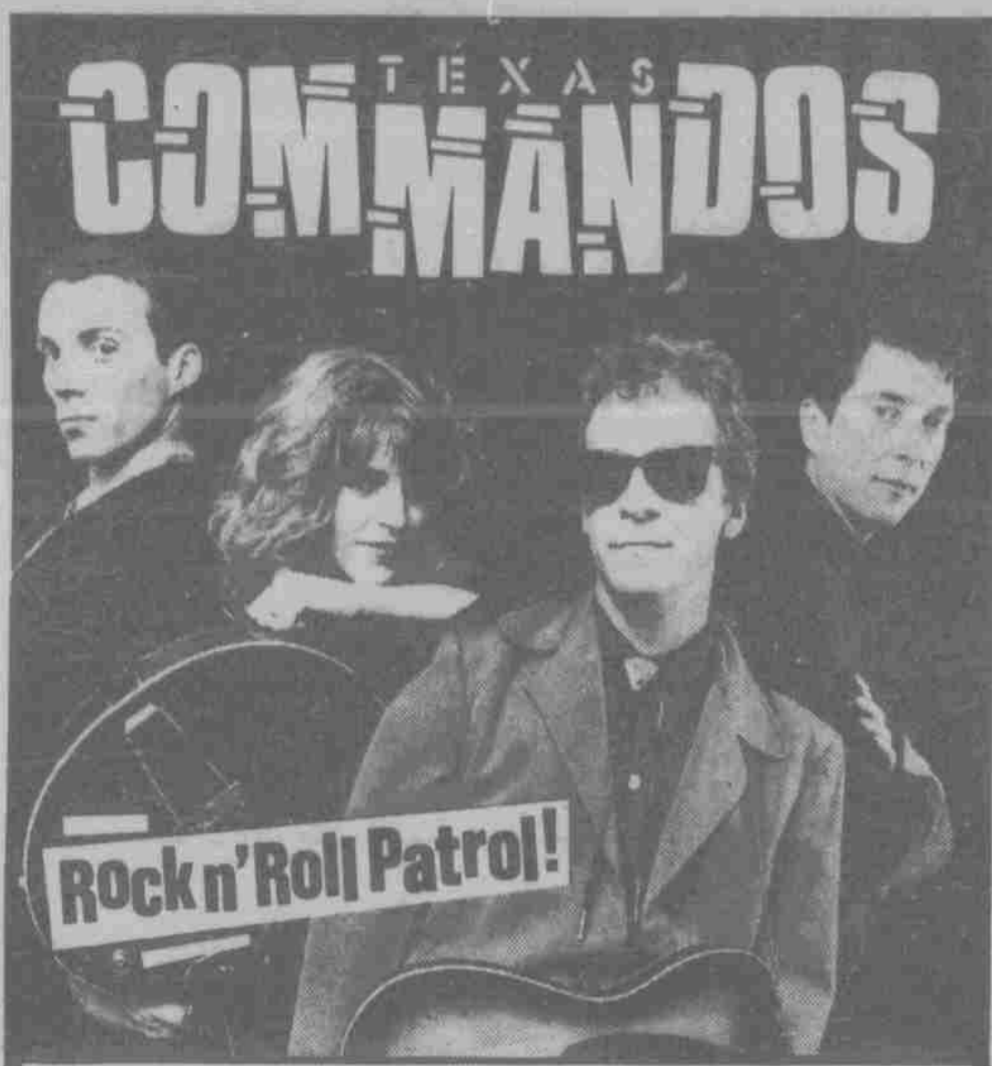


Review Board . . .



REVIEW BOARD from Page 7

Fishbone, "Fishbone In Your Face" (Columbia Records)

Prince said in his first big hit: "They say 2000 zero, zero, party over whoops out of time, so tonight I'm going to party like it's 1999."

The Los Angeles based dance-funk band Fishbone took this message to heart and came up with one of the wildest debut EPs ever, last year's "Fishbone." Fishbone's attitude is simple — a nihilistic approach to hedonism. The world is going to end; it's a party at ground zero, so let's dance.

They took Prince's message, but not much of his music. But message in music is secondary. No one's going to listen to it if you can't tap your toes.

Fishbone gets its music from everywhere — Rick James' punk-funk, ska revivalists The Specials and straight-forward funk blasts from George Clinton and Parliament. In other words, Fishbone's music comes from any source that can make an audience dance. Fishbone has played Lincoln four times, and each appearance had plenty of hot and sweaty people dancing. There's no doubt in my mind that Fishbone is the best live act in the universe. But with great live acts, the eternal question inevitably comes up. Can the intensity from the live performance be transferred to vinyl? The answer with the first EP was a definite yes, yes, yes. I had visions of the band hopping and skipping around the studio, sweating buckets.

"Fishbone in Your Face" isn't as wild as the first EP. I think the

producers said, "No guys, just sit down in these chairs and play your instruments." Well, it's hard to keep a good dance band down.

