Record Review Ratings

Excellent ★★★★★ Very Good ★★★★ Good ★★★ Fair ★★ Poor ★

THE JACKSONS

Victory
Epic QE 38946
Torture, Wait, One More Chance, Be Not Always, State Of Shock, We Can Change The World, The Hurt, Body

Rating — ★ ★ ★

The Jacksons are back on Epic with an album guaranteed to sell big, "Victory," which features the talents of all six Jackson brothers. Each brother does a lead vocal on the album (Jermaine shares his with Michael on the opening cut). Of course, the tunes were composed and produced by the Jacksons. What we have is a modern Jacksons pop/rock album with some cuts more outstanding than others. One of the better melodies here is "Wait," which sounds like something by the group Toto (it was written by Toto's David Paich, along with Jackie). "State Of Shock," written by Michael, is fine imitation Rolling Stones, if you're into that sort of thing. It isn't the best rock tune currently out, but at least this cut makes the album worth buying for the 25 seconds they cut out of the 45 version. "Body," by Marlon Jackson, is more reminiscent of the Jacksons' previous releases. It's danceable and listenable, as it chugs along with a rhythm not unlike that of "Wanna Be Starting Something." Randy's "One More Chance" is not as memorable and Michael's "Be Not Always" is too dramatic and soggy for my tastes. This album is another chapter in the continuing musical history of a very popular family group. It's not the most exciting chapter—only a couple of tunes here seem likely to hit big as singles—but I'm glad to have the boys back.

SMOKEY ROBINSON

Essar
Tamla 6098TL
And I Don't Love You, Train Of Thought, I Can't Find, Why Are You Running From My Love, Gone Forever, Close Encounters Of The First Kind, Little Girl Little Girl, Girl I'm Standing There, Driving Thru Life In The Fast Lane

Rating — ★ ★ ★

Here it is, the new album by a singer, songwriter and producer who has contributed to the world some of the most memorable songs in pop music history — songs like "You Really Got A Hold On Me," "Ooh Baby Baby," "Tracks Of My Tears," "Tears Of A Clown," and "Tell Me Tomorrow." "Essar," his newest Tamla album, simply continues the musical legacy. The Smokey Robinson touch is evident throughout, as has been the case with past albums such as "Quiet Storm," "Love Breeze," "Where There's Smoke," and "Touch The Sky." If you're a Smokey Robinson fan, "Essar" is a good investment. Songs like the pumping "And I Don't Love You," the big, dramatic balladry of "I Can't Find" and the snappy tempo of "Why Are You Running From My Love" are among nine songs that look at love from every angle — pure Smokey that has improved with age. At a time when hip-hop music is all over the place, isn't it nice to know there are still people like Smokey to come home to?

LATOYA JACKSON

Heart Don't Lie
Private I BFZ 39361
Think Twice, Heart Don't Lie, Bet'cha Gonna Need My Lovin', Private Joy, Hot Potato, I Like Everything You're Doin', Frustration, Without You

Rating — ★ ★ ½

LaToya Jackson's "Heart Don't Lie" boasts quite a supporting cast: Musical Youth, Stanley Clarke, George Duke, Shalamar's Howard Hewett, the Police's Andy Summers, members of Kool And The Gang, and Tito and Marlon Jackson all lend their talents to the record. "Heart Don't Lie" is the first album on which LaToya Jackson has involved herself in every aspect of the recording process, from co-writing many of the songs to working closely with producer Amir Bayyan. LaToya's voice is improving on each new album, but I still think it'll take some time before her ballads will get to be top-quality. But it's quite all right for her to make Evelyn King-sounding records such as "Hot Potato." Dance tracks like this make the album worthwhile.

THE O'JAYS

Love And More
Philadelphia International FZ 39367
I've Got To Fall In Love, Extraordinary Girl, I'm The Kind Of Man (Every Mother Wants Her Daughter To Love), Everybody's Dance Krazy, I Really Need You Now, Summer Fling, Love You Direct, Let Me Show You (How Much I Really Love You), Give My Love To The Ladies

Rating — ★ ★ ½

The O'Jays have sold more than 18 million singles and albums worldwide since affiliating with CBS Records in 1972—quite an impressive statistic. When a classic vocal group is that successful, it is not surprising that they would pretty much stick to their tried-and-true formula. And so we have the latest O'Jays album, "Love And More," which is a new album in the sense that it was released in 1984. But their style and back-up arrangements can hardly be considered anything new. "Extraordinary Girl" is the first single from this latest album which Walter Williams says has "got funk, melody, romance and grooves." I'm inclined to agree with him. Matter of fact, I couldn't have said it better myself. And speaking of funk, check out "Love You Direct." With Dean Gant on keyboards, it is the funkiest O'Jays tune in quite some time.

DENISE LASALLE

Right Place, Right Time
Malaco 7417
Right Place Right Time, He's Not Available, Treat Your Man Like A Baby, Good Man Gone Bad, Boogie Man, Your Husband Is Cheating On Us, Why Does It Feel So Right, Keep Your Pants On, Bump And Grind, Love School

Rating — ★ ★ ★

Denise LaSalle has put together a solid collection of classic-sounding R&B that captures the spirit of her "Trapped By A Thing Called Love" days. The title cut, with additional lead vocals by Latimore, is a Denise LaSalle ballad done with gusto, and the bluesy "Your Husband Is Cheating On Us" shows off the tight playing of the back-up band. Denise produced the album and wrote four of the songs. You'll have fun with this one.

