

REVIEW BOARD from Page 16

ple of how far their attitude has slipped, but for a band that used to have some of the most fascinatingly and obscure cover photos, I find their cute little pseudo-rebel posing on "Midnight's" cover absolutely revolting. Sorry, guys, See ya at the Grammy's.

—Geoff McMurtry

Randy Erwin, "Til the Cows Come Home" (Four Dots)

Except for bluegrass, which is really a different critter, my favorite form of country music has always been cowboy songs. I'm not talking about authentic, archaic folk music, and I sure don't mean Waylon and Willie's cynical paeans. I mean those cheesy, mass-produced, dusty sweet hymns to American innocence from the singin' cowboy flicks of the '30s and '40s.

So meet Randy Erwin, America's newest singin' cowboy. Erwin had a small part in the movie "True Stories," I don't know what as.

Erwin's personal forte is the ancient art of the yodeling, and he hikes up his shorts and yodels his little heart out on all six tracks of his debut EP.

"T is for Texas" is a neat soggy-sad blues number, and Erwin's cover of the classic "Cattle Call" is top-notch. But me, I liked the dumber stuff like "Swiss Mountaineer" ("Oh, sweetheart, don't marry that Swiss Mountaineer! My yodel's longer and stronger and clear!") and the sweetly risqué "She's All Wet Now."

— Chris McCubbin

Concrete Blonde, self-titled (IRS)

A couple of months ago "Still In Hollywood" nuked MTV with lightning-fast bell-tone guitars under Johnette Napolitano's tough, vibrant vocals telling the curiously hopeful story of someone trapped in urban hell wondering why he doesn't feel bad about it.

Combined with maybe the most exciting black-and-white montage video ever, the song was like a backhand slug from the aesthetic hand of God. At least five years retro in every identifiable feature, "Still In Hollywood" was the freshest thing to hit the video airwaves all year.

The rest of the album isn't that good. Surprise.

The potential is there. Concrete Blonde is the portrait of an excellent band without a clue to where it wants to go.

The album, surprisingly, is mostly ballads. Besides "Still In Hollywood," the only decent rocker is "Your Haunted Head." The best ballad is the band's other single/video, "True" (not a cover of the Spandau Ballet tune). Most of the other stuff is pretty good, but at its worst the band sounds like the Motels, and that's scary.

One of these days these darn kids are gonna have to decide what they want to do with their lives. I hope they decide to do more relevant rave-ups like "Still In Hollywood" plus a few honest, understated ballads like "True." Wait for the next album; by then we'll know for sure.

— Chris McCubbin

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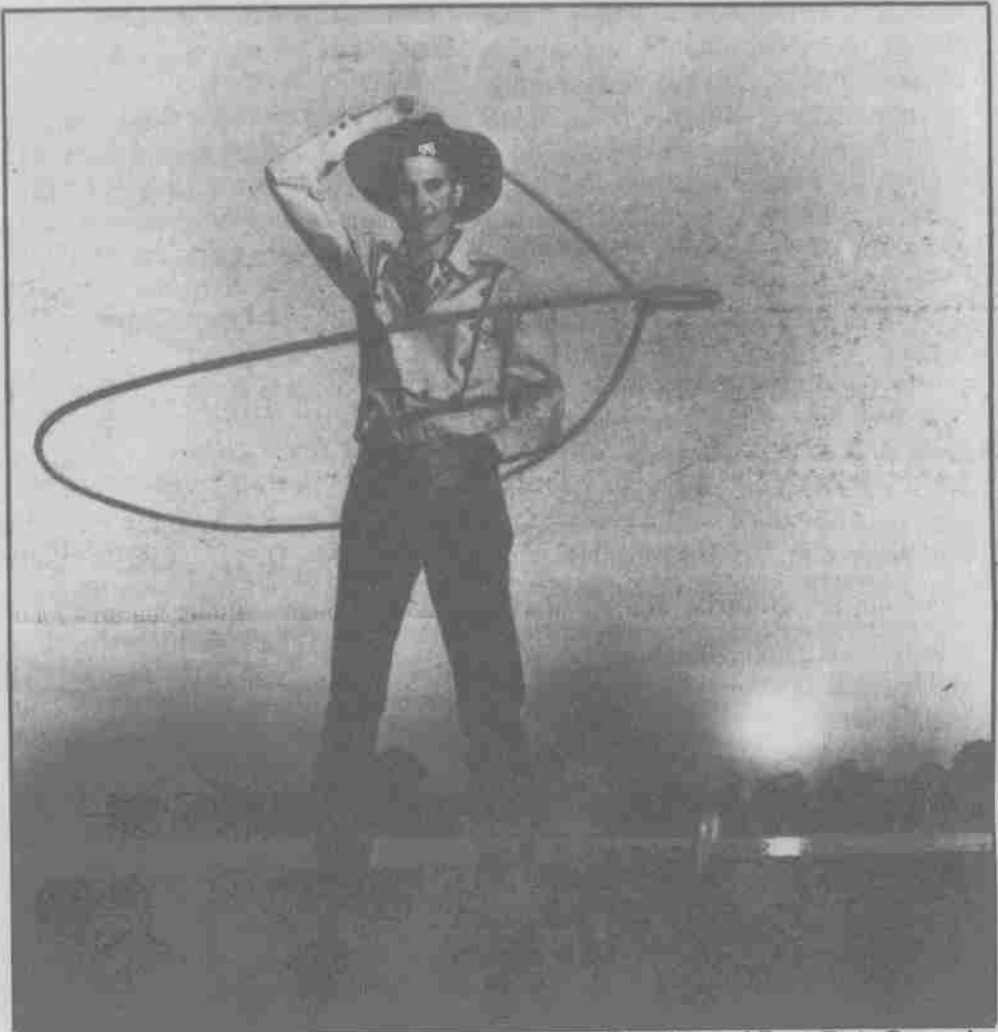
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