

# Record Reviews

## Joe Jackson

by David Talento

Review of *Mike's Murder Soundtrack* — Joe Jackson  
Rating: \*\*\*

On *Mike's Murder* Joe Jackson once again steps into a new musical environment. While there is no major stylistic departure as have been on successive previous efforts, this album is different in the respect that it is not the standard album, but instead a soundtrack for an upcoming movie.

This is important to recognize, because due to this fact, the album merits special consideration. Its soundtrack status both adds to and detracts from *Mike's Murder* in many ways. To better understand this, a little background is in order.

Joe Jackson's name was first heard when the single, "Is She Really Going Out With Him," hit the radio airwaves in late 1978. The following album, *Look Sharp*, not only included this song, but a vast collection of the pure pop sound that was

to later break into the eighties. *Look Sharp* was more than a pop album, however, and it contained many styles which incorporated everything from fast paced guitar hooks to a touch of Jackson's feelings for jazz. The second record titled *I'm the Man* contained much of the debut's original flavor with songs such as "Don't Wanna Be Like That," and the title track providing more of the same for a growing Joe Jackson audience. Guitarist Gary Sanford cut through the sound while simultaneously pushing it forward. While this release did contain some new slower songs and a slight variation, it was not until his third album, *Beat Crazy*, that the formula was altered.

*Beat Crazy*, as the title may suggest, placed its emphasis on the rhythm using more bass lines and percussion than the other two records. Here guitars were used to chop rather than flow with the melody and the result was a very strong, almost violent beat.

After the release of *Beat Crazy*, an album which Jackson himself describes as "desperation," he was forced to take time off from his musical career due to ill health. Finding himself confined to bed for a

period of months, Jackson took advantage of the situation by developing his old interests in the big band and jazz era. When he recovered, he got a group of friends together and eventually recorded some of the old hep cat anthems such as "Tuxedo Junction." The album, called *Jumpin' Jive*, and the subsequent tour were a surprising success, and, on the completion of the tour, Jackson's next move was anyone's guess.

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## New Order

by Helen Cohen

New Order: *Power, Corruption, and Lies*  
Rating: \*\*\*\*

We've all heard enough about New Order being made up of the three remaining members of Joy Division (plus one), a band who was made into history with the suicide of lead singer, Ian Curtis, back on May 19th, 1980. But the members of New Order are trying to put the unquiet spirit of Joy Division to rest. They don't play any Joy Division songs in concert (No, not even "Love Will Tear us Apart"), and they recently stated in a *Rolling Stone* interview, "Joy Division is dead." Time to move on...

Their newest album, *Power, Corruption, and Lies* is their best effort yet. This got them a well-deserved 5 star review in *Rolling Stone*, and may just be the album to get them commer-

cial air play. (All you long time fans are saying "No! Please WMMR and WYSP STAY AWAY!!!!"). "Power" shows tremendous growth and expansion of talent and style, musically and lyrically. To me, previous New Order material was exceptionally good, but it seemed as if they hadn't "got it all together" yet. Well—they've got it now! And they got it good! The new music is colored with a generous amount of keyboards — which, though there, were definitely scarce on earlier works. And the drum machine/drum combination provides a nice backing—rather than dominating the music. Guitars FLOURISH (As usual — they always did), and vocals are a lot cleaner, not as harsh as before. Yes, the rough edge in their style has been smoothed out.

New Order is primarily a dance band — and the music on "Power" is definitely delightful to dance to. (Perhaps this is why clubs all over the U.S. and G.B. consistently play them.) There are, along with the dance tunes, a couple of sensual, slower cuts such as "Your Silent Face" and "Leave Me Alone" that simply pour out of the speakers and engulf the listener—envelop you—just pull you into the music, making you drop everything, forget your surroundings, and LISTEN — with undivided attention.

## The Alarm

by KellyAnn Brazunas

This new group from north Wales which consists of Nigel Twist, Eddie MacDonald, Mike Peters, and Dave Sharp, got their recognition in the states by being the opening act for U2 on the second leg of their U.S. tour. This five-song mini-LP has much potential. The first single released from this is "The Stand" which has gotten a great hand from their video seen on MTV. The best tracks on this album are "Marching On" and "For Freedom." What makes the sound of the Alarm so unique is that they use acoustic guitars. Only the bass is electric. The combination of two acoustic guitars, a bass and drums is quite different from anything else. One shouldn't be turned away by the fact that they use acoustic guitars — the sound they produce is more powerful than some bands that use electric guitars! Bono Hewson from U2 put it like this, "... There's a mentality towards rock and roll music. It's not important that they use acoustic guitars. When great music is made, there are usually great people behind it, and the Alarm are great people."

