

Elton John's 'Don't Shoot Me' rocks on target

If you will remember, the last time the Daily Nebraskan ran mini-record review, Bart Becker had just finished saying about the Move: "The only real reason I can imagine for this group being popular or successful is that they're better than a group called A Euphonious Wail."

This, then, is why.

A Euphonious Wail. A Euphonious Wail. MCA (KS-3668)

I can't find the PR notes I had, but if memory serves me right this is just another band from L.A. I think this music is intended to be quite moving—in fact it nearly made me move to another room.

There doesn't seem to be an original thought included on either side of the record. Probably what A Euphonious Wail needs is a good brisk walk in the chilly morning air to get them out of the stifling bag they're into.

The only reason I can imagine that this group will be popular or successful is because a lot of no-talent people are making it big in records these days.

Bart Becker

Don't Shoot me, I'm Only the Piano Player. Elton John. MCA (MCA-2100). At first listen, *Don't Shoot Me, I'm Only the Piano Player* seems to be a fairly undistinguished effort. But closer inspection leads one to a quite different conclusion.

On a somewhat lighter, hokier note than some of John's albums, the album is Elton John nonetheless. In fact, the album seems to be a combination of the best of his former efforts. There is the raunchy charm of *Honky Chateau*, the mystery of *Madman Across the Water*, even the simplicity of *Tumbleweed Connection*.

Beyond this, though, there is a new bend in John's style. Just this side of Sha Na Na, he adds another dimension to the '50s nostalgia-camp explosion, laced with humor.

This is obvious and done well on "Crocodile Rock" the current Top 40 single. It almost works on "Midnight Creeper" and "I'm Going to be a Teenage Idol" but both die of an overdose of hoke. Apparently, John should stick to less-camp endeavors.

And when he does, he's unparalleled. "Have Mercy on the Criminal" and "Blues for Baby and Me" are both sensitive and beautifully preformed vignettes. Non-camp rock n' rollin' "Elderberry Wine" also has a believable, jaunty tone.

The best song on the album is "Texas Love Song," in which John adopts the persona of a red-necked, hardhatted Texan berating longhairs and fairies and threatening them with "Goddamit, you're all gonna die." It's John at his satiric, biting best.

All in all, *Don't Shoot Me, I'm Only the Piano Player* is too good to miss. Forgive its transgressions.

Jim Gray

Lark. Linda Lewis. Warner Brothers/Reprise (MS2120). Linda Lewis is a sweet young thing who unfortunately has an extremely irritating voice. Which, as a result, makes reviewing her extremely difficult.

Her songs are pleasant enough and sung with enthusiasm, but her high-pitched and pinched voice grates unnaturally on the ears, making it impossible to enjoy her. For someone who can like this type of singing, fine, but I can't.

Larry Kubert

Life in a Tin Can. The BeeGees. RSO (SO 870). Probably the best review of the new Bee Gee album can be found on the album's front cover.

It's somehow appropriate that a tinny-sounding totally canned production should come out under the name *Life in a Tin Can*. The only part of the title that can be disputed is the "life" part. It's somehow doubtful that any of the dismal cuts therein could be attributed to life in any way.

While never an exceedingly innovative group, the Bee Gees have come up with a formula sound which

they continue foisting upon their audience time after time, proving their prowess as the Rod McKuens of the wax world.

If anyone could live through the sickening schmaltz of the first cut on side one (the Gibb brothers drone "I sa-a-a-aw-r a new morning"), he'd find seven other nearly-identical cuts. And then die of boredom.

But on the way, he would have caught such sterling phraseology (all songs on the album may be blamed on the Gibbs themselves) as: "If you're living in Chicago, it's your home."

"I've got a feeling God's still around," the album coos, "and if I'm right, there must be more than this to see."

Somehow, it's doubtful.

JG



Elton John

Newport in New York '72. The Jimmy Smith Jam, Volume 5. Cobblestone (CST9027). This is album five of an eight-record set committing to wax a history of the 1972 Newport Jazz Festival, which for the first time in history was moved last year from Newport, R.I., to the Big Apple, New York City. The response was fantastic, some of the biggest crowds that the festival has ever had.

Joining Jimmy Smith, who is the foremost jazz organist anywhere, in the jam are some truly amazing jazz giants: Joe Newman on trumpet, Clark Terry on fluegelhorn, Illinois Jacquet and Zoot Sims on tenor sax, Kenny Burrell and B.B. King on guitar and Roy Haynes on drums.

