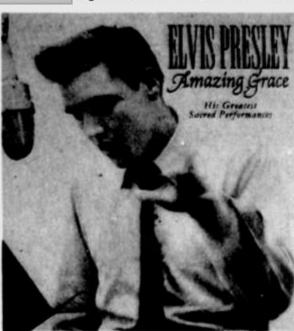
ARTS

TRACKS



PETTY: Captures emotion with words in a direct, disarming manner





Simple Petty very The opener, Just Another Reviews by The songs are very much Story, introduces you to the group's bouncy and often in a dance-pop vein and they R.S. Murthi are actually quite enjoyable,

nfectious music

☐ TOM PETTY — Wild-flowers (Warner Bros./ 62:51): The first thing that

hits you about Petty's second solo album is its disarming directness. Despite some subtle orchestration (by Michael Kaman) and fullblown instrumentation, the never music sounds swamped. In lesser hands, music as elementary as this would have been bland. But Petty is no average rocker, and his

is a simplicity springing from a complex artistry. There's nothing new about the themes Petty tackles in the songs, but his ability to capture emotion with words makes almost all the pieces enthralling. Some of the songs tell sad

stories while others deal with dark themes, like life on the edge. Most of them have a folk lilt, enhanced by the use of instruments like harpsichord, harmonium and harmonica. However, it's the chiming resonance of tunes such as

Wildflowers, You Wreck Me,

Cabin Down Below and To Find A Friend that has an intoxicating effect. Wildflowers has its banal moments but its bittersweet touches leave a lasting impression. Performance: ***/

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Tribute To Elvis (Mercury/44:50): Country, pop

Sound: ***

and rock artists ranging from Travis Tritt, Tanya Tucker, Dwight Yoakam and Michael Hutchence with NRBQ to Aaron Neville, Bryan Adams and Wet Wet Wet sing Preslav's most Wet Wet sing Presley's most abiding songs here. The performances are spirited for the most part, but you get that extra bit in terms of interpretive insight from people like Tritt (Lawdy Miss Clawdy), Yoa-kam (Mystery Train), Chris

Isaak (Blue Moon) and good old Tony Bennett (Love Me Tender) who's becoming hipper than he ever was, thanks to invitations to contribute to tribute projects.
Adams' Hound Dog, Billy
Ray Cyrus' One Night and
Wet Wet Wet's It's Now Or Never border on the bathetic. But there's enough to make up for these lapses. Performance: ★★★ Sound: ★★★★

□ JAMIROQUAI — The Re-

turn Of The Space Cowboy (Sony Soho Square/66:08): This British quintet has its heart in the right place and wisely stays out of the goopandering race.
While it steals most of its ideas from 70s funk and soul, the band has enough It's quite a driving mix, with percolating bass lines and rollicking rhythms fuelling the tunes. The songs have interest-

ing titles - Manifest Desti-nu. Stillness In Time, Mr ny. Stillness In Time, Mr Moon etc — but they're not as heavy as they seem.

Performance: ★★★ Sound: ★★★★ ☐ FRANK ZAPPA brucken 1978 (Foo-Eee/73:11): Part of Zappa's "beat-the-boots" campaign, this Rhino-distributed CD ~ captures a 1978 performance

at the Saarbrucken Open Air Festival in Germany.

The audio quality is dis-satisfying, but the bootleg recording has Zappa and the

band really cutting loose on staples like The Dancin' Fool, Easy Meat and San Alphonso's Pancake Break-Besides zany Zappaisms, you get some truly blistering guitar solos that demonstrate the man's facility as a neck-wringer.

🗆 FRANK ZAPPA — As An (Foo-Eee/43:45): This 1981 recording features such top-drawer players as Chad Wackerman, Steve Vai, Wackerman, Steve Vai, Tommy Mars and Bobby

Performance: ***

Sound: ★

Tommy Mars and Bobby Martin. There are lots of explosive moments and some of the most structured jam-ming you'll ever hear on a rock recording.

Among the Zappa staples that get the rip-roaring treatment are Sharleena and The Torture Never Stops.

The sound is not up to scratch but the spontaneity and energy of expression

won't leave you unaffected.

Performance: ★★★

Sound: ★★

JOHNNY HALLYDAY —
Rough Town (Philips/
58:50): Hallyday's music is redolent of Gary Moore's pop inflected blues. He also

plays guitar almost as heavy-handedly as the Irish

journeyman. But on straightforward pieces, Hallyday evinces a more original style, singing with controlled passion.

At times, the shuffles At times, the shuffles, boogies and ballads sound too familiar, but they're still listenable, despite their de-

Performance: ** Sound: *** TOM JONES — The Lead And How To Swing It (ZTT-Interscope/52:09): From the

rivativeness.

cover photo, you can see that the grandfather of fren-zied kitsch has been spending a lot of time keeping his old body trim. And from the music, you see that his sense of taste has improved.

to the shrewdness of executive producers Jimmy Iovine and John McClain. Jones also performs better than ever, which means he screams with a lot more muscle.

Performance: ** Sound: ★★★★ ☐ TINA ARENA Don't

Ask (Columbia/45:32): A singer with an average voice and an undistinguished style, Tina Arena gives listeners varnished pap on this slick production.
The tempos and textural colours are varied but there's really nothing to

stimulate the discerning listener here. Performance: ★ Sound: ★★★★ ☐ KATHY TROCCOLI — Kathy Troccoli (Reunion-RCA/42:49): Troccoli also

has a serviceable voice and a manner of expression that's neither here nor there. And the songs, which are mainly in a minor mode and

with a vigorous beat, are ho-

Only for those who think

mediocrity is a tolerable, Performance: ** Sound: ★★★★

ELVIS PRESLEY

Amazing Grace/His Great-

18

est Sacred Performances (RCA/1-75:10, 2-67:15): Presley was an instinctual gos-pel singer and this doublecollection disc

COMPILATION

testament to his brilliant interpretive skills in the Backed by vocal groups like the Jordanaires and the Imperials, Presley pays homage to God in such glowingly rendered pieces as I Believe In The Man In The Sky, Known Only To Him and If The Lord Wasn't

Walking By My Side.

The ardour of his expression, the precious inflections of his expression of his expression, the precious inflections of his expression of the six of the si affecting simplicity of the arrangements make it all absorbing The digital remastering has given the tracks a remarkable clarity and body,

and the extensive notes on Presley's gospel leanings and evocative pictures in the booklet shed new light on his wide-ranging artist-Anyone who claims to be Presley fan should give this a hearing. Performance: *** Sound: ★★★★

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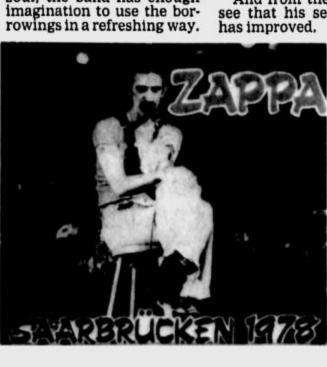
**** Excellent

*** Very Good

** Good

* Fair

Poor





RATINGS