Record Review Ratings

JOCELYN BROWN

Somebody Else's Guy Vinyl Dreams 0898 Somebody Else's Guy, I'm Caught Up (In A One Night Love Affair), Hot Blood, I Wish You Would, Ain't No Mountain High Enough, Hot

Natured Woman, I'm Somebody Else's Guy Rating - * * * *

With the R&B smash title cut getting things off to a rousing good start, this new Jocelyn Brown album should be a welcome addition to any disco happening. Tight, funky arrangements and some fine singing, as heard on such cuts as "I Wish You Would," make for good listening. The new arrangement of the Motown classic "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" is also interesting. The final cut is the rap version of the title song, with rap done by Frederick "M. C. Count" Linton.

REBBIE JACKSON

Centipede

Columbia BFC 39238 Centipede, Come Alive It's Saturday Night, Hey Boy, Open Up My Love, Play Me (I'm A Jukebox), I Feel For You, A Fork In The Road, Ready For Love

Rating — * * *

And now, ladies and gentlemen... at long last, here she is... Rebbie! That's right, folks, the eldest sister of the famous musical Jacksons debuts with her first album. This new album is of course a family affair. The album's first single, "Centipede," was written and produced by Michael Jackson. The electric percussion and synthesizer textures on this track make it a good opening cut, and you can hear how similar she sounds to LaToya. Productionwise this is in the same league as the Jacksons' "Torture," from their Victory album (by now, I'm sure you've heard that tune). "Come Alive It's Saturday Night" was produced by brothers Tito and Randy, along with Wayne Henderson. "Play Me (I'm A Jukebox)" is funkier than "Centipede" and features a little rap at the beginning. "I Feel For You" is a tune written by Prince, the same song that Chaka Khan made into a top-10 R&B hit. Rebbie plays it rather cool in comparison to Chaka Khan, whose version is harder-edged although it is at the same tempo as Rebbie's. The album as a whole sounds as good as the current releases by LaToya and Janet.

HERBIE HANCOCK

Sound-System Columbia FC 39478 Hardrock, Metal Beat, Karabali, Junku, People Are Changing, Sound-System

Rating — * * 1/2

Good grief! At first, I thought I was hearing "Future Shock" (his last LP, which we reviewed a year ago) all over again. As on his last album Herbie plays Fairlight CMI, the Yamaha DX7 and many other instruments, and D.St appears once again on turntables. Wouldn't you know that "Hardrock" sounds like a copy of "Rockit"? "Metal Beat" is exactly what the title says it is, an electrified collage of percussion and scratch-mixing not unlike that indulged in by the Art Of Noise (of "Beat Box" fame). This is fine when you're popping and breaking, but is sure to be an irritation to some listeners. Next we come to "Karabali," in which Herbie plays acoustic piano with calypso-like rhythms in the background, helped out by Wayne Shorter on saxophone; this is one of the finer moments on the album. "People Are Changing" features the vocals of Bernard Fowler. The title track has the same kind of punch that "Autodrive" from his last album had, although "Sound-System" has a more interesting arrangement; the cut can be described by a wide range of adjectives, but one thing's for sure, it couldn't be anyone else but Herbie. The title of a record by Man Parrish describes Herbie's latest disk: "Hip Hop, Be Bop, Don't Stop."

ALICIA MYERS

I Appreciate MCA MCA-5485

You Get The Best From Me (Say, Say, Say), Appreciation, Say That, My Guy, Just Can't Stay Away, Just Praying, Don't Do Me This Way

Rating - * * *

"I Appreciate" is the fourth MCA album from Alicia Myers. Once again, Alicia has teamed with Kevin McCord and Al Hudson, of the musical group One Way, to produce another action-packed album. The LP kicks off with the 8-minute jam, "You Get The Best From Me

(Say, Say, Say)," which is the first single. It's great for dancing of course, and Alicia's fine voice turns an ordinary repetitive funk track into a sellable single. "Just Can't Stay Away," a remake of a ballad previously recorded by Natalie Cole, gives Alicia a chance to show her versatility; elements of jazz, gospel, and soul seem to flourish in this fresh-sounding arrangement; the influence of artists like Aretha Franklin, Gladys Knight and Minnie Riperton can be clearly heard. "Appreciation" is more uptempo boogie, a simple song that Alicia romps through with ease, but might fall flat with someone else. There's something here for every Alicia Myers fan to like.

WYNTON MARSALIS

Hot House Flowers Columbia FC 39530

Stardust, Lazy Afternoon, For All We Know, When You Wish Upon A Star, Django, Melancholia, Hot House Flowers, I'm Confessin' (That I Love You)

Rating - * * * 1/2

This follow-up to last year's highly successful "Think Of One" is Wynton's first jazz album "with strings." The album was recorded in May of this year in New York. With Marsalis on this latest jazz effort are Branford Marsalis on saxophones; Kenny Kirkland on piano; Jeffrey Watts on drums; Ron Carter on bass, and Kent Jordan on flute. Conductor Robert Freedman's arrangements complement Wynton's playing on some of the selections here. The string opening of "Stardust" preludes a slow, relaxed-pace number that finds Grammy award-winning Wynton Marsalis in good form, with just the right background touches from Kirkland's piano. Wynton also shows his mastery of the horn on "When You Wish Upon A Star," a very interesting track which starts off uptempo, slows down, picks up again... He can play with the energy of Maynard Ferguson, Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, and many others. His talent as a composer can be heard in the title track, in which the true jazz fan can easily tell Ron Carter's bass-playing style. The serious jazz listener, and the casual listener as well, can find some enjoyable moments on this laid-back LP.

