The Name of This Band is Talking Heads. Another live album, and another excellent set, this record serves as a chronicle of the five-year history of America's best new wave band. The Talking Heads have always been pioneers, from their early Bowery days of singing about work, buildings, and food to their current cross-cultural polyrhythmic explorations — a band that created the sound so many others duplicate badly. Listen to side one of the set and feel the energy leaping off the vinyl, the Heads were a lean tight band that performed with adrenaline-fueled urgency, and this side presents definitive renditions of the band's early material. Side two presents the classic keyboard-oriented sound that most people associate with the Talking Heads, while sides three and four are more recent performances recorded with the band's expanded ten-piece lineup. Although these concerts seem sluggish at first (especially when compared to side one), a laid back groove Brooke becomes evident after a few bars. The addition of singers Noah Hendrez and Dollette Mac-Donald transform a "Life During Wartime" into a moshpit dance party, similarly. "Take Me to the River" turns into a gospel rave-up. My pick for the best live album of the year, and also one of the finest live albums ever, The Name of This Band is essential to any collection. Did I say "America's best" at the beginning of this review? Listen for yourself.

On Land (Ambient 4). Brian Eno on Elektra Records. Although this disc is titled On Land, I prefer to think of it as "On Water." The latest in Eno's series of ambient (background) music experiments transports the listener to various locales and paints an aural landscape. Pieces such as "Lizard Point," "Lantern Marsh," and "Dunwich Beach, Autumn, 1960" could easily be simple tape recordings made on location, but careful listening reveals a dense textured mix of synthesized and natural sounds. The ideal background record, On Land should replace the Environments records (remember "Correllis at Dawn") in any collection. If Eno's goal is to artificially create the sounds of a real landscape, this record brings him one step closer.

True Democracy. Steel Pulse on Elektra Records. Steel Pulse is the first reggae band to sign with Elektra Records, so it is no coincidence that a sizable side of Reggae Sampler '81 is devoted to this group. Steel Pulse, a Jamaican festival tribute to Bob Marley, marked Steel Pulse's first appearance overseas, and the result of that performance on the record (Rita Marley, Third World, Black Uhuru, Dennis Brown and others particularly incomparable, sounding no better than taken appearances for a greatest hits compilation. With the exception of the Steel Pulse set, Reggae Sampler '81 is an unconvincing souvenir.

The Hunter. Blondie on the Chrysalis, Beyond. Yes! I know, the hits just keep coming, but does anyone remember when Debbie Harry used to scream when she sang? I do, and listening to The Hunter makes me long for the days when Blondie lived in the Bowery instead of Soho. The disc is a perfect example of slick pop-disco, but it's just too smooth and seamless to be sincere. Will Blondie ever return to their original values? I suspect only if we took away all their money. While we're at it, we should get rid of the syrup in Debbie's voice.

On a recent late-night radio program, I heard the cover photo of the band's early material. Side two presents the classic keyboard-oriented sound that most people associate with The Talking Heads, while sides three and four are more recent performances recorded with the band's expanded ten-piece lineup. Although these concerts seem sluggish at first (especially when compared to side one), a laid back groove Brooke becomes evident after a few bars. The addition of singers Noah Hendrez and Dollette Mac-Donald transform a "Life During Wartime" into a moshpit dance party, similarly. "Take Me to the River" turns into a gospel rave-up. My pick for the best live album of the year, and also one of the finest live albums ever, The Name of This Band is essential to any collection. Did I say "America's best" at the beginning of this review? Listen for yourself.

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