ELEGANT

Christian Brothers Brandy

Worldwide Distributors: Fromm and Sichel, Inc., San Francisco, California, U.S.A. Brandy: 80 Proof

Record Review Ratings

Excellent ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Very Good ★ ★ ★ ★ Good ★ ★ ★ Fair ★ ★ Poor ★

By Carl C. Matthews

ASHFORD & SIMPSON

High Rise
Capitol ST-12282
High Rise, Side Effect, Experience, It's A Rush, My Kinda Pick Me Up, I'm Not That Tough, It's Much Deeper, Still Such A Thing
RATING — * * * ½

"High Rise is the second album release on Capitol for producer-songwriters Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson, and it looks like it will be another hot seller for the duo. This latest effort is pretty much in the same vein as the duo's previous releases, and the sound is professional and polished. Bound for success in the black contemporary market are such selections as the hit title cut "High Rise," "My Kinda Pick Me Up" which is fine mellow-out music with some competent sax playing, and "It's Much Deeper," with its rock-and-roll beat and the vocal harmonies which are the Ashford and Simpson trademark. Another commendable job by Nick and Val.

THIRD WORLD

All The Way Strong
Columbia FC 38687
Love Is Out To Get You, Swing Low, Come On Home, Seasons When, Lagos Jump, All The Way Strong, Rock And Rave, Once There's Love
RATING — * * * *

Third World, known for such hits as "Try Jah Love," "Now That We Found Love" and other hits, is back on Columbia with more of their mass-appeal reggae, or "jah's," or whatever you would like to call it. Some of this is the same old stuff reggae-wise, but on some of the cuts here it is obvious that the group put a little more care into their songwriting and arrangements, and so this disk is something more than just another reggae album. If you're a Third World fan, you'll like what you hear — the Dawn panel did.

MIDNIGHT STAR

No Parking On The Dance Floor
Solar 60241-1
Electricity, Night Rider, Feels So Good, Wet My Whistle, No Parking (On The Dance Floor), Freak-A-Zoid, Slow Jam, Playmates
RATING — * * *

"I'll be your Freak-A-Zoid, come on and wind me up!" That is the refrain from the lyrics of Midnight Star's hot single "Freak-A-Zoid," included in this album. Those lyrics should tell you what you're in for: possibly Solar's biggest party album of the year. Silly lyrics, you say? Maybe, but Midnight Star has crammed so much funk and drum-beat and electronic vocals and synthesizers into this mix that it gives you little time to think about lyrics and their meaning—this stuff is for dancing. It's a Midnight Star tradition. And this album does exactly what it sets out to do: give the partyers something they can get down to. What other value this album has is. . . .well, you can listen and decide for yourself.

THE B.B. & Q. BAND

Six Million Times
Capitol ST-12285
Keep It Hot, Stay, She's A Passionate Lover, We've Got To Do It, Six Million Times, She's A Woman, Downtowne, Missing You, Missing Me
RATING — * * ½

The group who gave you "On The Beat" two years ago is back with a new album, "Six Million Times," and single, "Keep It Hot." Like their previous releases, this one is full of electronic, party-down funk. The playing is tight, but as a whole this effort seems to lack originality; there is very little departure from the usual formula. The album does have an occasional interesting keyboard riff every now and then, but much of this is forgettable. There's an interesting arrangement here of "She's A Woman," which The Beatles made popular many years ago. Only time will tell whether this disc will be a hit.

HERBIE HANCOCK

Future Shock
Columbia FC 38814
Rockit, Future Shock, TFS, Earth Beat, Autodrive, Rough
RATING — * *

Herbie Hancock and his machines are back with another release on Columbia, this one produced by Material and Herbie Hancock. The single, "Rockit," is heard on the pop and soul stations, is available in 12-inch form for the dance clubs, and has its own video as well. On this album, Herbie plays a Fairlight CMI, a Rhodes Chroma, a Sennheiser Vocoder. . . .the list goes on. The Dawn panel feels that crowding all of these toys into the mix does not add much to the music, which is not the best Hancock has ever written. In parts of the song "TFS" he sounds like Herbie Hancock, piano player. But it seems that what Herbie is really trying to sound like is Kraftwerk and other techno-pop groups. Even Hancock fans may be disappointed by this one.

PHILIP BAILEY

Continuation
Columbia FC 38725
I Know, Trapped, It's Our Time, Desire, I'm Waitin' For Your Love, Vaya (Go With Love), The Good Guy's Supposed To Get The Girls, Your Boyfriend's Back
RATING — * * * ½

For more than 10 years, Earth, Wind And Fire has been blessed by the talents of vocalist Philip Bailey on such hits as "Reasons" and "Fantasy." Now, we have an album that marks a solo "Continuation" of his career. Produced by George Duke, and leading off with the single "I Know," the album has a much different flavor from his past E W & F projects. It is no easy task for him to create an album with a sound that is uniquely Philip Bailey, but this album is an interesting attempt. The potential is there: he's a good singer and there is something to like in every cut. Still, it is your basic soul album and conforms to that formula. Perhaps not unique, but not a failure either.