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**Their Music Flows**

**R** STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

**R** Their Second Album Includes RUN AWAY And CAN YOU SEE ME

**O**

Produced By John Palladino On Capitol Records And Tapes

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### Heaven Tonight

Cheap Trick

Epic JE 35512

By Mitchell Schneider

**G**IVEN CHEAP TRICK'S boisterous indebtedness to rock & roll history, you could argue that the members of this foursome are not so much creators as dedicated fans. Exactly. *Heaven Tonight*, the band's third and best album, practically synthesizes the music of the Beatles, the Who, et al., into a series of superbly crafted and cleverly arranged original songs. While Cheap Trick may not be remembered as lovingly as its primarily British antecedents—the price one has to pay for musical kleptomania, I suppose—the group's intelligence, verve and charm will do just fine for now.

Not since the Move (whose "California Man" is covered here) or the Raspberries has a band hammered out power pop as irresistibly and snappily as Cheap Trick. *Heaven Tonight* has enough gorgeous harmonies, zealous melodies, two-fisted riffs and heavy-metal chords to scare the kitsch right out of Queen or Kiss. However impressive last year's *In Color* was, it merely anticipated this record. If Cheap Trick now plays with more force and precision—guitarist/chief songwriter Rick Nielsen slashes away with Pete Townshend vengeance—it also comes on with more innocence in its bubbly harmonies. And that's where the tension 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 frenzied as a contestant on *Name That Tune*. Some of the vocals on "Surrender" (whose electronic guitar effects and power chords re-create *Who's Next*) duplicate those from the Hollies' "Carrie-Anne." "Stiff Competition," which borrows its chords from Pete Townshend's "Won't Get Fooled Again," contains harmonies that are reminiscent of the Beatles' "I Feel Fine." The vaudevilian frivolity of "How Are You" bears a suspicious resemblance to the bouncy part of "A Day in the

Life." Further, lead singer Robin Zander successfully impersonates John Lennon (not to mention Lennon's clone, Jeff Lynne). So it's no wonder that "Heaven Tonight" and "Takin' Me Back" suggest "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," respectively. And so on.

Yet for all its stylistic meticulousness, *Heaven Tonight* never comes off as detached or lofty. Such compellingly morose verse as "Sayonara oh suicide hari kari/Kamikaze you won't/See another evening/Goodbye" makes Cheap Trick, along with the Ramones, ardent practitioners of Andy Warhol's finest philosophy: "We should really stay babies for much longer than we do, now that we're living so much longer." Consider the phallicentric "Stiff Competition," on which Zander sings "The bigger they are—the harder they fall." Or "On the Radio," whose Pampers harmonies 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 swipe its musical ideas from the past—an approach that could become tedious—or eventually carve its own initials. I'm willing to find out.



Baltimore  
Nina Simone  
CTI 7084

By Stephen Holden

**B**ILLIE HOLIDAY and Frank Sinatra each had a moment late in their careers when, facing middle age, they turned a single song into a transcendent statement of what their lives had meant. Holiday elevated a torch song, "I'm a Fool to Want You," into a tragic prayer. Sinatra's "It Was a Very Good Year" summarized a mode of erotic nostalgia.

Nina Simone's first album in four years contains such a moment in Bernard Ighner's "Everything Must Change," a song previously recorded by George Benson and Judy Collins, but which Simone makes her own in a semioperatic version that risks everything to succeed. Phrasing in spontaneous

outbursts that vary in style from blunt speech-song to jazz-gospel melisma, the singer runs the emotional gamut from fear, sorrow and tenderness to a final exhilarating hiss of challenge. Set against a wash of strings and a tentative piano figure that retards the momentum, Simone's oracular baritone transforms "Everything Must Change" from a wistful philosophic morsel into a tough, anguished proclamation of survival and artistic independence. It is a moment to remember.

Except for an indifferent version of Hall and Oates' "Rich Girl," the new LP resounds with further tremors of self-renewal. The blinding anger that infused Simone's more recent records has attenuated into an eloquent moodiness. Indeed, the bulk of *Baltimore*'s material stresses love, reconciliation and the passage of time, and includes the definitive version of Judy Collins' haunting "My Father." While Creed Taylor's lush pop-R&B production provides adequate, if somewhat soupy background, the force of Nina Simone's personality has always been sufficient to render most producers irrelevant. *Baltimore* is a stunning comeback by one of the very greatest.



Happy to Be with You  
Jean Carn  
Philadelphia International  
JZ 34986

By Joe McEwen

**O**NE COULD EASILY accuse Jean Carn of playing it safe. After all, it wasn't too long ago that Carn garnered a devoted cult of fans with her Afro-prop jazz vocals. But *Happy to Be with You*, like her Philadelphia International debut, shows the singer working as a pleasant pop-soul stylist, very much in the mold of Nancy Wilson and Dionne Warwick. Though this effort is conservative, it does contain an easy sensuality and appealing spunk missing in her more ritualized jazz work.

*Happy to Be with You* features no less than five sets of producers, but the finest work here belongs to head men Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff, whose contributions are spry and intelligent—just the