Record Review Ratings

By Carl Matthews

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

LUSHUS DAIM AND THE PRETTY VAIN

More Than You Can Handle
Motown 6150ML
More Than You Can Handle, The One You Love, Be There For Me, The Rhythm Of Love, Flex, Pretty Poison, Attention Addict, Payback, For You

Rating — ★ ★ ★

Here's a really rocking LP, the debut album by Lushus Daim And The Pretty Vain, which features the current single "The One You Love." The album was produced by Lushus Daim along with veteran producer Leon F. Sylvers, III. The album starts off cooking with the title track, a synth-funk number comparable to recent efforts of other notable artists such as Shannon and Brenda K. Starr. It's followed by the current single, "The One You Love," a mid-tempo jam that will comfortably fit in the playlist of many a radio station, with its simple message and uncomplicated vocal hook. Although Lushus Daim has a voice that sounds very similar to numerous other female vocalists that are popular right now, she does have vocal ability. However, some of these synth-driven arrangements and instrumentation, of which "Flex" is a perfect example, detract from, rather than enhance, her best vocal qualities. You'll find this LP an upbeat, current, and professionally-done collection of dance tracks and ballads.

YARBROUGH AND PEOPLES

Guilty
Total Experience TEL8-5715
Guilty, I Wouldn't Lie, Wrapped Around Your Finger, Let The Music Play On, Anytime, I'll Give Anything To Have You Back, Everything, Who Is She, A Closer Love Affair

Rating — ★ ★ ★

With "Guilty," the duo of Cavin Yarbrough and Alisa Peoples have another top-20 R&B album and top-5 R&B single. The album opens with the hit title track which is typical of their slick, contemporary pop style. The simple easy listening flow of "Wrapped Around Your Finger" is for those who like 'em more laid-back. "Anytime" contains instrumentation similar to their first big hit, "Don't Stop The Music," and things really get jumping with "Who Is She," a welcome deviation from the usual formula. "A Closer Love Affair" is the slow ballad here. Fans of their previous works should not be disappointed with this one.

COLONEL ABRAMS

Colonel Abrams
MCA MCA-5682
The Truth, Speculation, Never Change, Picture Me In Love With You, Trapped, I'm Not Gonna Let, Over And Over, Margaux, Table For Two

Rating — ★ ★ ½

Colonel Abrams's latest album opens with "The Truth," the kind of upbeat fare you've already heard done by such notables as Jeffrey Osborne and Kashif. It was co-produced by Cerrone ("Love In C Minor"). Also, imagine what Freddie Jackson would sound like if he specialized in synth-funk; "Speculation" gives Abrams a chance to vocally work out. "Table For Two" is done in a very quiet, mellow, and catchy arrangement, which shows that Colonel does have versatility to match the fine production job (at least, it's "fine" enough to sell albums).

TOTAL CONTRAST

Total Contrast
London 422-828 002-1 R-1
Hit And Run, The River, Where Is Love?, How Many Reasons, Takes A Little Time, What You Gonna Do About It, Sunshine, Entangled

Rating — ★ ★ ★

This is Total Contrast's first LP, featuring the talents of Delroy Murray, 26, and Robin Achampong, 22, who are both from London. Actually the sound of this record is not a total contrast from what you'd expect British synth/R&B to sound (if you've heard such artists as Five Star, Junior, Billy Ocean). "Hit And Run" and the following track, "The River," sport lengthy introductions consisting of much pulsating percussion, a very noticeable bass line, and your average synthesizer doodlings. These guys are still young yet, and considering that, the warm, cozy arrangement of "Where Is Love" from the musical "Oliver!" is quite beautiful and tastefully done, but I believe it needs a more mature, seasoned voice to make it really a standout cut.

