

Rock Record Round-up

by Michael Snyder

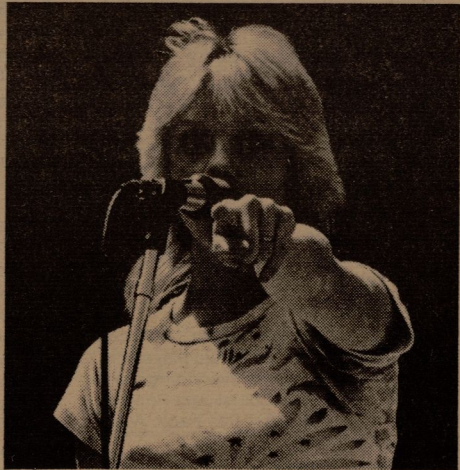
January is a notoriously slow time for records to be released, but the Christmas backlog is so extensive that there's been a large number of high-quality turntable regulars. Which doesn't mean that the flow of vinyl garbage has abated. Au contraire. I'm still knee-deep in stiffs. Nevertheless, I thought it would be nice to start off the decade with a positive attitude. Therefore, let it be known that I am positive about the future of the recording industry. I'm positive that prices will rise, quality will decrease, and my attitude will remain cynical. Bring on the '80s. The earplugs are in place, and I'm ready.

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D.L. BYRON - This Day And Age (Arista): Remember when rock pundits called Bruce Springsteen the new Dylan? Well, here's just what the world needed: the new Springsteen! Another young man with a guitar, a sensitive soul and a record contract. Not possessing an individual singing style, we must turn to D.L. Byron's songwriting to assess his worth. Puerile retreads. "21st Century Man" is ironically out-of-date next to Ray Davies' "20th Century Man," a certified Kinks classic, and "Backstage Girl," D.L.'s ode to groupiedom, doesn't have the insight or depth of "Backstreet Girl" by the Stones. If Mick Jagger displays more warmth towards women than this bush-league Byron, I'd say D.L. is too cool for comfort.

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS - Damn The Torpedoes (Backstreet / MCA): Although recorded by the same guys who did the D.L. Byron album, Petty's third outing in the studio is an unqualified winner. Direct, unpretentious lyrics and dynamic rock rhythms are his ticket. Petty is a charismatic band-leader whose influences aren't duplicated. They are filtered through his own experiences, allowed him to spotlight his significant quently and the forms varied widely from Following three records and many rigorous tours, a promising career takes off.

CHERIE & MARIE CURRIE - Messin' With The Boys (Capitol): Cherie was the juiciest jailbait in L.A.'s proto-punk all-girl band, the Runaways. She left the band in her teens, joining her twin sister, Marie, to tour Japan, where the Runaways were stars. After a best-selling LP in Japan, it was only a matter of time before they'd put out product in the States. Product, it is. Backed by session hacks like the gang from Toto, the Curries project the sort of pouting, manipulative persons that give sexuality a bad name. One track stands out. Eric Carmen's "Overnight Sensation" is fairly faithful to the lush Raspberries original. You can't lose 'em all.



Dave Patrick

Cherie Currie is Playin' With The Boys.

The Raincoats (Rough Trade — Import): A endearing quartet of ladies from England merge flutey, choirgirl vocals and rock 'n' roll, garage variety. Vicky Aspinall's violin is their one concession to artiness. Their humor becomes coy when they cover the Kinks' tune, "Lola," which is about a man who picks up a transvestite while bar-hopping. The storyline is somewhat transformed if sung by a female in the first person. A severe case of gender-fuck. Other than that, delightful songs of innocence and expedience.

The Specials (Chrysalis): Stirring integration of ska (reggae's predecessor), R&B and new wave rock 'n' roll. Do you like to dance? They Specialize. "Concrete Jungle" and "Gangsters" are already standard fare at the hip discos. They're Top Ten in Britain, but could be too esoteric for America. Catch them live at the City on February 13 and decide for yourself.