

New ABC...

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Instead of a new, fresh sound, ABC has come up with a hodgepodge of styles and lyrics in a very ambiguous album. Little remains of the distinctive style of *The Lexicon Of Love*; nothing is left of the group's originality. It seems as though ABC has thrown this mixture together in the hope that one of the ingredients will catch on. It should have stayed with the original recipe.

Beauty Stab, like all of ABC's recordings to date, contains a wealth of instrumental sounds, including trombones, piano, oboe and lots of percussion. The title song, "Beauty Stab," is a purely instrumental, moderately fast piece and is one of the better efforts on the album.

Another good selection is "By Default By Design," a slow ballad of heartbreak that recalls, faintly, ABC's former self. "United Kingdom," sung with only a piano accompaniment, has an excellent melody but terrible lyrics.

ABC has introduced a few vaguely political songs into its repertoire, none of which give any hint of the group's political philosophy. "Hey Citizen!" — the first song on side two, which mentions Americans, Russians and Indians, states "there's no glamour in the slammer" and expresses anger at the rich, who

are seen "slumming their way out the Jacuzzi."

In contrast with his former high-class image, Fry now mentions he's "lived in a slum . . . it did not amuse me."

"King Money," "Bite the Hand" and "United Kingdom" are of the same ilk. "The Power of Persuasion," the ABC song heard most frequently on FM radio these days, sounds like a typical corporate-rock-with-heavy metal-thrown-in product. Shame on you, Martin.

And, far from the romantic, but perpetually heartbroken group they were in the days of *The Lexicon Of Love*, ABC now affirms that "Love's just a gimmick, a mime or a mimic, to make sex seem respectable" ("Unzip," side two). Fry, who appears to be trying on a working-class style, seems to be experimenting with his voice as well. In "King Money" his voice sounds harsh and nasal, without his former soft tones.

In "That Was Then, But This Is Now" released as a single shortly before "Beauty Stab" appeared, Fry says "Why make the past your sacred cow? I guess you've changed, you've changed and how . . ."

Change is not always for the best. Come back to the supperclub, Martin Fry, Martin Fry!

Brooks' latest film...

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This film features no gimmicks such as black-and-white film or no soundtrack as in other Brooks' film. Nor does he go for the "cheap" laugh.

The only problem I have with this film is one which I have with other films set in foreign countries. The main cast, whether they be German or Polish, speak in English. That's fine. However, the bit players and extras speak in a foreign tongue. It's distracting. Why not give them subtitles? Hopefully, Brooks can decide upon one language for all of his characters and end this needless confusion for the moviegoer.

To Be or Not to Be is not the typical Brooks film. It brings a few laughs but more often an admiring smile for the courageous people it portrays. Fans of

the high-handed comedy in the traditional Brooks genre may not enjoy this somewhat sobering film, but for those wanting a bitter but mostly sweet comedy, *To Be or Not to Be* may be the answer instead of the question.

Correction

Because of an error, the reviewer's name was inadvertently left off the article called "Van Halen passable, but lacks emotion." It should have been credited to Randy Wymore.

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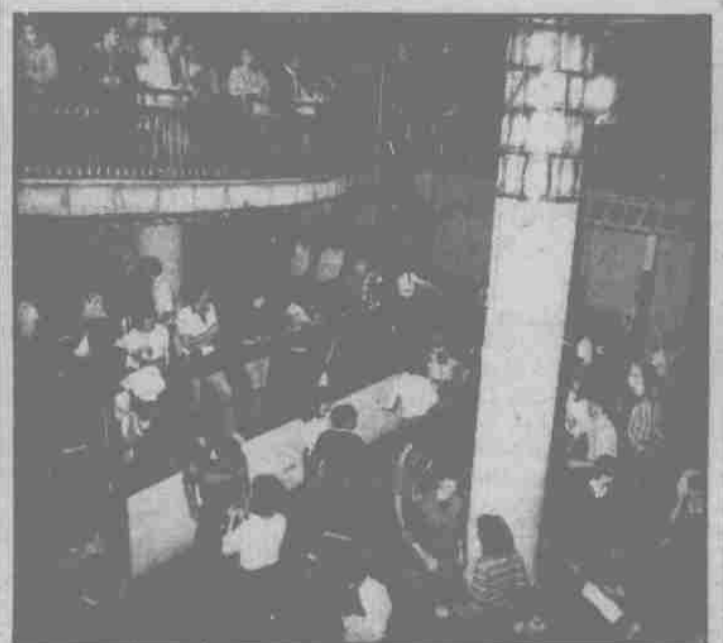
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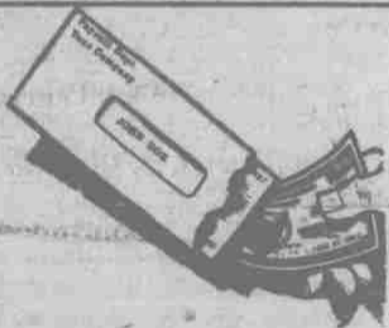
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