

Dexy's Midnight Runners
Don't Stand Me Down
Mercury

Absolutely pathetic. This is the worst album I've heard in years, I knew it the second I heard it, and it only gets worse after repeated torturings (playings).

Hailed as some sort of street level messiahs after "Come On Eileen", Dexy's Midnight Runners sold surprisingly well and many expected this, the follow-up, to be something wonderful. Me, I was surprised someone gave them a contract, that someone other than immediate family bought it and that radio picked up on the song. They never fooled me, I fell asleep at the first annoying strains of Rowland's questionable voice. After that rush, they were nice enough to go to sleep, but now we find them out of hibernation again. Go back to sleep.

Don't Stand Me Down is about the worst white r&b likely to ever be perpetrated, an alarmingly sluggish compilation of songs dragging a heavy load. It goes no where every step of the way with the dull style they perfected years ago. Why a man like Vince Crane (ex-Atomic Rooster) would come out of hiding to involve himself in a catastrophe of this order is beyond me, but perhaps this is all actually a detective story in the making. It sure as hell ain't music.

For the tots with the multi-colored hair and trendy wardrobes, this crud's for you. I'm going back to sleep and I hope this lp doesn't appear in a nightmare. Oh yeah, this does have one redeeming feature: at the proper oven setting, it makes a wonderful ashtray. That's it... ■ —John Blenn

Rush
Power Windows
Mercury

It seems like a million miles ago that Rush began it's trek to mass popularity. As a fledgling metal band, they were denied airplay and Geddy Lee's voice, in particular, was under constant harsh



Rush: Joe Anderson's Favorite band.

criticisms. After getting a foothold with a sweep through sci-fi rock, they eventually settled into a nice, politically-aware progressive rock groove. For that very reason, *Power Windows* comes as no surprise, but do not percieve that as dull.

The latest from one of rock's sturdiest survivors stays right in the slot that has won them the battle for mass acceptance. There's no failed experimentation to report, no drastic limb climbing. Rush continues to thrive on the unique vocals of Geddy Lee, the bigger than life drum sound of Neil Peart and the timely bursts of guitarist Alex Lifeson, which is fine by the public, I'm sure.

"The Big Money" kicks the lp off with a hook-laden natural for a first single. Rush's calling card, superb lyrics, makes itself known one-off, and the rest of this offering remains consistent in that uneasy mood. "Emotion Detector" and "Marathon" both stick out as well, thanks to some solid introspective lyrics. The thread of it all seems to be Lee grappling

with his inner soul, a tried and tested format for many successful works. The music remains in the vein of "Signals", so if you loved that, you'll fall in love all over again.

The pulse of Rush remains strong and steady, and *Power Windows* is another nice addition to their legacy. Another shining example to the theory of "expected". No surprises, no disappointments. ■

—John Blenn

Throughout 1985 RCA Records issued an ambitious series of 'greatest hits' albums from performers on its quite sizeable past and present Nashville artist roster, including Willie Nelson, Jim Reeves, Bobby Bare, Dolly Parton, and Waylon Jennings.

Happy holiday listening! ■

Jeff Berlin and Vox Humana

Champion

Passport Record, Inc.

If the *Terminator* were a killer cyborgnetic bassist only one man could play the part. That man is Jeff Berlin. Best known for his blistering bass solos as a sideman for such artists as Bill Bruford and Alan Holdsworth, Berlin proves himself to be equally accomplished as a leader with his second solo effort *Champion*.

Listen to the opening cut "Mother Lode" and you will hear Jeff Berlin display all the qualities it takes to be a bandleader. Taste, technique, heart and an understanding of when to play out and when to lay out. But most importantly Berlin knows that at any time he can blow the rest of the band away with just one short burst of his blazing speed and machine-like precision. But he doesn't.

Champion is made up of five instrumentals, two vocal tunes and one solo bass piece. Compositionally Berlin's style lies somewhere between Allan Holdsworth and the Brecker Brothers. Not bad people to be compared to, but don't accuse Jeff of stealing licks or jumping on the bandwagon, for Jeff Berlin has a musical voice all his own.

Featured on *Champion* are guitarist Scott Henson, T. Lavitz (formerly of the Dixie Dregs) on keyboards, drummer Neil Peart of Rush, guitarist Neil Schon and drummer Steve Smith of Journey and Ronnie Montrose who produced the LP.

Champion is an impressive second effort from a brilliant artist. And as always, no matter how fast he plays there is always sincerity in his music. But what's even more amazing is that no matter how fast he plays he still doesn't make any mistakes. ■

—Lou Furino