

Former Go Go makes politics cute

By Tom Mockler
Staff Reporter

The record shows I took the blows and did things my way. Jane Wiedlin is a true romantic.



Wiedlin

A year ago she left the Go Gos to pursue a solo career. Apparently, she was tired of having Belinda Carlisle sing all of her songs. Indeed, the band's format did seem rather rigid, with Wiedlin playing rhythm guitar and writing at least half the songs on the last album and Carlisle doing nothing but singing them.

Record Review

But the Go Gos never seemed to be completely in charge of their destiny. After suddenly becoming the hottest pop act of 1982 with "Our Lips Are Sealed," they slowly sank in popularity, partially because of a prolonged absence brought about by medical problems. Earlier this year, the remaining Go Gos split.

When I was in Los Angeles this summer I heard a live recording on KROQ-FM of various songs played at a pro-peace rally. It was a small-time, almost underground event, featuring Wiedlin alone with only her acoustic guitar accompanying her singing. She did a rendition of Bunny Wailer's "Cease Fire" and her "Goodbye Cruel World."

What struck me when I played back the tape I had made was that she came

across very much as the Joan Baez of the 1980s.

Such a comparison is even scarier when you open her solo album "Jane Wiedlin." When you pull out the record, a card pops out, one half addressed to Ronald Reagan and the other to Mikhail Gorbachev, asking them to stop all nuclear weapons testing as a first step toward a more productive Geneva summit.

Along the dotted line there is a little picture of scissors and a note saying "Jane Wiedlin requests that you send these postcards if you care about nuclear arms."

This is not to say Wiedlin's music is thoroughly political. Far from it. But the gem on the album, a full version of "Goodbye Cruel World" is very much so. Far beyond any vague social commentary Bruce Springsteen might make, it is a full-blown '60s-spirited idealistic anthem.

"No more people split by their color/No nations hating each other/No women trapped by their sex/No experiments that end in death."

The truly remarkable thing about this song is that it is not only listenable but it is practically danceable. Given the growing trend toward making social consciousness fun, Jane Wiedlin takes

it one step further: She makes it cute. This doesn't bother me. I'm waiting for the psychedelic dance-mix version. If it gets airplay, I say all the more power to the people.

The rest of the album is not quite as grand. It is a mixture of synth-pop, rock, pure pop and a dash of folk. While none of it is offensive, much of it is rather unremarkable musically. A lot of it is pure fluff. But can't the same charge be leveled at the Thompson Twins? The interesting element is its pure infectiousness. Perhaps this is due in part to the lyrical depth, which is not really apparent until after several listenings. At times it would seem Wiedlin has almost too much to say about love and life. This may detract from pop appeal in the short run, but it increases its durability.

The album's opener, "Blue Kiss," is a bouncy, light tune that takes advantage of Wiedlin's rather high voice. Her voice actually is a double-edged sword — it can be either very enticing or somewhat irritating, in a Cindi Lauper sort of way.

"Modern Romance" vaguely reminds me of the Motels' "Only the Lonely" in its adult-crossover appeal, floating lazily on the FM airwaves, complete with a solo. "I Will Wait For You" has the

effervescent flavor of A-Ha's "Take On Me." As a matter of fact, most of side two is aimed straight at the FM band.

The closest thing to "rocking out" on this album is probably "Where We Can Go," which features X's Billy Zoom on guitar.

But if you're looking for music with an edge you won't find it on this album. Even more than the Go Gos as a whole, Wiedlin's sensibility is pure pop. But then again, she had a hand in nearly all of their hits. Now that she has been unleashed on the world, there is no telling what may happen.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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ACROSS

- Stun
- Home made of adobe?
- Not fully open
- Signatures, à la Harpo
- Croce's Brown
- She gets what she wants
- Added
- Put on cloud nine
- Foulards
- ★
- fries
- Corrodes
- Football div.
- Italian seafood dish
- With 38 Down, description of the solutions to the starred clues
- Sac
- Final stanza
- Flout
- Jar
- Civetlike animal
- Snarl
- Some horses
- Fragrant oil
- Mad, or Lex., e.g.
- ★
- Caught
- Hodges and Blas
- Roe
- Lacedaemon
- ★
- Hawkeye's home
- N.Z. native
- Places

DOWN

- Takeout place
- Impulse conductor
- Joie de vivre
- Respect
- ★
- Lugosi and Bartók
- Buccal
- The i's have it
- Looker
- ★
- Fuse
- Guinness
- Madcap
- Yawn
- "Confound it!"
- Settled
- Big spender
- Distort
- Dwight's rival
- Card game
- Kind of code
- Vacation
- Flubbed
- Dresses a calf
- See 29 Across
- ★
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- Basketry fibers
- Frightening
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- Aperture
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- 56 Gats
- Tiny Greek letter?
- 58 Sgts. or cps.
- 59 We cotton to these devices
- 62 — Baba

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