

THE MACS MAKE BRYAN Adams look like a piker. It's been only three years since his monster hit, "Reckless." This album produced a host of Top 10 singles, including "Run to You," "Heaven," "Summer of '69," and his duet with Tina Turner, "It's Only Love."

The new LP is titled "Into the Fire," but there aren't that many hits this time around.

Still, there's some nice work here. The first single, "Heat of the Night," is five minutes of finely tuned, muscular rock. It's got a tight band sound, too. Another goodie, "Only the Strong Survive," sounds like it was written to provide Adams's live shows with an all-out, mindless stomper. Despite a fistful of cliches, it should do exactly that.

My favorite cut is the sensitive and sober "Remember-

ence Day." It's a melancholy tale of a young man going off to war. He's obviously fighting for God and Country, but his first thoughts are always of the girl he left behind. It's got a nice epic feeling about it and

"LET ME UP (I've Had Enough)" is the latest release from Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Petty & Co. comprise one of the most underrated musical aggregations in American popular music. Their albums "Southern Accents" and "Damn the Torpedoes" (from 1979) are genuine rock-era classics. The Heartbreakers have also produced a fistful of hit singles, including "The Waiting," "Refugee," "You Got Lucky," and "Don't Come Around Here No More."

Too many people don't take Petty and the Heartbreakers seriously because 1.) they're from the South and 2.) they take chances. You can't do much about where you're born, and I don't think the band is too concerned with No. 2.

Like U2, the band's basic sound remains the same: Petty's nasal, Southern drawl of a voice and Mike Campbell's chiming 12-string guitar. It's the approach that varies from song to song.

The guys know their roots. Where they once sounded vaguely like the Byrds, you'll now hear overtones of the

Stones ("Jammin' Me" and the title track), the Band ("Thinking About Me" and "Ain't Love Strange"), and even Hank Williams Jr. ("A Self-Made Man" and "The Damage You've Done"). Just overtones mind you, the core music is definitely "Heartbreakin'."

Side I of "Let Me Up" is as good as anything I've heard so far this year. "Runaway Trains" has an impressionistic Southern sensibility and a sad synthesizer line that'll break your heart. "The Damage You've Done" is a laconic country rock tune. "It'll All Work Out" is a mandolin/banjo waltz, permeated with Canjun fatalism. And "My Life/Your World" is sinuous urban blues, but with a host of other musical colorings.

Over the past couple of years the Heartbreakers have been

a distinctive chorus.

From there, though, "Into the Fire" starts to flicker in a hurry. "Native Son" is an admirable attempt to draw attention to the plight of the Indian, but it gets bogged down by a pedantic lyric that uses stereotyped "Indian" phrases. Other throwaways include "Rebel" and "Another Day," an inexplicably lightweight cut that could be meant as parody, but smells suspiciously like a sell-out. "Into the Fire" has some merit and is already a hit. But with success, Bryan Adams is discovering that he's having to affect a pose and sound that once came naturally.



BRYAN ADAMS
Into the Fire
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giving Bob Dylan the best backing he's had since his legendary tours with the Band. So for "Let Me Up," Bobby D. has returned the favor by co-writing the raucous, name-dropping "Jammin' Me," also from Side I.

On Side II, "Ain't Love Strange" is a joyful celebration of the heartland. And you've got to like the song "Think About Me" for no other reason than it makes you want to dance and smile. Only the schizophrenic "A Self-Made Man" is a total wash-out.

When this album was being recorded, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers were interested in granite-hard country rock songs that championed the underdog in the name of love. By the time next year's model is released, they may have left this territory completely, looking for more fertile musical ground elsewhere.

That's why Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers will probably never be No. 1—and that's one of the reasons why I like them. ☐



TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS
"Let Me Up (I've Had Enough)"
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