

Rock Review by Dawn Anderson

Tom Petty produces pure pop for the people

He has gorgeous, wispy light blond hair. He knows just how to hold a cigarette, a guitar and a note.

He knows just when to whimper, when to enunciate, when to slur his words and when to crack his voice as if he is faint with ardor. He knows just how to emit a tuneful "ooh!"

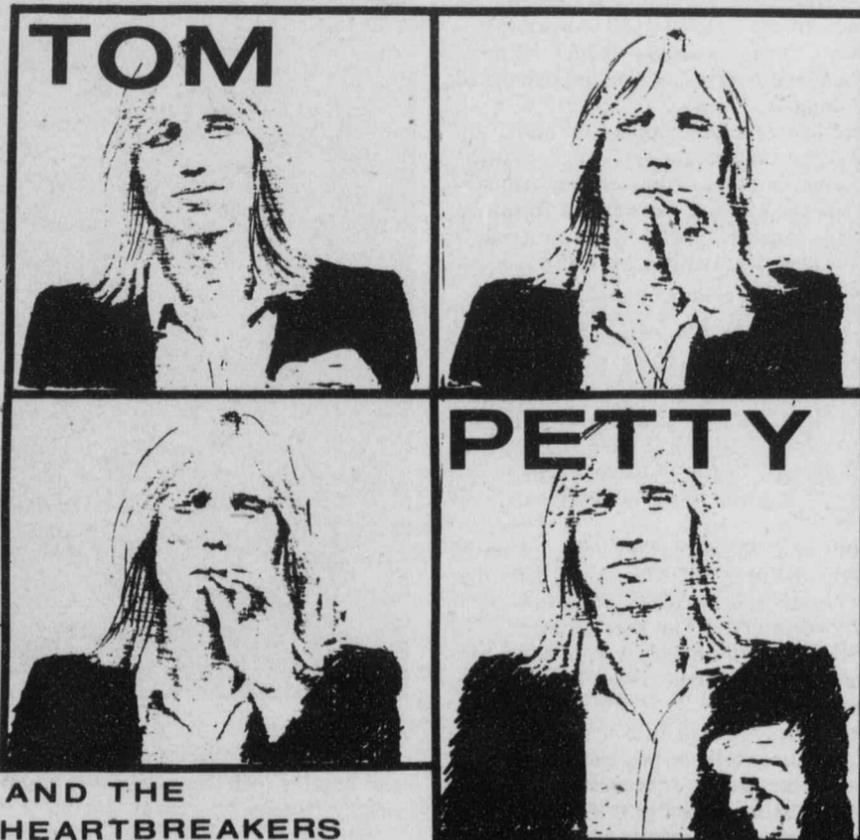
In short, Tom Petty possesses all the requirements of top-40 stardom. He and his band, the Heartbreakers, create unpretentious rock tunes that are as easy to like as Ringo Starr, though more intelligent. Petty recently gained even wider support by battling MCA over the cost of his new album. At his insistence, "Hard Promises" will sell at \$8.98, a dollar cheaper than the proposed list price.

This fight was so well-publicized that Petty had quite an image to maintain by the time the album finally appeared on your local Fred Meyer racks. Would this Friend of the People deliver good music as well as good intentions?

Well, Petty and the Heartbreakers have not produced the next "Sgt. Pepper" or even the next "Damn the Torpedoes." For the most part, however, "Hard Promises" is just what it is supposed to be — a collection of astoundingly catchy pop songs.

"A Thing About You," for instance, displays all three characteristics needed to shoot it to the top of the charts: romance, simplicity and a good strong hook. The last of these is provided by Petty's voice, which rises unexpectedly for a note in the chorus. The lyrics fail to impress on paper, but they are sung with such urgency that they appear to be extremely important. And though it may not take a genius to write "You gotta be careful what you dream," who could deny its truth?

Petty once admitted, "I don't have an attention span of over three minutes," and since the public usually doesn't either, this is a good quality. The artist's impatience guarantees that each song will be direct, short and full of spunk. Three minutes leaves little room for bloated instrumental arrangements



JDM '81

Healyums

by Tim Healy

The following incident is true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent. (So have some of the facts and locations, but most of it is true . . . or close to being true.)

