**Transformed Young**

If you go into a record store and look for the new Neil Young album, you will probably find a sticker on the shrink wrap which denotes a typographical error: the album cover and inner sleeve list a song called "If You Got Love" which, in fact, does not appear on the album. One may suppose that another stupid computer screw up, and this fords the cornets of the album.

Trax, which most likely stands for "transition," has brought Neil Young into the electronic eighties. The album cover and lyrics are overflowing with computer references: a heart, which normally represents love or other gushy emotions, is drawn automatically on the back cover, and various musical notes are electronically processed. Perhaps he is satirizing the overuse of the new techniques, but in any case, the electronic elements add themselves to the album's assets, not substandard Young, and marks a crucial change in his methodology. Somehow his trademark style still shines through, and his brilliant guitar work remains audible over all the beeps, whistles, and hums. The disc's three "normal" tunes are classic Young: "A Little Thing Called Love" will probably be remembered long after Young's "trans" music fades away. "Like An Inca" is also of interest, both musically and lyrically. The simple, traditional Young style and beautiful natural voices close the album in a satisfying manner: it is a relief to hear normal voices again.

Neil Young fans will almost certainly be disappointed by his transformation. New music fans will also be disappointed; Young is not a pioneer of the genre. Although every artist should grow and change in order to remain fresh and vital, changes toward current trends seem more commercial than artistic. One can only hope that Neil Young will return to his own path, the one that made him a legend.

John Stein

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**Writhing by the stereo**

When I put Dire Straits' new *Twisting by the Pool* EP on my turntable, I had absolutely no idea what to expect. The EP's name is interesting enough — two figures poised, ready to dance — so I figured the tracks would be energetic songs even a zombie could dance to. I mean, after all, this was supposed to be a dance EP. Well, the album certainly lives up to its name. You could dance until your feet split off, in fact, I had trouble sitting still enough to write this review. The album has only four songs, but the tunes seemed pleasing.

"Twisting By The Pool" could easily be inserted on any random Beach Boys' Boys' album and not be distinguishable stylistically. If you put aside the fact the lyrics are pretty stupid, the tune remains interesting. "The Pool, twisting by the pool, twisting by the pool, etc.", and the beat was designed for dancing, the childish repetition will still get on your nerves.

The rest of the album, unfortunately, is not much better. "Badges, Posters, Stickers and T-Shirts," with its jazzy beat and great instruments, almost makes up for the other three songs, but the track is marred at the end by a bad Ella Fitzgerald imitation by lead singer Mark Knopfler.

The record is catchy and fast, but I'm afraid repetitions slow down even the fastest tracks. "Two Young Lovers" and "If I Had You" (the cuts which constitute the second side), despite their fast pace, somehow manage to remain boring. They start off well, but too much of a good thing will ruin a record every time.

"Twisting by the Pool" is recognizable Mark Knopfler, and it is much faster than traditional Dire Straits, but the repetition and ridiculous lyrics will put you asleep on your feet. Yawn, yawn, yawn.

**Guitars and women, money and cigarettes**


In an age when you almost have to be an electrical engineer to cut an album — when you can become lost in a sea of synthesizers, voice processors, electronic drums, and random noise generators — it's refreshing to hear a solid rock and roll album laced with excellent guitar playing by one of the instrument's legendary practitioners, Eric Clapton.

Clapton's new album, *Money and Cigarettes,* offers both the simplicity of basic rock and roll tunes and standard country ballads, tied together with a blues base. The result is vintage Clapton.

*Money and Cigarettes* seems to suggest Clapton has changed a little from his earlier days with The Yardbirds, Cream, and Derek and the Dominos. The album is the first major work Clapton has produced since he suffered a stroke a few years ago, and his heightened awareness of life is evident throughout.

"Slow Down Linda" and "The Shape You're In" are two songs in which Clapton offers some advice to friends whose life styles are as fast-paced as his once was. "Man Overboard" and "Man in Love" are basically interchangeable romantic ramblings that offer little to the album. "Crosscut Saw" (one of the four tracks not written by Clapton) also falls into this category, offering the ridiculous lyrics:

Well I'm a crosscut saw,
Ah baby draggin' across your leg.
Yes, I cut your wood so easy for you baby
That you can't help but say, "Hot Dog!"
"I've Got A Rock N' Roll Heart" is a boring throwaway, made tolerable only by Clapton's vocals, while "Crazy Country Hop" is a jazzy rock and roll number that ends the album on a fast note. "Everybody Oughta Make A Change" and "Ain't Gonna Make A Change Sometime" are more evidence Clapton has decided to slow down a bit. Clapton's understandably recent concern with death also surfaces in these two songs:

Twist everybody, twist everybody
Twist everybody, twist everybody

Sooner or later we've got to go down
To that honeycomb.

Although every track on the album is highlighted and made eminently listenable by Clapton's unique guitar work, *Money and Cigarettes* is not Clapton's best. It is, however, classic Clapton. Recycled rock and roll really sounds this good.

**Carl Bauer**