

1

sunday spin

Just hard promises from Tom Petty

"I'M an insider/I've been burned by the fire/And I have had to live with some hard promises".

Thus goes part of the lyrics of Tom Petty's *Insider* which produced the title of his new album, **HARD PROMISES**, released locally not too long ago.

The ironical thing was that the song was not even supposed to be in the album. It was a last-minute effort by Petty to give Stevie Nicks a song for her solo set, **BELLA DONNA**.

But Petty and producer Jimmy Iovine loved it so much that Nicks had to be content with another song, *Stop Dragging My Heart Around*.

Tough court battle

Said Petty: "When that tune came in at the last minute, I thought it applied to what was going on. The tunes, they're all just hard promises."

And the album is just that — about growing up and having to deal with promises. It is a more sombre, more reflective album than the previous **DAMN THE TORPEDOES**. The new songs find Petty in doubt that he does not measure up, a change from the swaggering cockiness of the last album.

In taking the step from rock 'n roll adolescence to maturity, promises made

POP PROFILE

By JUSTIN S

earlier might have to be fulfilled. As Petty says: "It's about issues that aren't really resolved. I was trying to move on from the battle to deal with what goes on after."

Issues are certainly something Petty is familiar with. He played on the No Nukes concert, a protest against the use of nuclear power as energy. And of course, he fought a tough court battle to free himself from his record company, and lately wrestled with it again when it wanted to retail **HARD PROMISES** as a dollar more than the standard price.

Not surprisingly, Petty got his way but quipped: "I hope we're not remembered as the band that fought the record company."

DAMN THE TORPEDOES reached number two in the States and Petty knows the only way to top that is number one. But life wasn't so rosy for this Florida-born rocker whose sound recalls that of a combination of the Byrds and Rolling Stones.

Petty was 11 when he saw Elvis Presley filming on location in Florida and decided to be a rock and roller. It took several years before local stardom came but Petty and

□ PETTY and his Heartbreakers (from left)...Tench, Lynch, Campbell, Blair, Petty and guest player Phil Jones.



friends knew that to make it big, they had to get out.

There were two options. New York or Los Angeles. They opted for LA because the former was too cold for the native Floridians. Then began more slogging. From 1976, things looked brighter but it was not until last year's **DAMN THE TORPEDOES** that Petty and his Heartbreakers made the big breakthrough.

He's called by one English rock paper "the last great rock and roll romantic" to which he says: "Yeah, I guess I am a romantic, in a sense. Just to do this, to

believe you can get away with it, you have to be pretty romantic.

"But fighting the record industry — that ain't romantic, man. That's survival. All I've tried to do is get out of a huge sling so we can continue to play."

Last year, following his victorious court battle, Petty wrote these lines: "Even the losers get lucky sometimes/Even the losers keep a bit of pride."

Well, Petty need not worry too much about that now. Whatever else, he and his Heartbreakers — guitarist Mike Campbell, bassist Ron Blair, keyboardist Benmont Tench and drummer Stan Lynch — must surely be certified winners by now.

IMPORTS

Pretenders'
message
coming
loud and clear

● THE PRETENDERS:
PRETENDERS II (Real)

□ Performance: Great

□ Recording: Very good

The group's first album, *Pretenders*, was something of an event, not only because it was one of the most successful debuts on both sides of the Atlantic but also because of its sexual explicitness.

Chrissie Hynde, their lead singer, rhythm guitarist and main songwriter, held nothing back as she dug into sex and violence where "a lust turns to anger, a kiss to a slug".

Musically, her work was fresh and inventive, often imbued with a strong sense of urgency as she showed a penchant for unusual structural