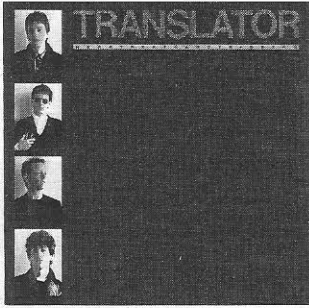


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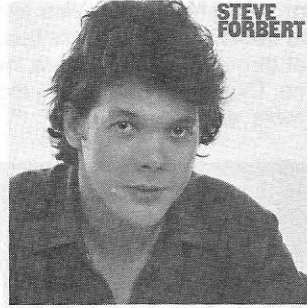
By J.D. Considine

SHORT TAKES

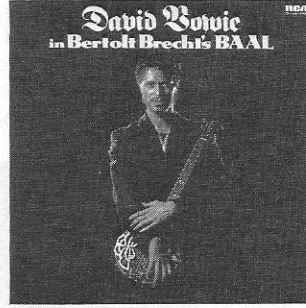
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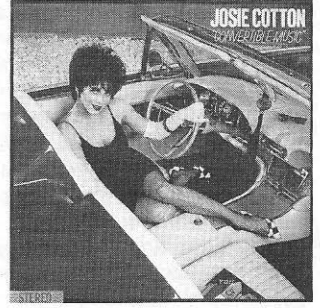
Steve Forbert



David Bowie



Josie Cotton



Translator — *Heartbeats And Triggers* (415/Columbia) "Everywhere That I'm Not" is the best unrequited love song I've heard in a long time—ingenious, obsessive, hauntingly melodic. Its moody refrain and catch-in-the-throat delivery give it the sort of impact you used to expect from Dylan. The other songs on the album aren't quite so stunning, but their potent infusion of folkie modality and a punkish jackhammer beat into a basically post-power-pop approach make them wonderfully addictive. If you're looking for a new record to wear out, this is it.

Killing Joke — *Revelations* (Editions EG/Malicious Damage) What made earlier Killing Joke great was the way the guitar was used to reinforce the wallop of the drums. What makes this album so wretched is the way the guitar has been watered down in favor of the whining vocals.

REO Speedwagon — *Good Trouble* (Epic) If *Hi Infidelity* sounded like static to you, be warned; this group is going to keep on bugging you. *Good Trouble* further establishes REO's place in rock's heartland with another helping of wholesome melody and gosh-I-love-you sentiment, which no doubt means it will be all over the airwaves through Christmas. Still, we could do worse. The sound of this one is more richly detailed than its predecessor, and makes a surprising show of the band's country roots. All in all, nearly likeable.

The Late Bronze Age — *Isles Of Langerhan* (Landslide) Imagine, if you will, Pere Ubu with a southern accent and a near-accessible sense of melody; add onto that notion the supposition that Captain Beefheart is really an R. Crumb comic strip character; mix in the better part of a bottle of Jack Daniels (just to

keep you in the mood) and you've got a rough idea of what this sounds like. Well, at least the parts that don't sound like what country music would if Jimmy Rogers was an extra-terrestrial. Fun? You bet. Just don't expect to understand any of it.

David Bowie — *In Bertolt Brecht's BAAL* (RCA) Question: Are you going to spend \$5.98 (or the local equivalent) for a mere eleven minutes of not very interesting ballad singing? Better question: Now that we've fallen for *Changes Two*, *Christiane F.* and this, when are we going to get a new Bowie album with something new on it?

Steve Forbert (Nemporer) Although Steve Forbert continues to show signs of becoming a better-than-average country singer, he still won't give up on the idea of being a below-average pop/rocker. Consequently, this album is a mess. Even if you restrain the desire to snigger through the metaphors of "He's Gotta Live Up To His Shoes," you can't help but wonder what the Jordanares are doing in there, 'oooooh-ing in rich harmony behind every twisted phrase. Is it a joke? If not, why is it so funny?

Tom Robinson — *North By Northwest* (I.R.S.) The performances here are so roughly hewn that the album almost sounds like a collection of demos. While this has its advantages—for one thing, Robinson is wonderfully relaxed and expressive—it nonetheless imbues the album with a sense of unfulfilled potential. A shame, too, because the songs here are hookish and buoyantly melodic, from the bittersweet "Now Martin's Gone" to the sly, wicked "Merrily Up On High." Here's hoping we'll be hearing some of these again with a full band instead of this skeleton crew.

Billy Idol (Chrysalis) If the fashionably

danceable *Don't Stop* EP struck you as disappointingly shallow, cheer up. This time 'round, Billy Idol lives up to promise most of us didn't know he had. No trendiness here; instead, Idol shows off an astonishing command of mainstream idioms ranging from the Mott-the-Hooplish bite of "Come On, Come On" to the semi-Springsteen romance of "Hot In The City." But the real surprise is how well Idol sings. Not only is his delivery smooth and resonant, but he manages some characterizations on "White Wedding" that would make Bowie envious.

Josie Cotton — *Convertible Music* (Elektra) Cheap imitation nostalgia by someone who is to the Go-Go's what Billy Falcon is to Bruce Springsteen. If you think this is what the girl group sound was all about, save your money for a Ronettes album.

The Reddings — *Steamin' Hot* (Believe In a Dream) It might have taken guts for Otis Redding's son to attempt a remake of "The Dock Of The Bay," but it took talent to pull it off, and talent is the bottom line with this group. Although their first two albums have been impressive, what sets this one apart is the confidence with which the Reddings define their own sound, a smoothly sophisticated funk similar to the Brothers Johnson but not half as slick. The key? Not the singing, which does the name proud, but Dexter Redding's punchy bass lines, which provide an unshakable foundation for each solidly grooving track.

Eddie Money — *No Control* (Columbia) Eddie Money would like to be Rod Stewart the way a Big Mac wants to be Salisbury steak—mostly 'cause he wants to be in the gravy. But Money's efforts are mostly corn, his material full of beans,

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