REVIEWS

singles

by Tim De Lisle



DEPECHE MODE: Just Can't Get Enough (Mute). A less memorable but sound enough follow-up to "New Life"; well executed and good for dancing, but not so strong lyrically as recent hits by the Mode's rivals.

BOB DYLAN: Lenny Bruce (CBS).
There can be few people in any walk of life who are getting a worse press than Bob Dylan.
No-one ever has a good word for him; mainly, it seems, because of his religious views. For me he remains one of the very few great songwriters, and there could be no better reminder of his talents than this poignant, simple ballad. Far from commercial, but by far my single of the fortnight.

RICKIE LEE JONES: Woody & Dutch On The Slow Train To Peking (WEA). Simon Bates was raving about this the other morning and I couldn't see why. But in stereo, and after a few plays, it grew and grew on me. Offbeat and jazzy, the song takes time to get going but then so, I assume, does the vehicle it celebrates. If anything, Rickie Lee sings better than on "Chuck E's In Love". Delicious!

JOAN ARMATRADING: I'm
Lucky (A&M). Just the kind of
song that first made Joan
popular — mellow,
medium-paced soul, beautifully
sung. The difference now is that
Joan's voice is backed not with
gentle guitars but with the
strident synthesisers and snare
drums that producer Steve
Lillywhite used to such good
effect with Peter Gabriel. But here
the combination doesn't work.

THE RUBETTES: Rockin'
Rubettes Party 45 (Polydor). As
the title suggests, yet another

medley, but one which has three tracks a side rather than 26 because the boys only made six hit singles. That they should be brought out of mothballs now is ironic since in 1973-75 songs like "Sugar Baby Jive" cashed in on '50s nostalgia. So this is third-hand as well as third-rate. I trust those of you who bought "Stars On 45" are feeling guilty.

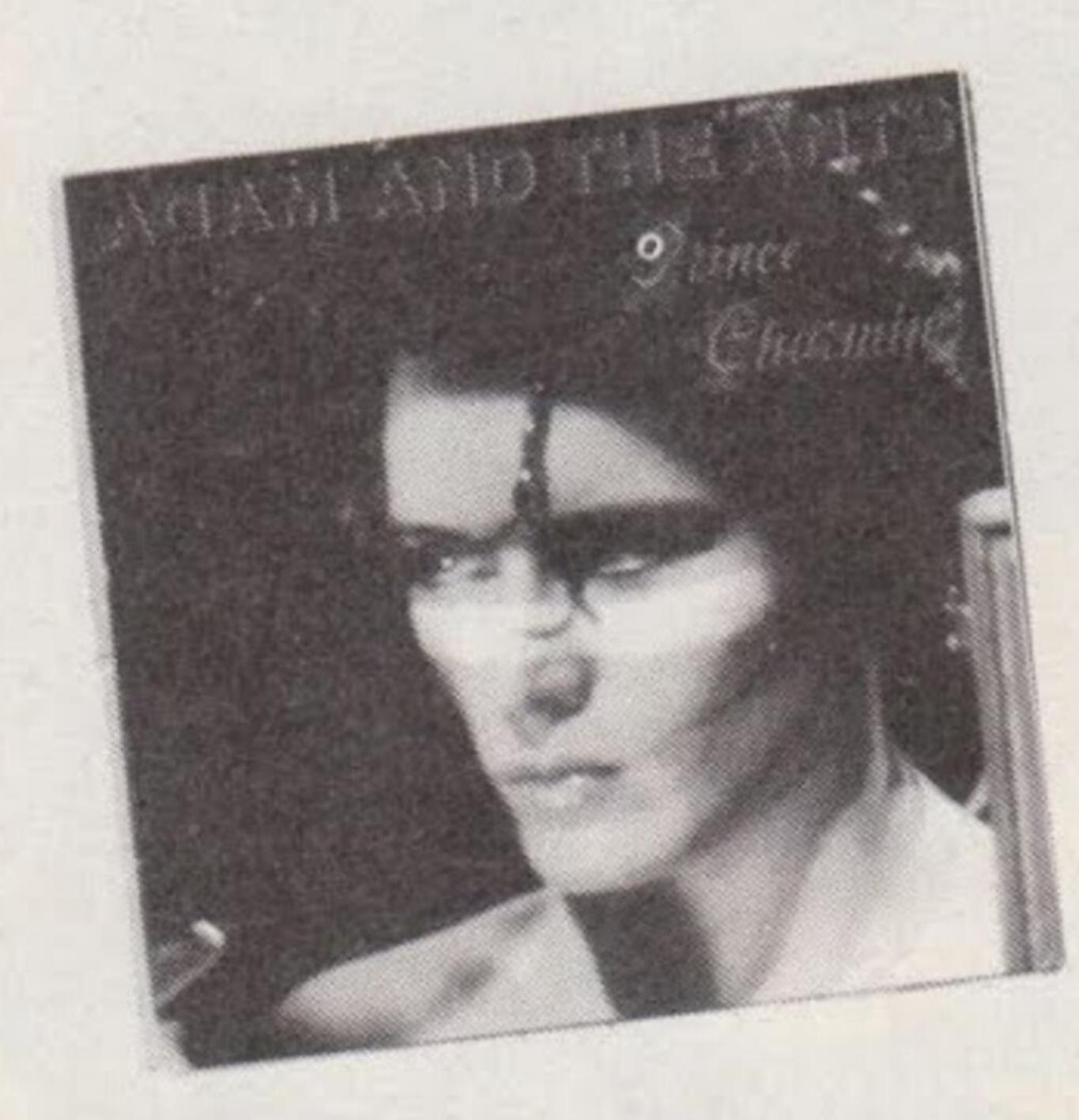
IRON MAIDEN: Maiden Japan (EMI 12"). A four-track souvenir of the group's first world tour which is lost on me. Sounds good considering it's live, and will no doubt go down well with the "headbangers, earthdogs, and metal merchants" to whom it is dedicated.