I agree with Bono and if you are ready for a great change in music, give their album a chance. It's worth it! If you are interested in more information about the Alarm write to:

THE ALARM  
c/o 28 Alexander Street  
London W2

Not only have New Order improved as musicians, their lyrics have gone from "Temptation's" "Oh you've got green eyes, oh you've got blue eyes, oh you've got grey eyes" and the repetitiousness of "Every Thing's Gone Green" (ie: repeating "Seems like I've been here before" 50,000 times), to songs like "Age of Consent" and "Your Silent Face." "Age of Consent" is the album's opening track. It has a ripping, upbeat tempo, and takes a realistic sort of modern look at a "love-gone-sour." It hints at four phases one goes through after a broken romance: Hurt ("Won't you please let me go/these words lie inside they hurt me so"), anger ("I saw you this morning and thought that you might like to know/I received your message... a few days ago/I understood every word that it said/and now that I've actually heard, you're gonna regret"), resentment ("Do you find this happens all the time/a crucial point one day becomes a crime?"), and finally, regret and realization ("I've lost you, I've lost you, I've lost you. I've lost you, I've lost you"). "Your Silent Face" is, again, one of the slower tunes on the album, and such lines are thrown at you as "A thought that never changes remains a stupid

lie/it's never been quite the same/no hearing no breathing no movement no color just silence"...

New Order has always had an air of mystery about them. No credits, band member's names, or any lists of who-plays-what appear on any E.P.s or albums, and "Power" is no exception. I am not going to list the members here, or who-plays-what, because I like the mystery. Besides, the lead singer says no credits appear because it's the music that's important, not the musicians. When you buy an album, it's to listen to the music—the music is everything.

Well, you won't get the names of the faces-behind-the-notes outa me! My lips are sealed, "except to say this is one of the greatest albums to come out of 1983, and G.B. It's a DEFINITE MUST for all New Order fans—old and new alike. I'm sure (and a little sad—because they won't be "all mine" anymore) we'll be hearing a lot more about this band in the (very) near future.

## Shriekback

by Antonette D'Orazio

Shriekback Care  
Rating: \*\*\* 1/2

Shriekback, a post-punk band made up of ex-members of Gang of Four, XTC, and Out of Blue Six, have created an obscure, urgent album that requires close attention. What the listener may notice first is that lyrics are not included. This is unfortunate because the few lines that can be discerned hint at a seriousness that many current bands lack. For example, the single released this past summer, "Lined Up," deals with conformity: "... Our most exemptable business is on a line in just one direction/Organized in the same line/With one face, one side/We got all lined up..." and "... Back at the all night party/We're getting clearer all the time/Refined to one shape/Frozen like crystal/It has a symmetry of perfect design/One line leads to another..." Other songs are less obvious, yet a feeling of foreboding can be felt. In "Into Method," one of the most poignant lines on the album is sung; "... everybody swings from madness into method..." Likewise, "Brink of Collapse" offers a gem: "... you know it all mounts up/nothing left to inhabit/we stay quiet/missing nothing at all..."

Like New Order, Shriekback has an air of mystery about

them. They do not list who plays what instruments, and this esoteric image is carried through the vocal style they employ. Along with a voice singing the melody line, often, a high falsetto can be heard singing simultaneously, and, although less notable but more instrumental in defining this style, is the usage of a soft, low, deep voice below the melody line. This unique vocal manipulation adds to the sense of darkness in the music.

Although all the songs are individualistic, a Bowie influence can be felt at times. Musically, the weakest and weirdest cut is

a tune called "Lines From the Library." It sounds like a hunchback dragging a ball and chain through a dungeon while some sort of religious ceremony is taking place. No doubt Shriekback is trying to say something significant, but one may not be able to get past the shock of such unusual, unpredictable instrumentation to listen closely to the words. Yet, this is what is special about Shriekback, they are not afraid of the untraditional or unusual. Pick up the album and see for yourself, you may like being on the dark side of things for a little while at least.

## Culture Club

by KellyAnn Brazunas

The Culture Club concert at the Tower on August 31 was not what I expected. One of my friends asked me to go with her and after much pleading with me, I agreed to go. My main problem was I didn't know if I could stand looking at Boy George for more than five minutes. To my shock and great disbelief I enjoyed the show tremendously. The group opened with the song "Take Control" and Boy George surely had the audience in his control. At one point the ushers were telling the people who were standing up to sit down.

Boy George didn't care and told us to get up on our feet and dance in the aisles. In the middle of the show he and one of the background singers sang, to my great surprise, a beautiful ballad. I had never heard the song before and presume it will be on their next album. By the end of the night I was so touched by the energy and sincere manner in which the band performed that I too, held my lighter up and cheered for an encore. I think anyone who has been turned off by Culture Club because of the androgynous looks of Boy George, should give the band a second chance.