Opening (in fact the entire first side is dedicated to it) is a monster of a piece called "Blue 'N' Boogie." Back in the be-bop era of jazz, this was a classic piece and Smith and company do it justice. Amid charging riffs and powerful solos Smith, Jacquet and Sims stand out.

The second side is a medley of songs with an individual artist featured on each song. Smith and Haynes are tied down to playing backup, but do they give support.

On this album, Smith is much less in evidence than on previous albums. He doesn't stretch out on any long involved solos that are his trademark, rather he is confined to providing a strong, solid backbone for the group. And when he occasionally does slip out into the spotlight, it's pure delight.

L.K.

Andy Kim. Andy Kim. Uni (UNI73137). It looks like the Famous Artists School of Impersonation has been busy again. It has quite obviously, turned out another graduate, this time a Neil Diamond major by the name of Andy Kim. Kim, you will remember, is a top pop artist who a few years ago back churned out wondrous hits like "Baby, I Love You." If bubblegum as heck, they were at least Andy Kim and nobody else.

But now, Kim has changed his image—for the worse. He unmercifully mimics the droning, emotional Diamond style, but comes off lookin' more like a rhinestone.

Even the songs, all of which the "new" Kim had a hand in writing, have a definite Diamondesque feel—softly reminiscing about childhood and love lost. There's not an original cut on the whole album. And Kim just doesn't have the talent to cut into the Diamond style. So *Andy Kim* is a mess. (Somehow symbolically, Kim's new album appears on Uni, the label Diamond just abandoned for more-stable MCA.)

J.G.

Sheldon expands American art

A gift of \$150,000 from the Woods Charitable Fund has allowed Sheldon Art Gallery to purchase 33 new acquisitions for the Nelle Cochrane Woods permanent collection, according to Sheldon director Norman Geske.

The new works were bought to expand the American art represented in the collection and to supplement the work of artists already included.

Some of the works are by regional or self-taught artists, areas not strongly represented in the permanent collection but vital to an overall view of American art since 1900, Geske said.

"Regional artists confined their work to a particular part of the country, concentrating on its history and area," Geske said. "It is generally out of fashion now, but America has had regional artists that were quite well known, such as Grant Wood and Thomas Benton."

"In a sense the (self-taught) work is amateur but the artists we have represented have a personal level of achievement through their imagination and technique that takes their work above the multitude of pieces at a county fair," Geske said.

"The Alexander McKenzie Going Up the Mississippi" is one of these works. The artist, Samuel Colwell Baker, lived in Shenandoah, Iowa and had no training. According to Geske, Baker worked from photographs, adding his own sense of color and drama to the painting.

"I met him and his wife, in Shenandoah, when they must have been 80 years old or so. After that we gave a small show of his work at the gallery which was returned to his family after his death. He is unknown outside of Iowa and Nebraska, but his work is representative of self-taught artists, Geske said.

"Portrait of Jean Joseph Marie Carries" by John Singer Sargent is a work which supplements an artist already in the Sheldon collection. The portrait joins a sketch of a mural in the gallery.

The Sargent work, which Geske termed the single most important work of the acquisition, and the other gift acquisitions will be presented at 3 p.m. in the Gallery. They will be on display through April 15.

Life Goes On. Paul Williams. A&M Records (SP4367). Paul Williams reminds one of an over-sized, over-aged elf, whose only duty on this earth is to act silly, consume large amounts of alcohol, and entertain folks with his songs.

Thus Williams rates as one of my most favorite people for two reasons: the songs which he writes and performs are delicate and bewitching and he's insanely crazy.

Williams' songs deal with emotions; sadness, loneliness and lost loves. Not overly sentimental songs, but ones in which a person must listen to the lyrics to fully appreciate them.

The title song, "Life Goes On," is mildly interesting, as is Williams' "Out In The Country" and oldie "That Lucky Old Sun," but it's with songs like "Little Girl," "Rose" and "Where Do I Go From Here" on side one; and "Park Avenue," "I Won't Last A Day Without You" and "Traveling Boy" on side two that make the album enjoyable. "Little Girl" is one of the best, conjuring up images of San Francisco and idealistic little girls.

Try Paul Williams sometime, for an elf, he's just a lot of fun.

L.K.