beautiful, because they don't realize it's Puccini! (laughter) Even though I put it on the cover, they don't take too much notice of that, it's just the association of me with such a song."

Have you had any adverse reactions from Opera buffs? It's a bit of a sacred cow . . .

"Not at all! Here they're far more mercenary, and of course opera buffs love the idea that there's the possibility of having *Madam Butterfly* in a discotheque. The girl who sung that aria — hearing herself in a New York discotheque is just superb for her. No, they're wild about it — goodness me, they're actually holding a *Butterfly* Ball here very shortly in New York's hippest discotheque where they're actually not going to play any disco music at all, purely Strauss mixed with Puccini. I think they're obviously going to use *Madame Butterfly* — the record I've made — as a kind of segue. It's like a fancy dress, everybody's going to come as characters out of these operas, like Carmen, but creative characters; they're not going to be in period costume. Or *Butterfly*, or Tosca whatever and then sent out these invitations, these little fluorescent coloured fans. Quite gorgeous — New York is great for that, they're very hip and they're desperate to be creative with ideas of that sort. They really are on the ball."

ALBUMS

by Russell Handley

PETER WOLF
Lights Out (EMI) ***

Peter Wolf was the lead singer in the J Geils Band from their beginnings in the very early Seventies until slightly after *Centrefold*, their eventual number one of a couple of years ago. For this first solo album, he's teamed up with Jonzun Crew/Tommy Boy producer/writer/multi-instrumentalist Michael Jonzun and assembled a fine band including guitarists Elliot Easton (from The Cars) and Adrian Belew (Bowie, Talking Heads, King Crimson) and one Mick Jagger, who sings backing vocals on the Stones-ish *Pretty Lady*. "Lights Out" is fairly evenly divided between rock and funk. *Lights Out* — the title track — is a raunchy opener. *Do-ee Diddle-Bop!*, *Billy Bigtime* and the sci-fi 'epic' *Mars Needs Women* are more typical of Michael Jonzun than Peter Wolf but fun none the less. *Baby Please Don't Let Me Go* is a nod in the direction of Motown; *Gloomy Sunday* and *Here Comes The Hurt* look even further back.

HERBIE HANCOCK
Sound-System (CBS) ****

Remember *Rockit*? Stand by for more of the same plus much more. Most of "Sound-System" continues Herbie's exploration of all things Hip Hop: drum machines, scratching hard funk and dance music in general. This time out, keyboard player Hancock has added the extra dimensions of a marked African feel on *Karabali* and *Junku* and the incredible saxophone playing of Weather Report's Wayne Shorter. With the exception of the song *People Are Changing* sung by Bernard Fowler and some chanted vocals on *Karabali*, "Sound-System" is instrumental. Produced again by Bill Laswell/Material Herbie Hancock should have little trouble following the success of "Future Shock". This is actually a better album, despite the fact that nothing stands out the way *Rockit* did. *Junku* was part of the official music of the Olympics. *Metal Beat* is just a touch monotonous, but let's face it, there's only so much scratching you can listen to before it all begins to sound the same. This month's best dance record by a mile.

THE SPECIAL AKA
In The Studio (Two Tone) ****

This album's been a long time coming. It's been two years or more since The Specials disintegrated, with Terry Hall, Neville Staples and Lynval Golding leaving to form The Fun Boy Three. Organist and songwriter Jerry Dammers has assembled a large cast to replace them. Rhoda Dakar and Stan Campbell are the two lead singers, assisted by up to a dozen backing vocalists. Production is mostly by Dammers. Ex-Specials producer E. Costello

was called in to do *Nelson Mandela*, the album's almost hit (so far). *War Crimes* was the first single and features odd timing and some melancholy violin. *Racist Friend* marries a lopping reggae rhythm to some hard-line comments on racism — "So if you are a racist/Our friendship has got to end/And if your friends are racists/Don't pretend to be my friend." It's not all heavy going, however. *What I Like Most About You Is Your Girlfriend* is actually pretty funny! "In The Studio" is not the most easily accessible record, but persistence is sometimes richly rewarding.

COREY HART
First Offence (EMI) **

If you liked *Sunglasses At Night*, chances are you'll like this too. Me, I hardly noticed it. New face on the charts Hart is polite enough to be heard anywhere. The playing's of a reasonable standard, but lacklustre. Ditto everything else about this debut. He sings O.K., looks good, but... Ten tracks, mostly lively, mostly uptempo. *Jenny Fey* is the album's closer and *Big Ballad*. Guitars and vocals predominate throughout, while Andy Barnett's saxophone adds occasional colour. A hit, but not really much of an event.

BLUE RONDO
Bees Knees And Chickens
Elbows (Virgin) ***

Whatever happened to the Zoot Suit? You know, those impossibly long and baggy double-breasted jackets and extremely high-waisted trousers. For what must have only been a few weeks in late '81, the then Blue Rondo A La Turk were the hippest thing around. Times change...

These days main-man Chris Sullivan and Co. are still pursuing their interest in Latin/salsa/sambas, but with a much lower profile. "Bees Knees..." begins with a long instrumental, the infectious and muscular *Samba No Pe*. Like most of the album, it's multi-layered with all manner of percussion. When the vocals and brass arrive, Blue Rondo take on a Wham-like gloss and energy. *Stepping Into Daylight* would be perfect after an all night party, but only if you were still up and dancing. *Masked Moods* is the album's only relief, a quiet jazzy number more suited to a smoky nightclub. Side two's *Smoking Dynamite* continues where the rest of side one left off, and that's really this album's failing: it's a bit boringly boisterous after a while. Like any 'life of the party', Blue Rondo don't know when to shut up.

SADE
Diamond Life (CBS) *****

Cool, elegant, understated, jazzy, sophisticated, melodic... somebody stop me, please! *Sade* (pronounced 'shar-day') may not be the world's greatest female singer ever, but so what? On the evidence available here, she's definitely one of the most enjoyable to listen to. This album has already been to the top of the charts in the U.K. — Australia and the rest of the world shouldn't be too far behind. *Smooth Operator* is the introduction; the description could easily apply to her band. Guitars and sax are by Stuart Matthewman, bass and drums by Pauls Denman and Cooke, keyboards by Andrew Hale. All lyrics and most of the music is by Sade Ado. *Your Love Is King* was released as a single here some time ago. Shame on you for not buying it. *When Am I Going To Make A Living?* was the next single in Britain. It's lyrical concerns are beyond the champagne /nightclubs atmosphere suggested by most of this record. A diamond indeed.