Dawn Book Reviews

By Jadi Z. Omowale

THE INSANE NIGGER

Mack B. Morant

International Publishers Associations

YOURS IN STRUGGLE

Barbara Smith, Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt. Kitchen Table Press

SPECTACULAR VERNACULAR Jean-Louis Bourgeois, Carolle Pelos Peregrine Smith

In big cities all across this country, there is always a place for people and their soap boxes. You know, the folks who take to the busy metropolitan corner to air their views; sometimes about God, sometimes about taxes, sometimes about being black in

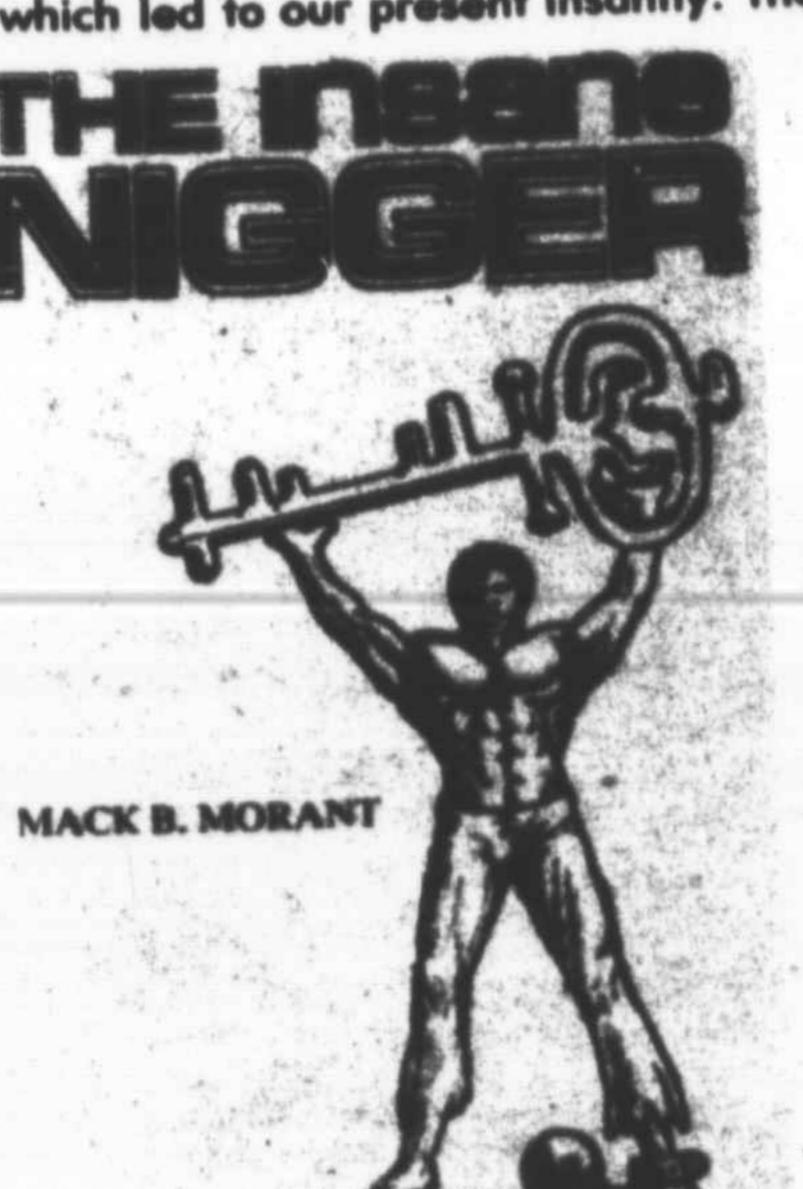
And so we come to this months' book reviews; three books which in their own way are up on that soapbox and shouting loudly their views, respectively on: the black state of America; racism and anti-semitism; and the necessity for the preservation of desert architecture.

THE INSANE NIGGER by Mack B. Morant is like reading or listening to one of those street corner lectures.

The book attempts to describe the reasons why blacks in this country are insane. Mack Morant does not use the term insanity lightly, he defines black insanity from the very beginning of this work.

"...in the sense of the sociological, educational, economic and politicial rights Blacks have been denied in America from the time they were brought here as slaves. Being denied these basic rights have created sociopsychological problems for most Afro-Americans."

He goes on to document historical conditions which led to our present insanity. The



Current and Choice book is in fact very well documented, and though brief and at times rhetorical; the facts

of us to deny. Problems with the "Insane Nigger" is the heavy rhetoric and th author's remarks about black women smack of some of the worst kinds of chauvinism.

and claims of Morant would be difficult for any

For the most part "Insane Nigger" is an honest attempt to discuss the roots of the psychological problems prevalent in our

YOURS IN STRUGGLE: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism, by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Barbara Smith. Like "Insane Nigger", will touch the more sensitive spots in many of us.

