

Record Review Ratings

Hot Spot

Motown 6149ML

If Only You Were In My Shoes, Hot Spot, Paranoid, All The Way, S. C. L. & P. (Style, Class, Looks And Personality), She Used To Be My Girl, When You Needed Roses, Slow Rap Rating - * * *

Yes, friends, right on schedule, the Dazz Band returns with the follow-up to "Joystick." They also return with a new member, Marlon McClain, on guitar. The Dazz Band is currently led by Bobby Harris, a saxophonist. It was Harris who founded the Cleveland group, first known as Bell Telephunk and then Kinsman Dazz. One listen to the title cut, the album's first single, and you'll know they're aiming even harder towards rock and roll. Sounds a bit like Slave from a few years ago, with Skip Martin sounding a bit like Steve Arrington. Side one of the LP, as a matter of fact, is pretty hard-hitting, party-hearty stuff, from "If Only You Were In My Shoes" to "Paranoid" with "All The Way" the most pop-oriented of the bunch. They've not totally abandoned their earlier styles, you understand, just taken them into a different "dimension." Now check out side two for more evidence of this. "S. C. L. & P. (Style, Class, Looks And Personality)" sounds almost like a cover of Glenn Frey's "The Heat Is On"! Same tempo, key, instrumentation. Maybe the Dazz Band will be included on the soundtrack of "Beverly Hills Cop II"! A jazz-R&B fusion-type number follows, "She Used To Be My Girl" (not the old O'Jays hit), and a ballad called "When You Needed Roses."

MAURICE WHITE

Maurice White Columbia FC 39883

Switch On Your Radio, Jamboree, Stand By Sea Of Glass, I Need You, Believe In Magic, Lady Is Love, Invitation, The Sleeping Flame, Children Of Afrika, Alpha Dance

Rating - * * *

Here's the first solo album by Maurice White, formerly of Earth, Wind And Fire. The raibum's first single, "Stand By Me," is a slick but typical piece of solid production from Mr. White. It was originally a top ten smash for en E. King back in 1961. "Believe In Magic" another rocker that also brings to mind

Reese's former group. The vocoder on "Invitation" adds a little spice to this alternate groove. The album also includes ballads such as "I Need You" and "Lady Is Love." With this project, it seems that Maurice is just starting to find out what he can do as a solo performer, for this first solo album does not seem to take full advantage of his many abilities. We'll look forward to more from this man.

Extellent * * * * * * Very Good * * * Good * * * Far * * Poor *

KRYSTOL

Talk Of The Town Epic BFE 40044

Love Is Like An Itchin' In My Heart, The Things That Men Can Do, C'est La Vie, Shattered Glass, Talk Of The Town, Wounded Heart, Hard To Believe, You Could Have Been With Me Last Night, I Want A Man Who Can Dance

Rating - * * Karon Floyd, Tina Scott, Roberta Stiger and D'Marie Warren have a new album on Epic titled "Talk Of The Town." The album opens with a cover of "Love Is Like An Itchin' In My Heart," a top-ten hit for The Supremes back in 1966. This cut sounds like a souped-up version of the record done by Shalamar (the song appeared as part of Shalamar's 1977 medley, "Uptown Festival"). With a "fresh beat" opening, the girls rap through "The Things That Men Do," glide through the mid-tempo "C'est La Vie" and stomp through "Shattered Glass." You've heard all of this type of stuff before.

THE STAPLE SINGERS

The Staple Singers Private i BFZ 40109

Are You Ready?, Life During Wartime, Nobody Can Make It On Their Own, Back To The War, Reason To Love, We Stand (Together, Forever), Start Walking, Love Works In Strange Ways Rating - # # 1/2

The family group that's been a staple of the gospel, R&B and pop charts over the past 30 years or so reached a "Turning Point" in its career with the release of their last album a year ago, and the logical follow-up has arrived. "Are You Ready" for it? You fans of this group know how well The Staple Singers covered that Talking Heads song "Slippery People," and the Staples have got another one from the Talking Heads on their latest LP: a tune called "Life During Wartime," a 100-percent certified Staples rocker. Music with a message, that's the Staples. The album

starts off with their latest single, "Are You Ready?" This tune was a top-40 hit for Pacific Gas And Electric in 1970. This is a new, equally lively arrangement. The way the gang blends pop and reggae on "Reason To Love" shows how sharp the Staples still are. The waltztempo "Love Works In Strange Ways" is the slow number here.

BRASS CONSTRUCTION

Conquest Capitol ST-12423

Goodnews, Modern Touch, Give And Take, Startin' All Over Again, Comeback, Zig Zag, Secret Lover, My Place, Conquest

Rating — * * 1/2

The group that hit the top ten with the funky, mostly instrumental single "Movin" back in 1976 returns with their latest. No doubt about it, the guys are definitely trying to reach a wider market with this one, but the formula needs work. Some of this stuff sounds stale even on the first listen, but as a whole, this LP is as good as most of their previous LPs.

DAYTON

Capital ST-12412

Ordinary Girl, I've Got Me (Somebody To Love), This Love Will Last, Nobody Else, Hang Out, This Time, Coming To Get My Love, You Should Be Dancin'

Rating - * * 1/2

Although it is plainly obvious that Dayton makes commercial-sounding pop/R&B, which attempts to garner crossover appeal, Dayton has a way of sounding like Starpoint one minute, Daryl Hall And John Oates the next, the Bar-Kays the next. The opening track "Ordinary Girl" rocks along with a similar arrangement to Jermaine Jackson's "Dynamite." "Nobody Else" is standard commercial pop/funk fare. The single "This Time" is a fine showcase of the group's ballad abilities, and although this is not the recent hit by Champaign, it could easily be suitable for a Champaign album. However, the Dayton single doesn't sound like it will top Freddie Jackson's "Rock Me Tonight (For Old Time's Sake)" in the sales department. On "You Should Be Dancin' " is more of Dayton's happy, harmonizing vocal expressions, a forgettable tune, but spiritually uplifting while on the turntable.