



Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers: Stan Lynch, left, Mike Campbell, Ron Blair, Tom Petty and Benmont Tench.

Record reviews

'Torpedoes' breaks through for Petty, Heartbreakers

By Dave Marsh
Rolling Stone

Records are rated from one star to five in ascending order of quality.

TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS: "Damn the Torpedoes" (MCA) 3 Stars.

This is Petty's breakthrough disc, and its best numbers, especially "Refugee," prove that it's a meaningful commercial milestone. Petty is an excellent songwriter, who synthesizes a Springsteen-like pastiche of influences into something genuinely personal.

The problem, despite this album's streamlined production by Petty and Jimmy Iovine and sweet singing, is that Petty lacks a killer instinct. There are plenty of tough rock 'n' roll attitudes here, but because Petty refuses to fully commit himself emotionally, they remain poses, just another cute kid fronting a very hot band. Which is a shame, because performed with the heart they deserve, three or four of these numbers might be all-time classics.

As it is, they're as well crafted as any other late '70s California hard rock, more intelligent than most of the competition but ultimately just as inconsequential.

MOON MARTIN: "Escape From Domination" (Capitol) 3 Stars.

More California cool, from another transplanted Southwesterner. Martin's claim to fame is writing hits for Robert Palmer and (almost) Mink DeVille. On his own, he's an even more diffident performer than Petty, continually pulling back (on the grounds of good taste, maybe?) just when he should be driving the point home. Still better than "The Long Run" but

this one's not up to, say, Lindsey Buckingham's standard.

WAYLON JENNINGS: "What Goes Around Comes Around" (RCA) 4 Stars.

Waylon has reached the peak of arrogance where the artist's album covers no longer need to carry his last name. He's also beginning to record the kind of music that has long made him one of the most exciting live performers around; it's funkier and more rocking than

anything he did in his "outlaw" period, and it retains his edge of rebellion.

This time, the target seems to be society at large, not the narrow minds of Nashville. Which also means that Waylon has reached the point where his music is more universal than provincial, the first country musician to get to that position with some fragments of his soul intact for many years. Hallelujah.

FUNKADELIC: "Uncle Jam Wants You" (Warner Bros.) 4 Stars.

In which George Clinton creates another funk-positive manifesto attacking by turns both those who dance too much and without sufficient celebration and those who dance too fake, with far too much calculation. The grand expression of the former is "(Not Just) Knee Deep," while the latter demon is exorcised in a vicious anti-Rolling Stone cartoon on the back cover.



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