

On Vinyl

WILD THINGS RUN FAST
Joni Mitchell
Geffen Records

Wild Things Run Fast is a logical next step in the long career of Joni Mitchell. It combines the rich rock/pop sounds of her mid '70s LP's with the jazzy sound of her later ones. It is the fitting mixture of the many styles of a woman who has been in the music business for almost two decades.

Side 1 opens with "Chinese Cafe (Unchained Melody)," a beautiful song presenting a shocking realization of time gone by. Mitchell blows it with the next two tracks—the title song and "Ladies Man"—one a laughable attempt at rocking out, the other a trite, "Oh baby, do what you want with me as long as you fuck me!" mellow jazz tune. She redeems herself with "Moon at the Window," an introspective ballad, and "Solid Love"—get this!—a happy song. "Hot dog, darling!" Mitchell



cries with joy at discovering a romance with some hope in it.

Side 2 is much better and more consistent. On "Be Cool" and "(You're So Square) Baby I Don't Care," Mitchell lets herself do some uninhibited jazz crooning and just has fun. The best uptempo song on the album, "You Dream Flat Tires," combines some solid Mitchell guitar playing with her old and faithful standby—the over-dubbed choir of her voice. Finishing up *Wild Things Run Fast* are "Underneath the Streetlight," the happiest, most positive song Mitchell ever wrote, and "Love," her declaration of faith in the emotion that has been the subject of so many of her songs.

Wild Things Run Fast is no great album, but it is a good one and a convincing sellout when one remembers that just three years ago, Joni Mitchell was criticizing rock and pop for being too simple, thus her attraction to jazz. What would have made this album a classic would have been the removal of a few tracks on side 1 and the addition of a few songs where Joni Mitchell just sits at the piano or plays her guitar and sings.

JIM HOHMAN

ZOMBIE BIRDHOUSE
Iggy Pop
Animal Records

Okay, Iggy lovers, child molesters and jock-strap aficionados: this one's for you. After a string of, well, *questionable* releases, Iggy Pop seems to have found his "niche" in the world of the rock and roll bizarre. *Zombie Birdhouse*, the new album, is, no doubt, one of Iggy's best miscarriages.

Though the rest of the listening world may still not be ready for the music of Iggy Pop, those that have found this musical contortionist strangely endearing (there must be somebody) will most likely be pleased with the release. *Zombie Birdhouse* is Iggy's thesis on America with its yarns of toil, anger and general despair (listen to "Angry Hills," "Eat Or Be Eaten," and "Life of Work") a la "Pop" music. Surprisingly, this album has a lot more profundity than would be expected from a man who has often chosen the gross-out over

artistic integrity. Even the music, which is provided by Blondie's Chris Stein and Clem Burke and Iggy's resident musician, Rob duPrey, is punctuated with some exotic tribal rhythms and guitar work, among other courageous stylings (though who's to say Iggy has never been courageous?).

In the past, I've always been a bit cautious when it came to revealing my admiration for Iggy Pop, but with the release of *Zombie Birdhouse*, I now feel that I have a legitimate excuse—an excuse that hasn't existed for quite some time.

FRANK DIGIACOMO

UNTITLED
Marc and The Mambas
Some Bizarre (import)

Soft Cell's *Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret* was one of last year's best albums, and the main reason for that was lead singer-songwriter Marc Almond—he of the voice that could drip sarcasm ("Entertain Me"), smirk innuendo ("Seedy Films") or drool mushy love songs ("Say Hello, Wave Good-bye") at the drop of a hat. *Untitled* is his "solo" debut—though, I suppose, The Mambas refers to the other three people who lend

their help to the LP: Anne Hogan (keyboards), Cindy Ecstasy (back-up vocals) and Matt Johnson (guitar and song-writing)—and while Almond's voice is still the single most dominant force, it differs significantly from *Non-Stop*.

Untitled is sparser than the Soft Cell LP; indeed, often Almond's voice is accompanied only by a piano, and there's even one track, "Margaret," that's a solo by keyboardist Hogan. Most of the songs are pleasant enough, but only one track really reaches out and grabs you, and it's one we've heard before—Lou Reed's semi-classic "Caroline Says." Other decent but notstupidous songs include "Untitled," a ballad-like pop song that sounds like a '60s movie soundtrack, "Terrapin," a smokey cabaretish tune much like material from *Non-Stop*, and "Twilights and Lowlifes" could be a sequel to "Seedy Films." Jacques Brel's "If You Go Away" is perhaps the oddest choice for someone of Almond's reputation to try, but in his own desperate way, he manages to do it justice.

Untitled is a double album, but it only contains 10 songs, one of which is done twice, and the second "album" is really just a 12-inch 45. In light of this, and considering the so-so quality of the album (albums?), I have to wonder why he didn't just release an EP.

LESLIE VAN BUSKIRK

ROD STEWART
ABSOLUTELY LIVE
Rod Stewart
Warner Bros.

The only thing I fear more than the Andy Williams/Fires-tone Christmas Hour is the avalanche of collection-packages the record companies shamelessly drop on us every Yuletide.

This live LP from everybody's favorite rooster, Rod Stewart, is a nice souvenir from his three-ringed tour of last year. For something more than you'd pay for the average concert T-shirt, you can get plenty of crowd noise, plenty of material and plenty of Mod Rod's sultry wit charm. Whether you missed the show or just can't get enough of this mop top's stuff, then start saving the boxtops.

Some of the numbers are lot of fun ("Young Turks," "Tonight I'm Yours," "Passion"), but if you've ever seen the word "Faces" capitalized, you'd probably rather not sit through the extended rap of "Do You Think I'm Sexy."

The tour's appeal depended a lot on visual dynamics, Rod's and otherwise, and yet, there isn't even a picture or two here to remember them by. Instead, you get various artist's conceptions of bums in leopard leotards (Rod's? His wife's? I don't know).

Much like the tour, the musical performances are mostly continued on page eighteen

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