With the current chism between the Afro-American and Jewish communities, may shed light for some on both the history and current status of what has been the relationship of two often oppressed groups of people.

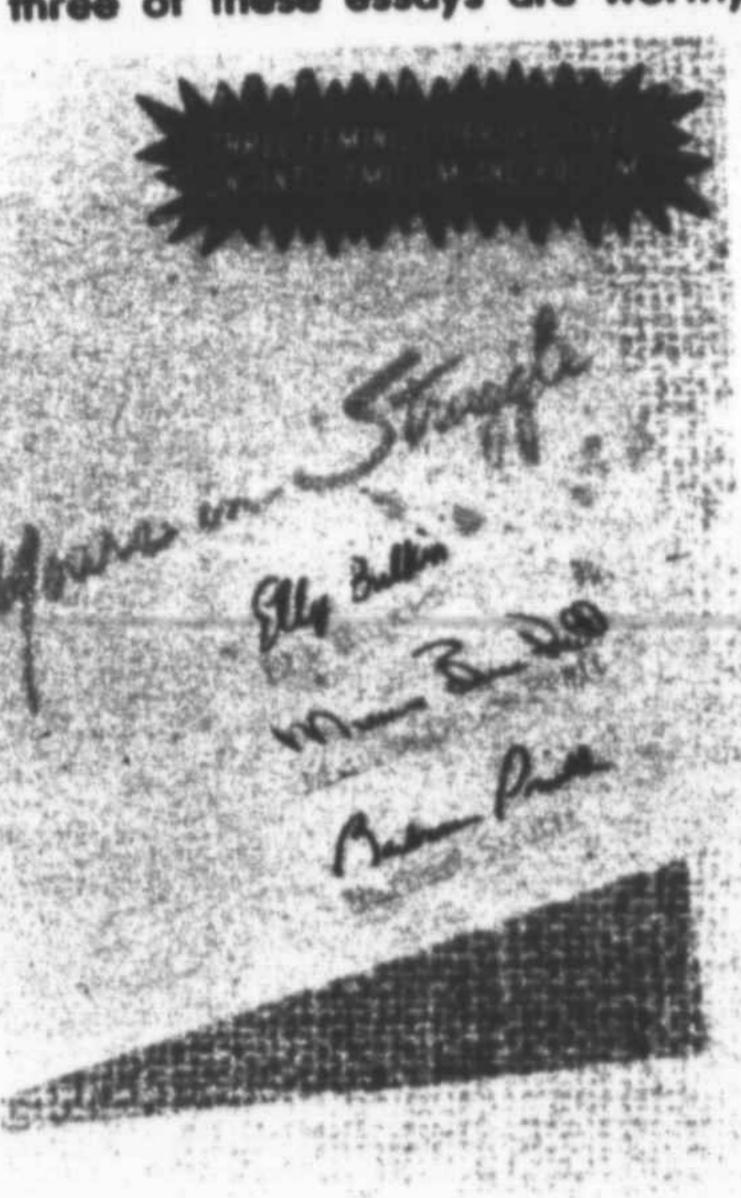
Each woman has an essay addressing the topic from her perspective based in her own background and history.

Pratt is a southern white christian from a privileged background, Smith is a black woman from New Jersey, and Bulkin whose essay is the bulk of the book, is an Ashkenazi Jew from New York. All three describe themselves as Lesbian-Feminist.

When juxtaposed against one another the books seems to be saying what Pratt seems to best describe in her essay:

"But there have been other constrictions: the clutch of fear around my heart when I must deal with the fact of folks who exist, with their own lives, in other places beside the narrow circle I was raised in."

All three of these essays are worthy of



discussion and deserve a viewing in all communities, white, black and jewish.

The women attempt to ferret out the very basis for our often misunderstood dislke for each other which often emerges out of fear and misunderstanding.

The essay by Pratt was the most clear and perceptive in this collection, in the conclusion of that same paragraph quoted from above

"I have learned that my fear is kin to a terror that has been in my birth culture for years, for centuries: the terror of a people who have set themselves apart and above, who have wronged others, and feel they are about to be found out and punished."

SPECTACULAR VERACULAR by Jean-Louis Bourgeois and Carolle Pelos, is a beautiful book requisite for all our libraries, as it explores and codifies another aspect of black history and culture.

The book is a photographic essay, of desert vernacular architecture. These houses and places of religious worship exist in Mali, Senegal, Afghanistan and India, and other deserts around the world

The buildings are perhaps some of the best adapted dwellings in the world. They are perfect for the deserts' particular environment and well suited to the peoples who live there.

Not only that, they have been tested over time: and though made out of mud, water, dung and straw; some of them have stood hundreds of years and suggest a history and an innovativeness that Westerners probably

Perhaps this is why Westerners want to replace the traditional mud architecture with concrete and steel, which, Bourgeois describes as "cruel in the desert".

An inexpensive must buy.