Repeat (Virgin). Produced by the admirable Robert Palmer, whose influence on Baumann (formerly of Tangerine Dream and never before a vocalist) has been tremendous. "Repeat Repeat" is an infectious dance record in the style of "Looking For Clues". Might just get the popular success that is evading Palmer.

THE BLUES BAND: Who's Right And Who's Wrong (Arista). One of the Band's least bluesy singles; more of a late '60s rock song and featuring vocals from Paul Jones that could well be a Jagger pastiche. Quite good but not very commercial.



MADNESS: Shut Up (Stiff). Oh Madness. You are a fine group and several of your eight hit singles have been excellent. This is sure to be the ninth but it doesn't deserve it. The song is dull and not very nutty and surely shouldn't have been released. There must be something better on the new album. Don't watch that, watch your step!



Charming (CBS). Not another Royal Wedding souvenir but it might well be, so safe and predictable and glossily-packaged is Adam's latest number one. Sounds OK on the radio but fast becomes tedious in your living room — a far cry from "Dog Eat Dog" and "Antmusic". Is he past his peak? (Pull up the drawbridge. — Ed.)

SPARKS: Funny Face (Why-Fi).

Sparks usually make terrific singles for little reward. (I'd be pushed to name two better chart flops than "Young Girls" and "Tips For Teens".) "Funny Face" is all right but not up to that standard, so maybe it'll be a hit.

BUDGIE: Keeping A Rendezvous (RCA). I don't know which is worse — the dreary hard rock of the song or the equally cliched painting on the picture disc.