WARP 9

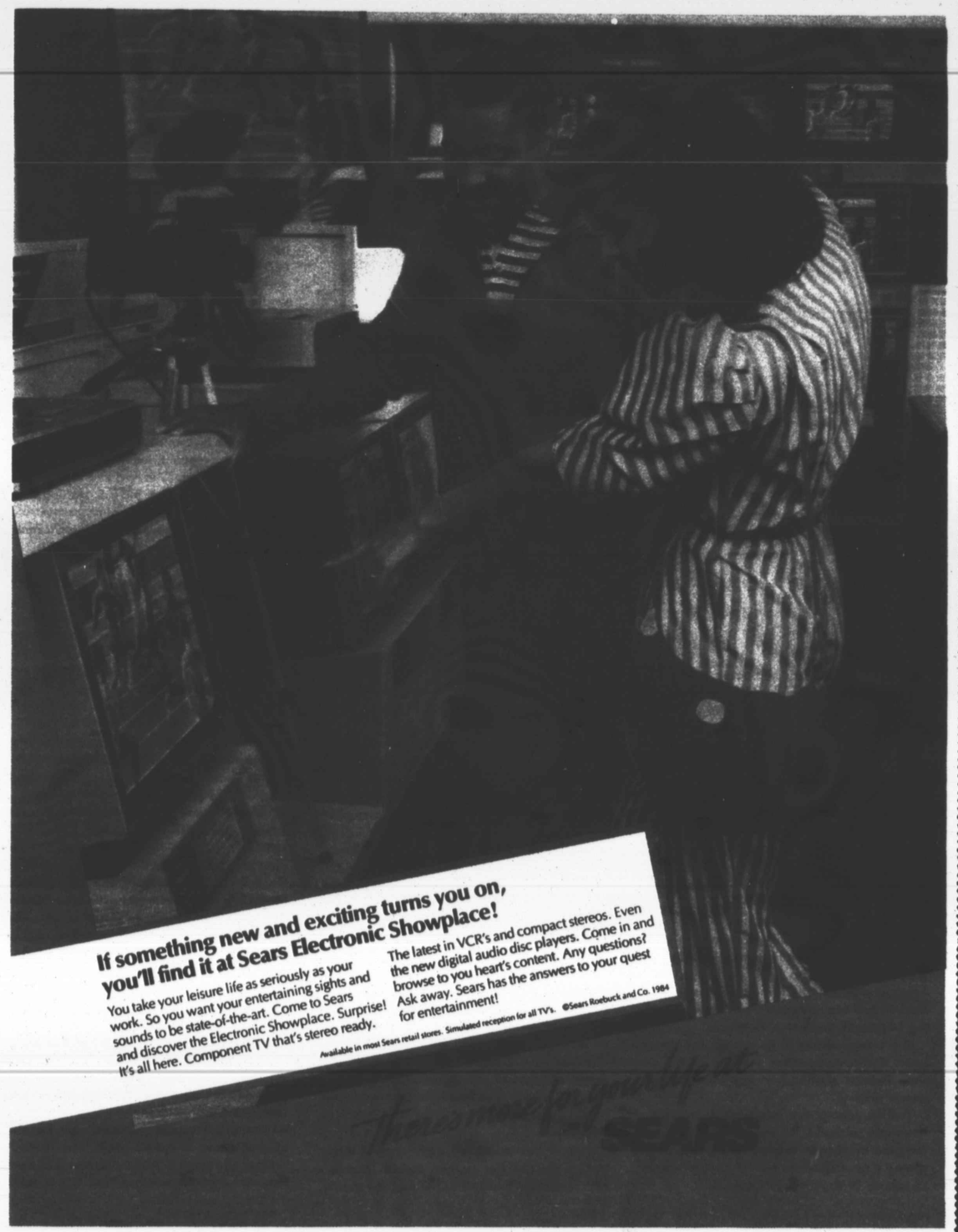
Fade In, Fade Out
Motown 6163ML
Skips A Beat, Dirty Looks, Big Fun, Reach For Your Star, The Cutting Edge, You'll Get Over It, To The Last Drop

Rating — ★ ½

Captain's log — stardate 1986: Warp 9, featuring lead singers Katherine Joyce and Chuck Wansley, have their first album on Motown out. Warp 9 is less street oriented this time around, with the first single "Skips A Beat" getting into that familiar disco groove you've heard thousands of times before — Nothing really noteworthy here. The mix on "Dirty Looks" leaves Joyce's vocals sounding pale and uninspired, and sounding like a weak imitation of many other well-known female artists. "Big Fun" just isn't; it's more formula music that just breezes by without anything really interesting to say.

LATOYA JACKSON

Imagination
Private I BFZ 40267
He's A Pretender, On A Night Like This, How Do I Tell Them, Imagination, Baby Sister, Weak Spot, Love Talk, Boys Got Somethin' Girls Ain't Got

Rating — ★ ★ ★

There must be some reason why, while Michael Jackson has hit the top ten on the pop charts many times, Rebbie, LaToya, etc. haven't been able to get a single into the pop top 20. I'm still wondering. And I don't know too many people who remember such singles as "If You Feel The Funk" and "Heart Don't Lie." LaToya is working with Mike Piccirillo and Gary Goetzman this time out. Their productions certainly are pop-oriented. Pretty well recorded and mixed, too. Of course, these folks are no Smokey Robinson, so look for somewhat predictable lyrics, but they seem to suit LaToya just fine. The new wavish "Baby Sister," about a guy who dumps a girl for the girl's younger sibling, is just the kind of ear candy LaToya is a natural for. And she even wrote "Love Talk," for the romantic crowd.