

Siberry offers alternative to formu

POP

**The Speckless Sky
Jane Siberry**

DSR 31039

This is a more left-field extension of Siberry's album, *No Borders Here*, with less interest in whimsical pop, and more in atmospheric sound and vocal textures. Siberry's abstract poetry is supported by a multi-layered mosaic of sounds: principally the Fairlight computer synthesizer, her girlish overdub voices, spoken and chanted lyrics, chunky rhythms and Pat Metheny-style, quiescent keyboards-guitar tones.

Occasionally, Siberry's rarefied experiments fall flat (the song, *Vladimir*, *Vladimir* could live without the lengthy soundscape introduction), but most succeed as a stimulating alternative to the big, bland, three-minute, well-crafted pop song that currently rules the world.

**No Rest For The Wicked
New Model Army**

Sat-12432

More to-the-barricades-with-the-guitars anthems from a well-intentioned English post-punk band. Without either the raw, didactic anger of California's *The Dead Kennedys*, nor the craft and talent of their biggest influence, *The Clash*, England's *New Model Army* blusters along, armed only with shop-worn, rock-and-roll riffs and some good haranguing tunes, in an attempt to save the world through rock and roll. Lots of luck, blokes.

**The Head On The Door
The Cure**

Elektra 96-0431

Between the extremes of ingratiating cuteness and plaintive anxiety, *The Cure's* singer-songwriter-guitarist, Robert Smith, has managed to keep all sorts of fans off-balance. *The Head On The Door* is a nice compromise between both poles: an engaging set of melodies, and enough lyrical substance that makes it clear that Smith has enough brains to be more than just another of the pretty pop faces that rule the English charts. This is both musically sophisticated and cute.

Much of the charm of his previous work has been the dark-fingered guitar work; here much of the guitar is acoustic, and the rest is background to support the tunes; the flourishes are provided by flutes, violins and synthesizers. Already, Smith has reached the next musical stage beyond the current vogue of neo-psychedelia — bringing the musical experiments back to the service of good songs.

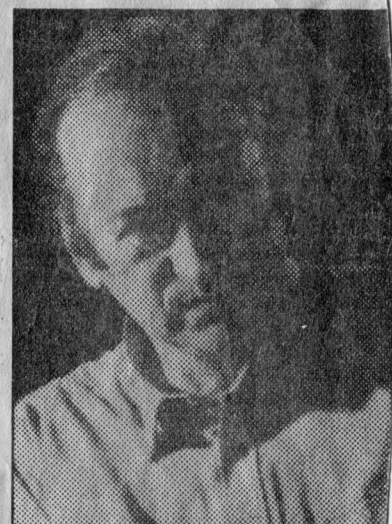
**Miami Vice
Music From
The Television Show**

MCA 6150

The TV series, *Miami Vice*, inspired by Brian De Palma's *Scarface*, and a NBC executive's two word memo idea — "MTV cops" — is usually centred around cocaine use, and the charged-up night life



**INSIDE
THE SLEEVE**



**Below, New Model Army;
Jane Siberry; and
Nikolaus Harnoncourt**

element in the ensemble's sound. Until the music of *Hidden Shade* makes it onto vinyl, it is available for \$9.50 from 1201-207 W. Hasting St., Vancouver, V6B 1H7.

that goes along with the drug.

The song selection, by Jan Hammer, is excellent — big rhythm tracks, and that cold, wired quality to the arrangements which is often associated with cocaine use as well. Included here are such songs as Don Henley's *Smuggler's Blues*; Chaka Khan's *Own The Night*; Glenn Frey's *You Belong To The City*; Phil Collins' *In The Air*, and Tina Turner's *Better Be Good To Me*.

As a promotional gimmick, those comical people at MCA also included a baggie filled with white powder (it's dextrose — the cocaine lookalike substance used in *Scarface*) in each record sleeve. When you keep in mind how cocaine has already turned dozens of music executives into sniffing idiots, you can understand why the record industry feels the need to promote the stuff.

Liam Lacey

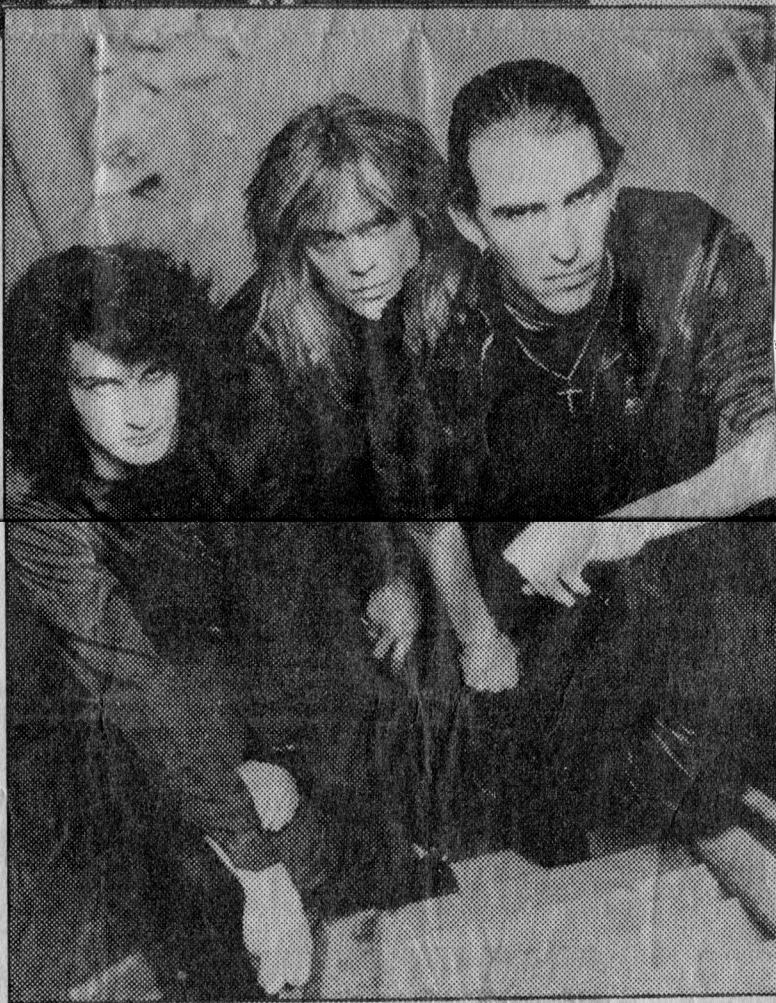
JAZZ

**Hidden Shades
Paul Plimley Octet**

Independent cassette

It's only mild exaggeration to suggest that the most interesting jazz to come out of Canadian recording studios these days rarely makes it as far as LP, but stalls at that marketing halfway house, the cassette. The creative spirits in Montreal have negotiated their way around this stumbling block; those in Vancouver, like pianist/vibraphonist Paul Plimley, are still working on it.

Plimley's *Hidden Shades* is most impressive for the homogeneity of his octet's style and sound in light



of the breadth of his musical references. Plimley's writing (for three reeds, two brass and three rhythm) is on display here, more so than the strengths of his solos or soloists, and his writing is often gorgeous in its color and melodic design. He touches a lot of bases, from early Cecil

Taylor (there's an allusion to Taylor's *Bulbs* from the *In the Hot* sessions) to a swaying sort of pattern music. Rhythmically, it can be a little static, but drummer Buff Allen keeps things ticking nicely; the evocative lead alto saxophone of Graham Ord is another dominant