record review ratings

EXCELLENT ★★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★★ GOOD ★★★ FAIR ★★ POOR ★

with Pamela Littlejohn

Diana Ross-Lionel Richie

ENDLESS LOVE: *Dreaming of You, Heart Song, I Was Made For Lovin' You.* Mercury SRM 1-2001

Rating — ****

By now this has become a quite familiar album with the top tune, the title of the album, Endless Love. It is the theme song from the movie which stars Brooke Shield and Martin Hewitt, and was written by Lionel Richie. The performance is top rate, with Diana in fine voice. It is definitely a mood setter, with romance the central theme.

Rene' & Angela

WALL TO WALL: *Just Friends, Secret Rendezvous, Wanna Be Close To You, I Love You More, Love's Alright, Imaginary Playmates, Come My Way.* Capital ST-12161.

Rating — ****

Another winner in this collection of original tunes, most of which were done by Rene'. The current trend of duet vocalists seems to be catching on more and more, and this production is a good reason for the trend to continue. Definitely listenable — and danceable too.

Peaches & Herb

SAYIN' SOMETHING: *Freeway, Red Hot Lover, Bluer Than Blue, Dream Come True, Wear You Out, Star Steppin, I Wish I Could Be A Kid Again, Picking Up The Pieces, Go With The Flow.* Polydor-MVP PD 1-6332.

Rating — **½

This is an ultra-slick production by that hitmaker Freddie Perren, and although all the ingredients are there, it comes off as almost a carbon copy of other albums issued by the pair. Although it is strictly formula fare, complete with exquisite production values, there is a degree of sameness that makes the listener want to move on. One item of note, there is a tune done in ¾ or waltz time, I Wish I Could Be A Kid Again. To us, this is the high point of the session.

Sheree' Brown

STRAIGHT AHEAD: *You'll Be Dancing All Night, Happiness Flows, You Are Beautiful, Get Down, I'm So Bad, Passing Thing, Never Do You Wrong, Everything You Do I Wanna Be By Your Side, It's A Pleasure.* Captitol ST. 12153.

Rating — ****

When an artist gains fame writting songs for others, it is only a matter of time before they write for themselves — and it happened now with Sheree, who composed all of the tunes on this album. This is her first recording under her own name and it is a goodie. The style is a combination of pop, R and B and jazz, and the Dawn panel picked "I Wanna Be By Your Side" as the top tune destined to go places. Formerly a background vocalist — she debuts on her own — auspiciously.

Roy Ayers

CENTER OF THE WORLD: *Africa, Center Of The World, I'll Just Keep Trying, Destination Motherland, The Third Eye, There's A Master Plan.* Polydor PD 1-6327.

Rating — ****

An exercise in percussion could be a substitute title for this album, for it generates a genuine African sound, complete with hand claps, Bass Marimba, Shekere and you name it. Ayers has never sounded better, and the Africa theme is ably expressed in the artful use of vocals as mood and pace setters. The whole thing seems a creation of recording and remix engineers, and it succeeds.

Ralph McDonald

STAR QUALITY: *Play Pen, The Outcasts, It's The Game, Universal Rhythm, Watching You, Wating Me.* Epic AL-BL 36887.

Rating — ****

Already laying claim to the title top percussionist, McDonald re-emphasizes his credits with this album, which is destined for the top of the charts. Ralph grew up with music — both of his parents were from Trinidad and his father was the Calypsonian, McBeth The Great. This debut album for Epic shows the African and Caribbean influences in musci brought forth by McDonald. These are combined with basic rhythm and blues to create a sound good for both listening and dancing.

Millie Jackson

JUST A LIL' BIT COUNTRY: *I Can't Stop Lovin' You, Till I Get It Right, Loving You, Love On The Rocks, Anybody TahtvDon't Like Millie Jackson, Rose Colored Glasses, Standing In Your Line.* Spring SP 1-6732.

Rating — **½

This was a bit of a shocker, for Millie sings country music on this cut, which is a distinct departure. In fact, it was difficult to recognize the Mille Jackson of last year in this format. It isn't until she launched into "Anybody That Don't Like Millie Jackson" that the familiar sound gets through. Maybe there is an audience among the plethora of C and W fans, but for the rest, this has to remain a dubious pressing.

S.O.S. Band

S.O.S. BAND. TOO: *It's A Long Way To The Top, Do It Now, There Is No Limit, You, Stay, Are You Ready? Unborn Child.* Tabu FZ 37449

Rating —

This recording could be labelled too much of everything, for it seems overly busy in most auditors. In fact, it is difficult to focus on a particular happening and as a result, the whole suffers. Dawn Magazine panelists paid particular attention to these sides, but were unanimous in their feeling that the group has missed the mark.