



Get Nervous
Pat Benatar

Chrysalis
★★★★½

THE MOST STRIKING thing about *Get Nervous*, Pat Benatar's fourth and easily best album, is her increased vocal power. As she throws darts at ex-lovers, Benatar manages to sound more assertive and cockier than ever by varying her phrasing and biting right into the lyrics. And because Benatar's commitment to her trademark I-will-survive-and-you-will-suffer approach is so strong, she generally is able to make one forget that these songs lack much in the way of emotional range.

Produced by Neil Geraldo and Peter Coleman, *Get Nervous* is immediately distinguished from Benatar's previous albums by its bigger sound. Geraldo's screaming guitar passages and rhythmic jabs are now matched by the bright keyboard and synthesizer work of new band member Charles Giordano, and the result is high-rent hard rock. Pushed by her powerful backing band, Benatar rises up against the men who've abused her, demanding to be treated right and vowing to break out on her own. "I need more than your bedside manner/I need someone to love," she sings in "I'll Do It." Although she's nowhere as lethal as, say, the Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde, Benatar projects plenty of strength here and sounds more comfortable with her woman-of-steel persona than on previous records.

In the end, it might be argued

Outcome

Jackie kisses
As if her mouth
Depended on it

You've just there

—RICHARD RUSSELL

that the music on this LP takes no real risks; "The Victim," for instance, dredges up every heavy-metal cliché imaginable. But on its own terms, *Get Nervous* is a step forward for Pat Benatar.

—MITCHELL SCHNEIDER



The Nightfly
Donald Fagen

Warner Bros.
★★★★½

STEELY DAN'S LONG-smoldering fascination with the smoky midnight mysteries of *le jazz cool* and the twisted romantic scenes played out under its influence is raised to the art of concept album on this debut solo LP by Donald Fagen, the group's singer and cowriter. Drawing on his own adolescence for these "fantasies" (as he calls them in a brief liner note), Fagen re-creates the illusion of the hip, big-city jazz DJ, a real gone ghoul ruling the evening airwaves in the late Fifties and early Sixties with a quiet, stylish authority that speaks directly to the imagination of an awkward but hopeful teenager curled up with a radio in his suburban bedroom.

The opening cut, "I.G.Y. (International Geophysical Year)," may sound more like supper-club soul than the passionate jazz of someone like Sonny Rollins. But the shadowy understatement of the muted horns and Fagen's spry turns on a synthesized blues harp heighten the song's naive future-gazing ("A just machine to make big decisions/Programmed by fellows with compassion and vision"), at the same time sharpening the slyly disguised cynicism in Fagen's clichéd chorus ("What a beautiful world this will be/What a glorious time to be free"). Similarly, the ersatz Latin swing of "New Frontier" is appropriate both to Fagen's droll party-in-a-bomb-shelter imagery and the effervescent desires of the homebound youth, who equates Dave Brubeck's jazzy piano and the wild blond who possesses "a touch of Tuesday Weld"