

LONGPLAYERS

by John Swenson

AC/DC salute the British blues

Stewart returns to classic form



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AC/DC — For Those about to Rock (We Salute You) (Atlantic)

AC/DC's eighth LP shows them consolidating their position as the latest exponent of hard British blues-rock. In the tradition of Humble Pie, Led Zeppelin and to some extent Mountain (which though not a British band, exemplified the style), AC/DC bang out thick and quivering blues structures that serve as vehicles for stately guitar solos and theatrical, blues based vocalizations.

The title track, which kicks off the album, is a slow funk crawl that features Brian Johnson's yowling Geordie vocals, and provides AC/DC's current stage act with the flamboyant rounds of cannon fire that

are suggested by the civil war-era piece on the jacket cover. "Put the Finger on You," a medium-tempo rocker, has Johnson gurgling his best Robert Plant bluesisms before the track segues neatly into the strutting vamp of "Let's Get It Up," which matches Angus Young's best Leslie West-style guitar solo with Johnson's rasping delivery. "Inject the Venom" is another medium-tempo Zeppelin fudge rocker that paves the way for the album's hottest track, the firebrand "Snowballed." Producer Robert John "Mutt" Lange pulls out all the stops here for a beautifully engineered multi-stage Young solo intercut with an exciting Who-style rhythm guitar chord sequence that sounds like Pete Townshend playing "Baby Don't You Do It."

Side Two of the record is

disappointing after the rasping "Evil Walks" and the infectious, Stones-like riffs of "COD." While the band's current approach is well-suited to its arena level of popularity, its calculation has replaced the edge of maniacism and sense of humor that the group once stood for. Even though they've progressed individually as musicians, it may well be that AC/DC have lost the identity with which the late lead singer Bon Scott infused them.

Rush — Exit... Stage Left (Mercury)

At first glance this album may seem like just another Christmas-time live two-record package. But *Exit... Stage Left* represents the coming of age of Canada's greatest band and one of the finest heavy-metal outfits to come out of the '70s proliferation of that style.

The difference between this record and the first Rush live LP, *All the World's a Stage*, shows just how far the band has come in the last few years. *Stage* was an energetic but somewhat leaden account of the band's live strengths at a time when the members of Rush will now freely admit they were struggling. The sound quality of that first live record disappointed them, but the record consolidated their audience at a crucial point and gave them breathing space to come up with a fresh approach to their sound, which proved to be the turning point in Rush's career.

The improvement in playing quality and material since the first live album is apparent from the outset of this record, which opens with the group's anthem-like "The Spirit of Radio." Alex Lifeson spins giddy figures on his guitar, before Geddy Lee's full-throated bass and Neil Peart's powerful drums carry the song into its majestic first verse. The band's multifaceted sound images pour through as Lee's foot pedal synthesizers and sequencers and Peart's galaxy of percussion instruments blend into a rich and subtle sonic contrast to Lifeson's shrewd slabs of processed guitar.

The one-two punch from *Moving Pictures*, "Red Barchetta" and "YYZ," follows, the former featuring Lifeson and the latter showcasing Peart's exquisite drum solo. "Jacob's Ladder," "Free Will" and "Tom Sawyer" provide further high points

on a record that really doesn't have a single bad moment. If you haven't listened much to the group, *Exit* is a perfect place to start. If you like Rush already this is the record you've been waiting for.

Rod Stewart — Tonight I'm Yours (Warner Brothers)
Adam and the Ants — Prince Charming (Epic)

Was Screaming Lord Sutch, the '60's madman with a penchant for pirate outfits, the first new romantic? Is Adam Ant the latest of the Mods? Little has changed since the days when Rod (the Mod) Stewart was Britain's fave teenage heartthrob, as Adam's cleverly calculated appeal proves. Both Rod and Adam's personae provide a glittery facade that is skillfully wallpapered over a musical strategy that recycles proven formats in a novel yet safely derivative fashion.

Stewart arrived at his most successful formula in the late '70s by incorporating the disco process into "Da Ya Think I'm Sexy," and on the

title track here he attempts to reproduce that move with less success. While his singing is up to its usual standard, the backing, particularly in the rhythm section, sounds too thin to carry the weight. "Young Turks," on the other hand, accomplishes the trick effortlessly. An even cagier move, though, is Stewart's recasting of the Rolling Stones' disco smash, "Miss You," as the funk strut "Jealous," which is easily one of the LP's high points.