This is his campus: Seattle University. He carries a walkie-talkie. He is a member of campus security. His name is Edward Scott Von-blonkenhorn Wurzweiler.

Wurzweiler reported to work on the night of April ____ at 10:35 p.m. He was working the night watch out of the dorm division. As he put on his baby blue S.U. Security jacket, he was completely unaware that he would soon be called upon to risk his life (and clothing) in the line of duty.

The call came at 10:36 p.m. An unidentified student has seen a "suspicious" person rattling an undesignated door of . . . THE GARRAND BUILDING!!! The entire security force was immediately placed on alert. It was feared that the mysterious door rattler was part of a major plot to "free the monkeys" held prisoner in the basement of THE GARRAND BUILDING.

A security team was immediately dispatched to the scene, but to no avail. The suspect, a 5 feet, 8 and one-half inch male who weighed between 130 and 130 and one-half pounds, eluded capture and was seen escaping off campus.

Wurzweiler received his orders: apprehend the subject. He and his partner, Bill Laden, commandeered a private automobile and set out in hot pursuit.

Several blocks north of campus, Wurzweiler and his partner overtook a young man that matched the description of the suspect. In a strategic move intended to cut off the suspect's avenue of escape, Laden drove the car on to the sidewalk in front of the young man at a high rate of speed. Wurzweiler recalled that Laden's strategic move "scared the _____" out of him (and I imagine the suspect as well).

Regaining his composure, Wurzweiler jumped from the car and slipped on some dog excrement that some thoughtless citizen had failed to clean up. He ordered the surprised suspect not to move as he struggled to stand up. At that time, the suspect regained his composure and began running.

Thinking quickly, Wurzweiler motioned Laden to follow the suspect with the car while he briefly brushed himself off. He then set off in close foot pursuit. The chase was on.

(To be continued in the next exciting edition of HEALYUMS.)

or pathetically winded "ballad" lyrics; thus, Petty's soul rarely melts into sap.

The result is the passion of Bruce Springsteen without the pomposity.

The Heartbreakers demonstrate how much can be done with just two guitars and an occasional keyboard in songs like "Waiting," the album's first single. The guitars wail, but never whine and their tone complements the fever in Petty's voice. The music stops occasionally to allow him to belt out a few unaccompanied lines and loud, dramatic drumming appears in all the right places.

In songs like "The Night Watchman," the slide guitar provides a pinch of Southern twang, but not quite enough to offend the rockers. Again, everything is in its proper place. The guitar picking and Petty's moaning are as rhythmic as the percussion itself, causing the listener to uncontrollably tap his pen, kick his chair or smoke his cigarette on beat.

Three songs prevent "Hard Promises" from rising to the pop potency of the band's last effort, "Damn the Torpedos." "Something Big," "Insider," and "You Can Still Change Your Mind" are slow, pensive

numbers that toil and forge ahead with a word-weariness unbecoming to Petty.

Petty's songs have always acknowledged life's ugliness, but with a positive approach — if someone drops the bomb today, it's best to keep rocking until the world ends. But not only do these three songs lack spirit, they lack the emotion needed to render them truly depressing.

This could be due to Petty's lack of familiarity with the mellow tear-jerker genre. He hesitates to exercise his exquisite vocal techniques on these numbers — his voice doesn't choke, doesn't quaver and simply doesn't work.

I hope Petty and the Heartbreakers remain pop purists, always pounding out their precise rock songs with vitality and a sense of fun. Few bands who proclaim themselves Friends of the People actually deserve this title. But then, few bands can create guitar lines irresistible enough to earn air time on heavy metal, top-40 and even New Wave radio. And few singers could make a line like "Woh . . . woh . . . I'm having trouble letting you go" ring with philosophical brilliance.

In Wake of Disaster

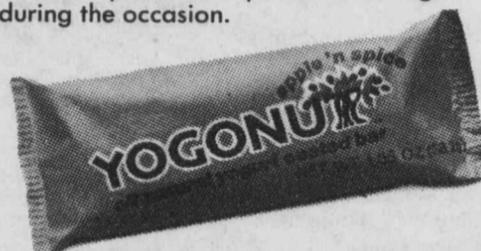
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