Bad Manners
The English Beat
The Specials
The Selecter
The Selecter, bummed out as usual.

Mo-dettes: The Story So Far on Deca (Dennett Records Limited)

One of my favorite albums so far this year is a ska album? An all-woman band? Hey, I don't believe it either. But it's true. This new Mo-dettes album is just fantastic.

The Mo-dettes appeared at the Channel last year and got the same reaction from me. An all-woman band had me grinning and jumping around and trying to dance to ska? Wow.

There's clearly something special about the Mo-dettes. Their approach to songwriting within the genre of ska is broader than most I've heard. They don't get into ruts where all the material sounds the same, and they seem to have more "new-wave" influence in their sound than I'm used to hearing in ska.

Their sound pops up in all the songs on this album. The drums, precise and imaginative, are most important in the Mo-dettes' sound. A nasal-sounding bass plays beautiful, complex, bouncy melodies. Vocals from Ramona have her gorgeous French accent. The thin, metallic guitar stays in the background, playing jerky chords and following the vocal line.

The sound quality of the record caught my ear. Decca is known for high quality recording, and here they have made the highest fidelity rock recording I have ever heard. This is a serious session with this record, and you can demonstrate how good a recording can be when people try. The drums especially stand out from the sizzle of the high hats to the French accent. The selecter album with people playing different drums, especially because of the emphasis placed on the drums in the music, is a ska album with people playing different drums, especially because of the emphasis placed on the drums in the music, is a ska album with people playing different drums.

The songs all deal with people and personalities. They are rich with imagery, but they all seem to lack the something special that characterized the songs on Too Much Pressure their previous effort. The title song sounds as if it would have made a superb soundtrack for a James Bond movie. "Tell Me What's Wrong," a great catchy and side two isn't worth more than one listen. Maybe part of the problem is that the rhythm section is not as good as it was on Too Much Pressure. The Mo-dettes' sound has changed a lot between the two albums. The line-up has changed, and the sound is different. But there's still something there that I can't quite put my finger on.

Anyway, pick up a copy of Dance Crave if you like ska. If you want a terrific party album with fifteen solid cuts and no filler, or if you just want to try something different. As far as I'm concerned, this is the best album of the year. The sound of the Mo-dettes is just fantastic. The drums, precise and imaginative, are most important in the Mo-dettes' sound. A nasal-sounding bass plays beautiful, complex, bouncy melodies. Vocals from Ramona have her gorgeous French accent. The thin, metallic guitar stays in the background, playing jerky chords and following the vocal line.

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