



Tom Petty and his Heartbreakers have fulfilled the promise of their last album, "Damn the Torpedoes," in their latest, "Hard Promises."

Keeping 'Hard Promises'

Petty And Heartbreakers Are Winners Again

By PETE BISHOP

When your previous album was a surprise smash, you've created hard promises to keep to listeners in general and to your fans in particular.

That's exactly the case with Tom

Petty and the Heartbreakers, whose "Damn the Torpedoes" shared Top 5 honors for three months early last year with such better-known acts as the Bee Gees and Eagles. Donna

Summer, Kenny Rogers, Michael Jackson, Rush, Linda Ronstadt, Heart, Bob Seger and Billy Joel. Their album was kept from the No. 1 spot only by another surprise, Pink Floyd's "The Wall."

So, appropriately enough, here's "Hard Promises" (Backstreet BSR-5160), a very worthy successor to "Damn the Torpedoes."

The Heartbreakers continue to improve as a unit, offering solid support, no flashy, indulgent solos. Super rock producer Jimmy Iovine has refined most of the rawness out of everything but Petty's Dylanesque, mushy, not overly intelligible voice (at least the lyrics are printed on the sleeve) and out of the lyrics themselves.

This is not a happy album. It's packed with unfulfilled longing, with the pain of dead romance — from the swain willing to be his woman's "bleedin' heart" and "cryin' fool" to the guy who gave his gal "everything; she threw it all

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away" to the night watchman whose "life's worth more than the minimum wage." Sounds as if Petty, who wrote or co-wrote all 10 songs, knows about heartbreakers firsthand.

"Hard Promises" won't break the heart of anyone who buys it, however.

It's filled with winners: melodic rockers "The Waiting," "Letting You Go" and "Kings Road," hot rock 'n' roller "A Thing About You," the slow, tough "The Criminal Kind" and "Insider," a near-ballad with a fine vocal duet by Petty and Stevie Nicks.

In short, "Hard Promises" continues what "Damn the Torpedoes" started, establishing Petty and the Heartbreakers as one of America's brightest young bands.

BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY, another bright, young prospect, hasn't let the breakup of his band, after the hit

single "Girl of My Dreams," get him down. The British pub-rock veteran simply formed another group and recorded "Funland" (Arista AB 4292).

And just as the title suggests, there's a large sense of fun on the LP, not to mention clean, catchy melodies, Tchaikovsky's pleasant voice (lower-pitched than usual for a rocker) and a good group sound akin to both the Hollies and the Cars.

"Stand and Deliver" fires right out to kick "Funland" off well, as Tchaikovsky and friends keep scoring with the bouncy-melodic "Heart of Stone," fast-rowdy "Breaking Down the Walls of Heartache" and ballad "Together My Love," which owes a lot to the Miracles' old "Tracks of My Tears."

Tchaikovsky and Denis Forbes provide sterling guitar licks, the words are largely accessible and the few guests are used judiciously and tastefully.

Yes, most of the vocal harmony is Tchaikovsky overdubbed and echo effects, both vocal and instrumental, are overused, but neither is enough to spoil "Funland."

"JOLE BLON" sounds like Bruce Springsteen — and why not? "The Boss" and his band all play and sing on that opening number from "Dedication" (EMI America SO 17051).

But whose album is it? Why, it's Gary U.S. Bonds's album, the first in ages from the man who hit with



Bram Tchaikovsky gets over the breakup of his band in "Funland."

Only Love" and Jackson Browne's "The Pretender," are very nicely done, ballad "Daddy's Come Home" (an allegory about Bonds' present career situation — "You see, the children have all gone away; I don't think I like what's taken their place ... All I can do is keep doing my part, tryin' my best to touch somebody's heart") is the same and ballad "Just Like a Child," enhanced by