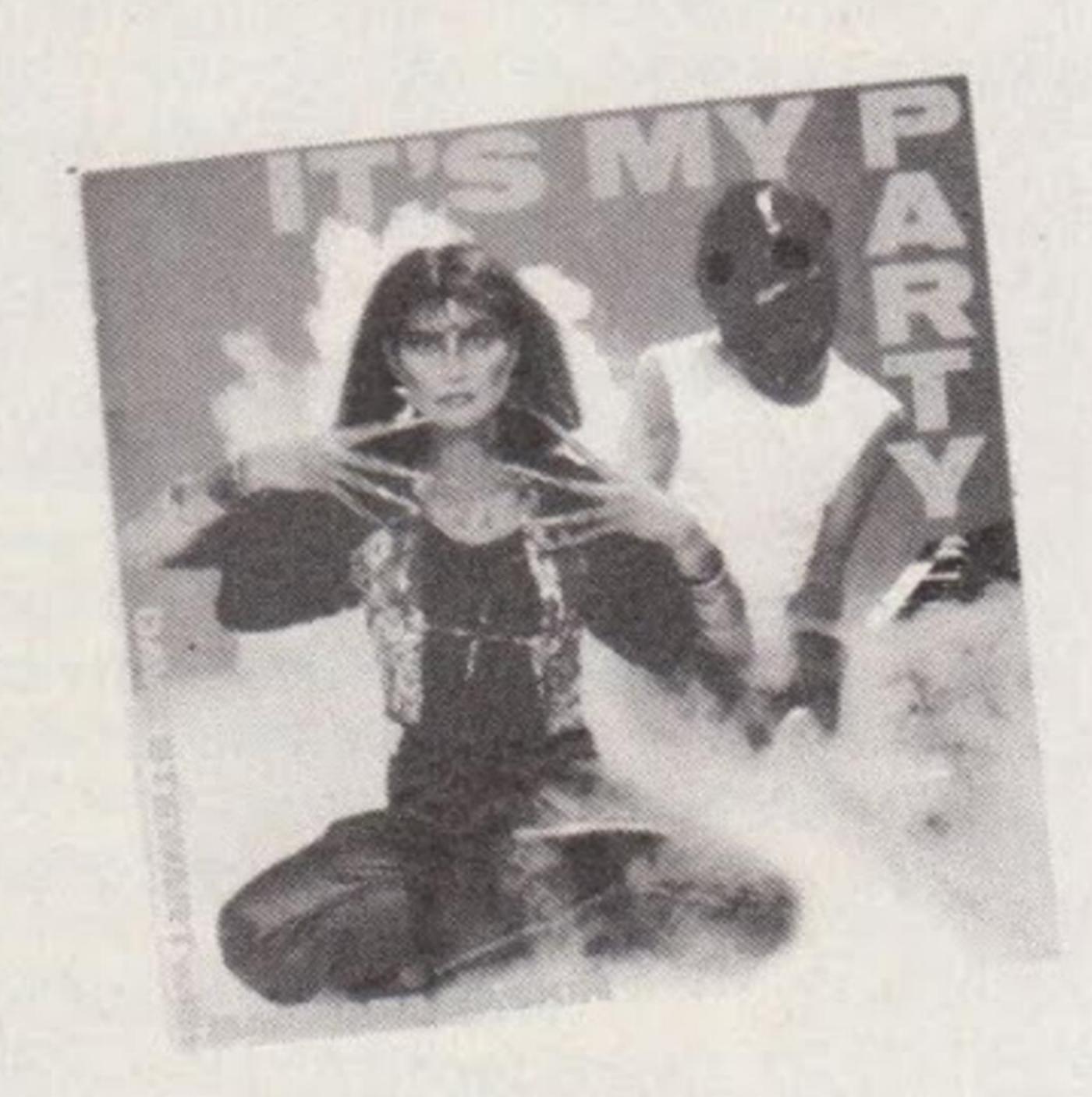
ATF: Frozen Rivers (Epic); NEW MUSIK: The Planet Doesn't Mind (GTO); RPM: Lost In Space (Ariola). Very much three of a kind. All of them carry on from where the Buggles left off, and all are the protegés of Tony Mansfield, who still produces New Musik and RPM and also wrote "The Planet Doesn't Mind". "Frozen Rivers" is a terrific old-fashioned pop song; the other two are very colourless.

BETTE BRIGHT AND THE
ILLUMINATIONS: Some Girls
Have All The Luck (Korova). Ms.
Bright could be forgiven if the
title was a wry comment on her
chart record, which is lamentable
and hard to explain in the light of
other girls' recent successes. This
song could do the trick. It's light

and bouncy with a strong melody and '60s girl-group vocals.

DIANA ROSS & LIONEL RITCHIE: Endless Love (Motown); ARETHA FRANKLIN & GEORGE **BENSON: Love All The Hurt** Away (Arista). On the whole these big-name duets don't work. Two voices tend to make a love song much slushier than one, and so it goes with Franklin & Benson. Ross & Ritchie are on to a much better thing. "Endless Love", written by Ritchie in his Commodores' vein, is number one in America and the theme song from the new Brooke Shields film. All the same it's an excellent track, sung with restraint and sure to be a last dance for many years to come.

MARC BOLAN: You Scare Me To Death (Cherry Red). Consistency was never one of Marc Bolan's strengths. When he was good he was brilliant but when he was bad he was awful — and this is indisputably bad. An early demo discovered and produced by Bolan's manager, Simon Napier-Bell, "as Marc would have done it if he were still alive", the single smacks of commercial overkill. Why else would single, album and forthcoming biography all have the same sensationalist title?



DAVE STEWART WITH
BARBARA GASKIN: It's My Party
(And I'll Cry If I Want To) (Stiff).
The second in Stewart's series of
"broken records" or
miscellaneous musical
meanderings, it's every bit as
good as the first, "What Becomes
Of The Broken Hearted". Again
Stewart has cleverly re-arranged
a classic single so that the charm