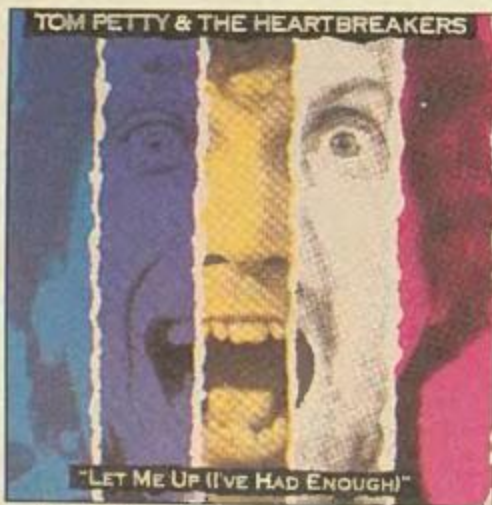


# IMPORTED TASTE OF BOMBAY GIN.

ALMONDS FROM INDOCHINA    LEMON PEEL FROM SPAIN    ORRIS (IRIS ROOT) FROM ITALY    LICORICE FROM INDOCHINA



**LET ME UP (I'VE HAD ENOUGH)**  
Tom Petty and  
the Heartbreakers  
MCA

DESPITE THE DESPERATE SURRENDER implied in the title, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers come out standing tough and triumphant on *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*. The eleven songs on the album chronicle characters who are reeling from media assaults and shattered relationships. But anger and the urgent need to make sense of a world spinning out of control are strong reasons for survival – and they are powerfully rendered in the muscular, guitar-charged rock the Heartbreakers hammer out. Not that *Let Me Up* is in any ulti-

mate sense a grim album. The characters in these tunes may live in absurdly oppressive circumstances – the song title “My Life/Your World” pretty much sums up their sense of impotence. But the gnarled, sarcastic humor of Petty’s lyrics and vocals – “I believe you baby,” he sings on the title track, “I know you wouldn’t lie/Like a dog won’t bark, like a bird won’t fly” – and the sheer exuberance of the music give the mystified losers he conjures up something like the last laugh.

The first four tracks on *Let Me Up*, alternately full-tilt rockers and quieter tunes, cover the emotional and stylistic range of the LP. The single “Jammin’ Me,” co-written by Petty, Bob Dylan and Heartbreakers guitarist Mike Campbell, opens the record. Over Petty and Campbell’s raw guitar chords and Benmont Tench’s honky-tonk piano fills, Petty’s vocal spits out the tale of a man overwhelmed by the volume of disconnected “news” generated in the disinformation age (“Take back Vanessa Redgrave/Take back Joe Piscopo. . . . Take back your Iranian torture/And the apple in young Steve’s eye”). The softer “Runaway Trains” showcases the shimmering folk-rock yearning that has

become Petty’s signature sound since *Damn the Torpedoes*. The character in that song is floating in the wake of a failed relationship; his voice is less manic and more poetic than the one in “Jammin’ Me,” but he is equally overcome: “I guess it’s one of those things/ You can never explain/Like when an angel cries/Like runaway trains.”

The insistent rhythms of “The Damage You’ve Done,” steadily thumped out by bassist Howie Epstein and drummer Stan Lynch, reinforce the paranoia of the singer, who asks, with snarling candor, “Why do you want to destroy/Me baby? What did I do wrong?” The mood becomes reflective again on the mandolin-sweetened ballad “It’ll All Work Out,” in which resignation about a breakup substitutes for hope, as the singer concludes, “It never goes away, but it all works out.”

Petty and Campbell’s production of *Let Me Up* appropriately emphasizes immediacy over polish. Tossed-off slide-guitar segments, hand claps and sing-alongs are sandwiched between tracks in a couple of places, and several songs fade up at the start, as if they hadn’t been properly cued. Guitar ravers like “Jammin’ Me,” “Think About

Me” and the title track recall the inspired studio anarchy of the Stones’ *Exile on Main Street*.

Through a bracing combination of will and raunch on *Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)*, Petty and the Heartbreakers manage to turn the Eighties epidemics of loneliness and media-induced alienation into the fuel for an uplifting rock & roll party. And if that’s no cure for the modern-day blues, it’s at least enlivening, heartfelt consolation.

—Anthony DeCurtis

**Just Released**  
**Solitude Standing. Suzanne Vega. A&M.** Suzanne Vega was the sort of confident, undeniably impressive debut that’s also undeniably difficult to follow. By the time of the second song on *Solitude Standing*, “Luka,” it’s clear that Vega is up to the challenge. It may be Vega’s most powerful track yet – it also might be the right track to introduce her to a mainstream audience with all her poetic quirkiness intact. *Solitude Standing* has a number of songs nearly as good, including “In the Eye,” “Night Vision” and the title track.