GivenCheap Trick's penchant for loudness and irreverence, you could argue that the members of this foursome are not so much creators as dedicated fans. Fortunately, "Heaven Tonight," the band's third and best album, presents a synthesis of the music of the Stones, the Who, etc., into a series of superbly crafted and cleverly arranged original songs. While Cheap Trick may not be remembered as lovingly as its primarily British predecessors—the group has, after all, paid for its musical megalomania, I suppose—the group's intelligence, wit, and charm will do just fine for now.

Not since the move (or more accurately, the rash of moves) of The Rolling Stones has a band hummed out power pop as irresistible and analytically Cheap Trick. "Heaven Tonight" has enough gorgeous harmonies, mellow melodies, two-fisted riffs and heavy-metal choruses to scare the kitten right out of Queen or Knack. However, impressive last year's "C'est La Vie" was (such a saturable group) recorded if Cheap Trick's new album has more force and precision—guitarist/vocalist Rick Nielsen comes across with Pete Townshend vengeance—it also comes with more innocence in its bubbly harmonies. And that's where the reason in the group's music resides.

There is probably not one melody, vocal harmony, or chord pattern on "Heaven Tonight" that honestly belongs to Cheap Trick. So what. Listening to this LP makes you feel as if you've witnessed a concert on "That Was Fun." Some of the vocals on "Scorcher" (whose electronic guitar effects and power chords re-create Wet Nett's), parodies those from the Hollies' "Carrie-Anne," "Stiff Competition," which borrows choruses from Pete Townshend's "Won't Get Fooled Again," contains harmonies that are reminiscent of the Beatles' "I Feel Fine." The vocal-williamowskytivity of "How Are You" bears a suspicious resemblance to the boony tone of "The Life." Further, lead singer Robin Zander successfully impersonates John Lennon (not unlike John Lennon'sclone, Jeff Lane). So it's no wonder that "Heaven Tonight" and "Tilts Me Back" suggest "Strawberry Field Forever" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," respectively. And so on.

Yet for all its stylistic eclecticism, "Heaven Tonight" never comes off as disheveled or off key. So compellingly monotonous as "Say Amen, I'll Usurp the Car," "Kamikaze you won't if you eat another evening/Goodbye" makes Cheap Trick, along with the Ramones, art rock practitioners of Andy Warhol's finest plebeys: "We should really stay babies for much longer than we do, now that we're living so mindlessly." Consider the phallicistic "Stiff Competition," on which Zander sings "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." Or "On the Radio," whose Pompous harangues brilliantly satirize and celebrate the Bay City Rollers in their prime.

However, admirable "Heaven Tonight" may be as an aural rock & roll encyclopedia, one wonders if Cheap Trick will continue to vie for its musical ideas from the past—an approach that could become tiresome—or eventually carve its own initials, I'm willing to find out.

Baltimore
Nina Simone
CTT 3844
By Stephen Holden

Happy to Be With You
Jean Carn
Philadelphia International
JZ 3988
By Joe McEwen

One could easily accuse Jean Carn of playing it safe. After all, it wasn't too long ago that Carn garnered a devoted cove of fans with her Afro-pop jive vocals. But "Happy to Be With You," like her Philadelphia International debut album, shows the singer working as a pleasant pop-and-soul stylist, very much in the mold of Nanny Wilson and Dionne Warwick. Though the effect is conservative, it does contain an easy sensuality and appealing snake mizing in her most ritualized jazz work. "Happy to Be With You" features no less than five cuts of producers, but the finest work here belongs to head honchos Gamble and Leon Huff, whose contributions are spicy and intelligent—just the