

ROCK

S·H·O·R·T T·A·K·E·S



Jason & the Scorchers — *Lost & Found* (EMI/America). Country-rock is rarely either, which makes describing Jason & the Scorchers, who are adamantly both, a problem. On the one hand, Jason Ringenberg sings with just enough of a plaintive twang to make the likes of "White Lies" or "Broken Whiskey Glass" reverberate with honky-tonk regret, while on the other, guitarist Warner Hodges puts enough high-voltage enthusiasm into "Last Time Around" and "Lost Highway" to pump his Keith Richards licks up to Clash intensity. Better to forget about labels and simply call this a great record. [CD]

The Power Station — *33 1/3* (Capitol). It didn't take a crystal ball to predict that drummer Tony Thompson would be the stand-out player here, but who would have guessed that he'd actually dominate this album? Anonymity is something of a habit for Duranies John and Andy Taylor, but it's odd to find Robert Palmer playing the shrinking violet. Or maybe it's just that the tunes are so slight that anybody would sound invisible singing them. [CD]

Elvis Presley — *Reconsider Baby* (RCA). An apt title, especially for those who never expected proof that Elvis was a great blues singer. Not only has producer Greg Geller dug up gems that show the King delivering everything from credible extensions of Arthur Crudup to a "Stranger In My Own Home Town" that'll put you in mind of Bobby Bland, these tracks show improvement as they span seventeen years—which blows a big hole in the He-Lost-It-In-The-Army theory. If this is revisionism, give me more! [CD]

DeBarge — *Rhythm Of The Night* (Gordy). Like virtually every worthwhile Motown act, DeBarge has finally fallen

victim to the Gordy machine's trash-masher approach to product. After DeBarge cut the best song in Berry Gordy's *The Last Dragon*, the Big Bosses figured a solo album would pick up what the soundtrack LP didn't. So they padded out some likeably unexceptional Jay Graydon sessions with a handful of leftovers, named it after the movie number, and—*presto schlocko!*—released this.

Aztec Camera — *Aztec Camera* (Sire EP). One of life's little pleasures: A ten-inch EP with four live cuts that clearly display the steely edge beneath Roddy Frame's wistful melodies, plus the long-awaited domestic release of Frame's sentimental (and surprisingly apt) version of "Jump."

Felá Anikúlapo Kuti — *Army Arrangement* (Celluloid). If you want a sense of just how heartbroken Fela fans were at the cancellation of his American tour last year, give this powerhouse a listen. Not only does *Army Arrangement* manage all the sarcastic bite of *Zombie*, but the addition of Bernie Worrell and Sly Dunbar gives Egypt 80's Afrobeat even more punch than usual. All of which makes it unbearable to wait five years—Fela's prison term—for the next album. (155 W. 29th St., New York City, NY 10001)

Greg Kihn — *Citizen Kihn* (EMI/America). When in doubt, wimp out. [CD]

Original Soundtrack — *Porky's Revenge!* (Columbia). Forget the movie; the soundtrack, lovingly assembled by Dave Edmunds, is the best ersatz oldies collection you'll ever hear, from the locomotive wail of Clarence Clemons' "Peter Gunn Theme" to the Fabulous Thunderbirds' strutting "Stagger Lee." Best of all, there's the Crawling King Snakes (Robert Plant and pals), who in just 2:15 manage to eclipse the whole of *The Honeydrippers*.

The Roxanne Chronicles: A few months back, the rap record everybody wanted was "Roxanne, Roxanne" by **UTFO** (Select 12-inch), an inventively funny routine about how three def rappers gave their best and still lost the girl. It wasn't simply the raps that made the record hot; the way "Roxanne" played against the self-inflating conventions of rap really captured the fans. So much so, in fact, that within weeks there was an answer record, "Roxanne's Revenge" (Pop Art 12-inch), in which the raw-voiced **Roxanne Shanté** demanded, "Why'd you have to make a record 'bout me?" Not to be outdone, UTFO fired

back with their own answer record, "**The Real Roxanne**" (Select 12-inch). Course, there was nothing *real* about this Roxanne, what with all her lines supplied by UTFO, and though the record was funny, its parody format couldn't compete with Roxanne Shanté's street-wise cracks. But that didn't stop **Sparky "D"** from putting her two cents in, as her "Sparky's Turn (Roxanne You're Through)" (NIA 12-inch) cattily tells Shanté that UTFO isn't really mad: "They understand that you did it for money." If that weren't enough, in jumped **Dr. Freshh** with "Roxanne's Doctor" (Zakia 12-inch), which presents our girl as a calculating nympho whom the Doc haughtily turns aside (doesn't say much for UTFO's sex appeal, does it?). By this point, "Roxanne, Roxanne" has become the biggest answer-record phenomenon since "Work With Me Annie" spawned its progeny, and doubtless there will be more to come ("Roxanne's Lawyers" anyone?). But for now, it looks like Roxanne Shanté has had the last word, with "Queen Of Rox" (Pop Art 12-inch), which tells her story straight and shows that she is one of the freshest rappers out there.

Einsturzende Neubauten — *Einsturzende Neubauten* (PVC). The name is German for "Collapsing New Buildings," a nice joke on their wrecking company methodology and their deconstructionist approach to rock. Their music is the clangor of hard rock, minus the melody but not without the beat; noise you can dance to, the perfect city soundtrack. (3619 Kennedy Road, So. Plainfield, NJ 07080)

Nik Kershaw — *The Riddle* (MCA). Say hello to New Muzak, in which atmosphere and electronic color take the place of melodies and rhythmic fortitude. Coming to an elevator near you. [CD]

Nicolas Collins — *Let The State Make The Selection* (Lovely). The title isn't a political message but a statement of method. Instead of the composer and performers deciding what sounds the instruments shall make, the electronics here have been arranged so that the instruments determine the resonances, overtones and musical color. It seems ass-backwards, sure, but it results in fresh, roomy soundscapes that capture the excitement of Cageian theoretics as well as the vitality of experimental rock. (325 Spring Street, New York City, NY 10013)

J.D. Considine