Heavy Metal — or Lukewarm Fuzz?

by Neal Vitale

Stormbringer — Deep Purple ( Warner Bros. BK-5237)
Hotter Than Hell — Kiss (Casablanca NBLP-7006)
Paper Money — Montrose ( Warner Bros. BS-5253)
Rampant — Nazareth (A&M SP-3641)
Quo — Status Quo (A&M SP-5649)

While it's a moot point as to whether or not heavy metal is the future business/record-buying public/world wants at this juncture, there are still bands that do it better than others. Of the five under consideration, Nazareth takes the cake.

Deep Purple is the saddest case of the lot — as on their previous album Burn, the loss of Ian Gillan has caused a most fascinating blues stance. newcomers David Coverdale and Glenn Hughes, he's taken Deep Purple into an increasingly regrettative blues stance. The result is an incredibly long drop from the group's peak some four albums earlier on Machine Head. Quo is not much better. Basically a heavy boogie band, which hit a bit with "Pictures Of Matchstick Men" many records, styles, and years ago, Status Quo has learned at least once, possibly twice, new chords for this album. Unfortunately, at best that raises their total to five. Groups like Status Quo make old-times such as the Seeds sound innovatory.

Live, Kiss relies on its outrageous make-up and stage presentation to satisfy a crowd; on record, there are no visuals. Hotter Than Hell is therefore more for the lukewarm heavy metal, certainly no more imaginative metallor, than other bands with similarly imaginative and religiously listen to the older musical ideas in an effort to reach a wider, younger audience. The overall downfall of rock. However, last Sunday night in Montreux, Switzerland to record at the Rolling Stones Mobile Unit, in a move quite akin to how Deep Purple's breakout album, Machine Head, was recorded, for Nazareth, Rampant (if the group ever tours these States) could have a similar effect.

Starting with the0 carnal "Silver Dollar Forger," this band of Scotsmen and a Canadian shrew that, not only can they play heavy metal with the best, but that they can do a straight-ahead rock 'n' roll song "(Glad When You're Gone), English bluesrock ("Loved And Lost"); pseudo-psychedelia ("Light My Way"), and even a slow love song ("Shine")plus a nominal (and unspectacular) cover of the Yardbirds' "Shapes Of Things." Nazareth moves easily among a variety of styles and arrangements, not only direct rock and roll songs, but also quite direct, but not overblown, and tastefully flashy and different instruments, some with a layer of obscurity.

First, Mr. Blackbird, Jimi Hendrix is dead and will play catatonic rock, Paper Money hardly merits investment.

Nazareth is the one group of the lot which does managed to make it all worthwhile; Rampant, fifth album, breaks out of the semi-cut into which the band had fallen; that is, of being a cover group. To date, Nazareth's single best song still remains, "Night Rider" from their previous record, "Loud & Proud." Produced by Roger Glover (ex-bassist for Deep Purple), has brought the band to Montreux, Switzerland to record at the Rolling Stones Mobile Unit, in a move quite akin to how Deep Purple's breakout album, Machine Head, was recorded. For Nazareth, Rampant (if the group ever tours these States) could have a similar effect.

After a brief intermission during which they rolled out Herb's electronic chariot, Hancock and the band began in their current flashy style with brilliant renditions of "Speak Like A Child," "Sly," and the beautiful "Butterfly." The band was a top form and seemed much more creative than they were in the recorded format, yet the music never lost coherence for a second. Hancock played mostly Rhodes piano and Chromatix, and didn't solo on the synthesizer until the final piece, "Chameleon.

Unfortunately, the ending of this song was the low point of the concert. Hancock used a different synthesizer for his solo and wrenched it up to the front of the stage as he played. After tilting the keyboard upward to the audience could see his hands, he left the synthesizer hanging a barely audible white noise as he crouched away from the stage to play his hands in the air. Wearing his hands like magic wands, the synthesizer began to squall at his command. (Actually, this magic show was created by a walk-on pedal hidden behind the monitor speaker.) In a similar fashion, Hancock commanded a second synth into the band to squall as the torrent of noise grew. In his act of sourcery, he waved one hand and triggered two blinding flashes of light, an explosion, and a smoke bomb as the stage went dark. The whole effect, which made up a large part of the audience, loved it. With a thunderous encore (and a subdued Blackbird on guitar), Herb Hancock completed his well-rounded show.

Hancock's electronic fireworks — crass or class?

by Bob Reina

Many of today's jazz greats are expanding (some call it prostituting) their musical ideas in an effort to reach a wider, younger audience. The overall result has been a Polarization of jazz afficionados into two groups: those that abhor the new "crass commercialism" and religiously listen to the older music. The appreciative group of afficionados into two groups: those that abhor the new "crass commercialism" and religiously listen to the older music.

Status Quo — Montrose ( Warner Bros. BS-5253)
Quo — Status Quo (A&M SP-5649)

The concert opened with a short set by Status Quo. The Hancock electric band to emerge, by Bob Reina

One of today's jazz greats is Herbie Hancock, bass; Bill Summers, percussion, and a Canadian shrew that, not only can they play heavy metal with the best, but that they can do a straight-ahead rock 'n' roll song "(Glad When You're Gone), English bluesrock ("Loved And Lost"); pseudo-psychedelia ("Light My Way"), and even a slow love song ("Shine")plus a nominal (and unspectacular) cover of the Yardbirds' "Shapes Of Things." Nazareth moves easily among a variety of styles and arrangements, not only direct rock and roll songs, but also quite direct, but not overblown, and tastefully flashy and different instruments, some with a layer of obscurity.

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