Elsewhere, *Tonight I'm Yours* offers a return to Stewart's classic strengths as an interpreter of ballads (Paul Carrack's "How Long," Bob Dylan's "Just Like a Woman" and several of his own: "Only a Boy," "Sonny" and "Never Give up on a Dream"). "Tora, Tora, Tora (Out with the Boys)" explodes with the devil-may-care frenzy that characterized Stewart's boozy sessions with the Faces. Finally, Rod dips into the history books to dig up the Rock and Roll Trio's rockabilly classic, "Tear It Up."

Adam Ant's third LP shows him to be deftly developing his own strategy. *Prince Charming* is a heady blend of funk jazz, punk rock, South American

rhythms and the Burundi Black beat that has provided the rhythmic root to all of Adam's work since he hooked up with Malcolm McLaren. Adam Ant can't match Stewart's vocal range and power, but he manipulates his facade more shrewdly, forcing imagery of surrealism on "Picasso Visita el Planeta de los Simios," referencing his heroic cameo mythologies with "5 Guns West" (cowboys), "Mowhok" (Indians), "Stand and Deliver" (highwaymen) and "Ant Rap" (ants).

The title track isn't just the most important cut on the record, it's a transcendent piece of pop commentary, merging Adam's musical policy with a statement of purpose to which he ties current events. This is the flip side of the Sex Pistols' renegade "God Save the Queen." Where the Pistols were calling for anarchy, Adam is linking the Royal Wedding and Prince Charles' charismatic appeal to the new romantics' fashion policy ("Don't you ever stop being dandy/showing me you're handsome"). He backs it with a crude and insistent electrochant. With this one song Adam Ant has earned his stripes.

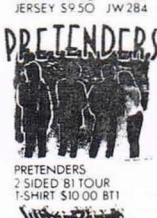
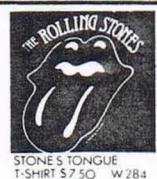
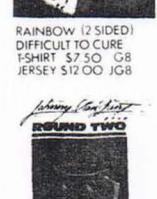
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- JOE JACKSON ★ BLONDIE ★ HENDRIX ★☆☆
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- BEATLES ★ DOORS ★ OZZY OSBOURNE ★
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The winners and the runners-up:



The winners: (Clockwise from top) Pat Benatar, Eddie Van Halen, Billy Squier, Mick Jagger, Chuck Mangione, Neil Peart, Keith Emerson.

BEST MALE VOCALIST:

1. Mick Jagger
2. David Lee Roth
3. Steve Perry

BEST FEMALE VOCALIST:

1. Pat Benatar
2. Stevie Nicks
3. Chrissie Hynde

BEST SONGWRITER:

1. Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
2. Neil Peart
3. Peter Townshend

BEST ALBUM PRODUCER:

1. Mick Jagger/Keith Richards
2. Ted Templeman
3. Roy Thomas Baker

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR:

1. Rolling Stones
2. Moody Blues
3. Ozzy Osbourne

BEST ALBUM:

1. Tattoo You—Rolling Stones
2. Hi InFidelity—REO Speedwagon
3. Don't Say No—Billy Squier

BEST SINGLE:

1. "Start Me Up"—Rolling Stones
2. "Who's Crying Now"—Journey
3. "The Stroke"—Billy Squier

BEST HORNS:

1. Chuck Mangione
2. Clarence Clemons
3. John Entwistle

BEST GROUP:

1. Rolling Stones
2. Van Halen
3. AC/DC

BEST NEW ACT:

1. Billy Squier
2. Loverboy
3. Go-Go's

BEST LIVE SHOW:

1. Rolling Stones
2. Van Halen
3. Rush

BEST GUITAR:

1. Eddie Van Halen
2. Keith Richards
3. Jimmy Page

BEST BASS:

1. Bill Wyman
2. Geddy Lee
3. John Entwistle

BEST DRUMS:

1. Neil Peart
2. Charlie Watts
3. Alex Van Halen

BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT OF THE YEAR

1. No Led Zeppelin LP or tour
2. No Aerosmith LP or tour
3. Debbie Harry/Blondie