

Exceptions to don't-waste-your-money rule

By Jerry Spangler
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Live albums are, for the most part, undisguised attempts by record companies to drum up an extra million or two in record sales until the band's next LP is released. The result is most live LPs are far inferior to regular studio recordings both in content and quality.

There have been a couple of notable exceptions to that over the years: Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's "Four-Way Street," Peter Frampton's "Comes Alive" and, more recently, the "Tribute to Steve Goodman" recording.

Despite their history of poor record sales, there is currently a rash of live recordings on the market. Still, most of them are of the double-LP, don't-waste-your-money variety. But there are exceptions to that, too.

The cream of the current crop includes Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, the Guess Who and Rainbow. Those releases, coupled with the release several months ago of Yes' exceptional "9012Live," are dispelling preconceived notions that live LPs have to be boring guitar solos and rehashed hits better left forgotten.

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS — Pack Up the Plantation. "So You Want to Be a Rock 'n' Roll Star," "Needles and Pins," "Refugee," "The Waiting," "Breakdown," 11 others. Double LP. Produced by Tom Petty and Mike Campbell. MCA2-8021. ★★☆☆

If you've been saving up your pennies to see Tom Petty & Co. at the Salt Palace sometime soon, you will have better luck spending your money on Petty's live album "Pack Up

the Plantation." Petty and the Heartbreakers are currently touring Australia as the backup band for Bob Dylan (at Dylan's request), and all indications are, both sides are tickled pink with the arrangement and they may make it quasi-permanent.

That's bad news for Petty fans in small venues like Salt Lake, where Dylan is not likely to make concert appearances.

While "Pack Up the Plantation" is not the same as seeing the Florida rocker live, it is the next best thing. It's a fine collection of 16 songs, including the many hits, that are wrapped in all the magic and spirit that makes Tom Petty one of the premier rockers in America.

The album also highlights Petty's exceptional concert skills, while avoiding traditional pitfalls like super-extended extended guitar solos and excessive wasted space. Petty

RECORD REVIEW

delivers the familiar and the not-so-familiar in crisp precision, alternating between hard rockers like "Refugee" and moaning ballads like "Southern Accents."

The best thing about this LP is you get so caught up in the performance you almost forget it's live.

THE GUESS WHO — The Best of the Guess Who-Live. "No Time," "These Eyes," "Rain Dance," "Laughing," "Undun," "American Woman," 14 others. Produced by Jack Richardson. Compleat Records 672012-1. ★★☆☆

In December 1982, Burton Cummings, Randy Bachman, Jim Kale and Greg Peterson received a phone call from Michael White: Would they be interested in a reunion tour of venues throughout their native Canada?

The question on everyone's mind was would people still remember and appreciate the Guess Who?

That question was answered when more than 40,000 people showed up for their first concert in Vancouver. Six months later, the reunited Guess Who completed the Canadian tour with a sold-out show in Toronto that had record-company execs licking their chops.

The subsequent live album (and a video that's even long-

er) is a landmark recording, not only in the re-union of Cummings and Bachman, but a revival of one of the tightest rock 'n' roll sounds to ever grace the radio airwaves.

It's been 15 years or so since the real Guess Who played together, but there's no trace of rust. The sound is still as tight, the harmonies as sweet as they ever were. And most of all, the songs were still as captivating as they were so long ago.

Most of the Guess Who's hits are on the 20-song collection (the most notable exception is "Share the Land"), and there are a fair share of the great songs that were not so big: "What's Gonna Happen to the Kids," "Running Back to Saskatoon," etc.

It's an electrifying collection performed with tantalizing skill. Like Petty's album, you almost forget it was recorded live.

RAINBOW — Finyl Vinyl. "Jealous Lover," "Miss Mistreated," "Tearin' Out My Heart," "I Surrender," "Weiss Heitu," nine others. Produced by Roger Glover, Ronnie James Dio, others. Mercury 827987-1-M-2. ★★☆☆

Rainbow will probably go down in rock history as one of the better hard-rock bands. But when you stop and think about who was really Rainbow, it was and always will be Ritchie Blackmore.

Rainbow had a greater personnel turnover than a downtown Burger King: three different vocalists, four drummers, five keyboardists and four bassists. The one and only constant through it all was Blackmore — electric guitarist extraordinaire who molded Rainbow into an orchestral equivalent of heavy metal.

But it was heavy metal with style and class. The instrumentals — and there are many of them on "Finyl Vinyl" — are masterful examples of Blackmore at his best. For fans of the Deep Purple-Black Sabbath variety of rock, Rainbow was a natural evolution.

The double LP includes a few unreleased studio gems, but most is devoted to live recordings made between 1967 and 1984 when Rainbow disbanded. I wouldn't go as far as calling Rainbow a great band, but "Finyl Vinyl" is an excellent collection of the very best of a venerable band.

SCREEN TEST

This week we mourn the passing of Ray Milland — not the most memorable actor the movies have given us, but a likable one, with at least one absolutely first-rate performance to his credit (in Billy Wilder's "The Lost Weekend," for which he duly received an Oscar). So let's see if you can remember a few of his more distinctive appearances. In which films, for example, did he:



Ray Milland

1. Plot Grace Kelly's murder?
2. Share a body with Rosie Grier?
3. Meet Charlie Chan?
4. Play the devil?
5. Join the foreign legion?
6. Wake up in a coffin?
7. Develop a wood repellent that takes him and a baseball team to the World Series?

8. Survive a nuclear holocaust?
9. Have the title role — but no dialogue?
10. Give new meaning to the expression "to croak"?

ANSWERS: 1. Dial M for Murder; 2. The Thing With Two Heads; 3. Charlie Chan in London; 4. The Pre-Code; 5. Beau Geste (1939); 6. The Pre-Mature Burt; 7. It Happens Every Spring; 8. Pan- in the Year Zero; 9. The Thief; 10. Frogs (in which he is devoured by the title creatures).