

The Aquarian/November 29-December 6, 1978 36 (10-A)

POSSIBLY PLATINUM

THE FRILL IS GONE



**Yes/Tormato/
Atlantic**

by James Robbins

When you talk about Yes, song length often leads the discussion. As their songs grew, so did their musical complexity and their distance from mainstream rock and roll. By *Close To The Edge*, their fifth album, they perfected a style of elaborate polyrhythmic arrangements that owe more to Paul Winter and Gustav Mahler than to Bo Diddley or Buddy Holly. It was a style that ran its cosmic course with *Tales From Topographic Oceans*, a double album that was theoretically one composition divided into four parts only because of manufacturing limits.

Now, with *Tormato*, their 11th album, Yes has taken the straightforward rock concerns of last year's *Going For The One* and produced a record that cuts even closer to the no-frills tone of *The Yes Album*. In the process, the group eliminates schizorhythmic opuses like "Awaken" and all the other lengthy aural canvases archtypical of its 10-year career. The album has eight songs, none of which exceeds eight minutes, something of a record for this band.

"Future Times," a kind of rock march, immediately pulls in the listener with the parading force of Chris Squire on bass and Alan White on military snare drum. Rick Wakeman's fluttering Polymoog and Steve Howe's airy guitar mingle nicely around this neo-Sousa motif. On "Rejoice," which follows with hardly a

pause, vocalist Jon Anderson gives the poetic tune a feeling reminiscent of "The Preacher The Teacher" passage in "And You and I."

Yes gets down to grittier business in "Don't Kill The Whale," released as a single in England. This time, Howe's guitar is heavier. For the directness of the music and the message, Wakeman acts the perfect foil, the funky strains of his Birotron suggesting the sounds of a whale.

On "Release, Release," another rocker, Anderson rails against confusion, pressure, and the "craziness of power" in relentless staccato phrasing. The verse yields to a piercing drum solo more akin to Keith Moon's explosiveness than to the exoticism of White's work on "The Ritual." Howe takes over with Page-like riffing, which gradually leads back into Anderson's frenetic vocals. The angry song (clocking in at 5:40) leaves you breathless.

Although *Tormato* avoids spotlighting any one musician, White nevertheless stands out for the first time since he replaced Bill Bruford six years ago. His skill seals the success of Yes' own *Get Back*. In fact, as producers, Yes has mixed his percussive parts so far up front (a great move), you wonder whether Fleetwood Mac provided a tip or two.

It's not surprising then that the two ballads that reduce the drummer to bell trees and crotales constitute the lp's lamest eight minutes. Granted, Wakeman and Howe are masters on the harpsichord and Spanish guitar of "Madrigral," but after the energy of the rest of the lp, that and "Onward" simply lose your attention. Besides, they pale next to "Wonderous Stories" and "To Be

Over," the best of Yes' calmer moments.

Squire's random chopping on Rickenbacker bass and White's fervent snare drum stabs and rolls give a jazz slant to the opening of "On The Silent Wings Of Freedom." Further on, Howe and Wakeman, in separate solos, evoke the flashy rock spirit of *Fragile*. Slowing down briefly, the song yields to haunting church bells as Anderson wails about the "torture of being one." His vocal performance on the record will not interest enemies of his high-pitched tones, but his lyrics are generally more down to earth.

Anderson does, however, indulge his taste for sci-fi fantasy in "Circus Of Heaven," distinguished by an appealing reggae bass line, and "Arriving UFO," co-written with Wakeman. Alternately melodic/chaotic synthesizers dominate "UFO," which reflects the keyboardist's noted fascination with close encounters of all three kinds.

Despite some spacy playfulness and the jubilant allusion to "ten true summers" in "Rejoice," the manic lyrics elsewhere suggest the band's outlook is in a state of flux. In "Release, Release" and "Silent Wings," the references to straitjackets, anarchy, and the 40-second screampdown" (the 19th nervous breakdown of the 1980s?) reveal that Yes has been feeling dangerously restricted, possibly by the shackles of its own past artiness more than anything else. But then, Anderson sings "Rock is the medium of our generation," hinting that a more unfettered brand of rock is the remedy for this repression and unrest. From the concise, driving sound of *Tormato*, Yes has taken this remedy. And it works.

—★—

BORDERING ON BOREDOM



**Valerie Carter/
Wild Child/
Columbia**

by Lydia Carole Disbrow

Valerie Carter, author of "Cook With Honey," a song made famous by Judy Collins, musters the

used a host of noted back-up musicians and singers. Everyone from Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne to Lowell George and John Sebastian did a spot on the lp. As a debut, it was exceptional.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about *Wild Child*. There are no guest appearances, and Carter's voice, although still as strong, is monotonous and doesn't hold up alone. The feeling would be fine if

variety of songs

real talent. I don't know if it's honey that's needed here, but there are some missing ingredients.

(No. 2)

—★—

OK

★
Sou
audio
App
album
recent
interp
the sp
seriou
but n
ventur
territ
point