Although it's a little tamer than the EP, "Fishbone in Your Face" is still a great dance album. The ska that dominated Fishbone's previous works has been whittled down to three songs, of which "I Wish I had a Date" is the best. The brief "Post Cold War Politics," has galloping horns and a cool skanky beat. The rest of the LP is more punk and funk. It's for people who like to dance and dance fast. "Give it Up" is the best song on the album, recreating the "Party at Ground Zero" message with a rock instead of a ska beat.

Fishbone is a hard band to label. Just when you think it's a ska-funk band, a cut like "Simon says," "The Kingpin" pops up on the turntable, a song I could have sworn was a brat-rock Dead Milkmen tune with a fast, hardcore punk beat.

—Stew Magnuson

The Neville Brothers, "Treacherous: A History of The Neville Brothers" (Rhino Records)

The Neville Brothers define New Orleans music.

This album sums up a 30-year career that touches on every facet of that region's music from zydeco to gospel, Basin Street jazz to lynch soul.

Rhino Records has saved much of the world's classic rock, R&B and pop from an undeserved obscurity caused by faddishness and America's ever-changing tastes, and this two-record set is monumental. From the early solo efforts, mostly in the straight soul mode, recorded by Art and Aaron Neville in the mid-1950s to that big tight-grooved sound of the brothers' most recent material incorporating reggae, whiplash funk and the epic-sounding gospel medley of "Amazing Grace," "Down by the Riverside" and "Amen," which closes the album.

Probably the most popular and well-recognized song of the LP is Aaron Neville's soul ballad "Tell It Like It is," later turned into corn syrup by Heart.

That one family could produce so much excellent music in so many different styles is remarkable; that they could have actually concocted many of these styles is miraculous.

Their hybridization of Caribbean

music, soul, gospel, tough horn charts and Louisiana rural music is almost exclusively the Nevilles' invention. Almost every track on "Treacherous" is a drastic change from the last one, offering more variety than 20 other albums in any genre.

Listening to "Treacherous" is not an academic exercise reserved for those interested in the history of American music. This album is not an attempt at archiving, but a raucous party album that's also suitable for hip historians.

—Charles Lieurance

Review record courtesy of Pickles Record and Tapes.

Flaming Lips, "Hear It Is" (Fever Records)

The Lips are the most frighteningly obsessed band around these days, penning wiggled-out ditties on such unsavory subjects as Charles Manson, Jesus on heroin and necrophilia. Their attack is one part Led Zeppelin, one part Blue Cheer, one part Velvet Underground and (let's see, how many parts is that now . . .) a smattering of garage psychedelia.

The Lips take their fuzz box for a walk down the rubber sidewalks of the twilight zone where VU's "European Son" and "Venus in Furs" are used as shopping-mall music.

The wall of dread sound quality makes the who package a feast for those whose idea of the perfect evening consists of picnicking along the Love Canal with Rosemary's Baby. Acoustic ballads like "She is Death" degenerate into dental-drill shrieks which are flanged to death and then run through a meat grinder.

"Charley Manson's Blues" sympathizes with the prince of paranoia while a possessed horde of Wonka Oompah Loompahs chants the Oompah Loompah mantra in the background. "Jesus Shooting Heroin" is similarly ominous, as the Lips remake the New Testament in a modern ghetto where even divinity won't save you from need.

While most bands in the gothic-horror rock vein seem to be relating hell secondhand as if they'd just seen a movie about it, the Lips relate it as if it were in their living room. Accept no substitutes.

—Charles Lieurance

Review record courtesy of Pickles Records and Tapes.

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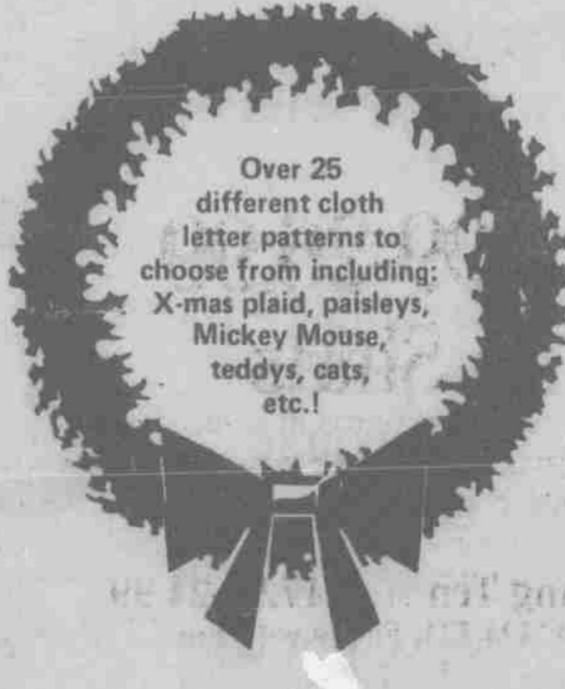
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