MILES DAVIS

Decoy
Columbia FC 38991
Decoy, Robot 415, Code M.D., Freaky Deaky, What It Is, That's Right, That's What Happened

Rating — ★ ★ ½

The new Miles Davis album, "Decoy," is not for everyone. But then, you knew that. The album features seven tunes written, produced and arranged by Miles Davis. At least, I think

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—Record Review

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they're tunes. Working with Miles this time are: Al Foster on drums, Darryl "The Munch" Jones on electric bass, Branford Marsalis on soprano sax, John Scofield on guitar, Minu Cinelu on percussion and Robert Irving III, who wrote the title track, on synthesizers and electric drum programming. On the title cut, the rhythm and Jones' bass line, which sounds suited for an Eddy Grant record, might distract your attention from Miles' horn, which seems to take a little time to "warm up." "Code M.D." is definitely going to turn you off if you're mainly a fan of mainstream jazz. Not only is the electric drum, which sounds as if it were borrowing from Herbie Hancock's "Vein Melter," no fun, but the synthesizer playing is not nearly as clever as on records by, say, Weather Report, although the keyboards here are reminiscent of Weather Report's "River People." On side two, there's an eleven minute stretch of music called "That's Right." It's a slow, relaxing piece where Miles can be clearly heard, without Jones sounding like the Brothers Johnson, and with Irving keeping a low profile. It's the most listenable tune on the album, one in which Miles shows he can still play his horn with class—and for that we are thankful.

KASHIF

Send Me Your Love
Arista AL8 8205
Baby Don't Break Your Baby's Heart, Ooh Love, Are You The Woman, Love Has No End, Call Me Tonight (Instrumental), Send Me Your Love, I've Been Missin' You, Edgartown Groove, That's How It Goes

Rating — ★ ★

Kashif is a hit songwriter and producer whose latest Arista album is titled "Send Me Your Love." Among the hit records that have been blessed with the Kashif touch are "I'm In Love" and "Love Come Down" by Evelyn King, "So Fine" by Howard Johnson, "Take My Love" by Melba Moore and Kashif's own "I Just Gotta Have You (Lover Turn Me On)" and "Stone Love." "I Just Gotta Have You (Lover Turn Me On)" was a number one R&B hit; Kashif could conceivably become the Smokey Robinson of Arista Records. If you've heard any of the above mentioned records then you're familiar with the Kashif sound. It's all over his latest album, exemplified by cuts such as "Baby Don't Break Your Baby's Heart" and "I've Been Missin' You," two uptempo numbers. There's also "Are You The Woman" and "Send Me Your Love" for the slow dance crowd. And, if you like scat vocals, try a taste of Al Jarreau on "Edgartown Groove." Your average good-time R&B/pop record.

—Stars and You

(Continued from Page 16)

to honestly evaluate whether you'll return to the job or not. Don't take it lightly, your future is at stake.

— —

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20)

Leo's high rocket pace may seem unsettling to TAURUS at times. Go with the flow. All will work out for the best. The plan setting down right now are solid—stick with them. setting down right now are solid—stick with them. You'll see result by the 18th. Hold a f amily reunion that weekend—reinforce your positive self image. Changes are coming both in relationships and careers, and you must be ready to handle them. Your loyalty and patience is being put to the test.

— —

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Communication skills will be keen early. Hold back on the 6th when the moon is in Sagittarius. Put everything in writing so you won't lose your ideas.

You may feel a change coming in your work. Discuss your feelings freely for feedback, but seek solitude around the 18th to sort them out and reach your own decision.

Your power High Day is the 20th. Don't fail to look ahead while caught up in your surge of productivity. Seek advice from others when needed.

CANCER (June 21-July 21)

If you didn't have the family reunion last month, do it the first week of August. Of course you'll need the week of the 16th to recuperate.

Bosses and co-workers will seem demanding, but it should temporarily alleviate money problems.

You'll be needed on the 17th by a friend. You'll be absolutely magnetic on the 23rd, but don't hoard so much. If you tell people you want to be done they'll understand.

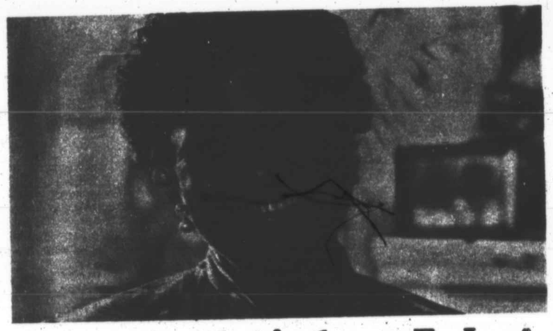
Sociability reaches peak again the last week of August.

— Ramadan

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The Eid is the festival of fast breaking, called Idul-Fitr. Idul-Fitr commemorates the completion of the month of Ramadan and marks a personal victory of spiritual man over his unrestrained appetites.

Idul-Fitr is a time of feasting, family gathering and gift giving. It is a time of settling old disputes, a time to begin anew with restored faith and belief.

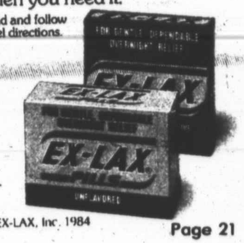


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