

PLATTERS

Time to hang up your cowboy boots?

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

THE EAGLES:
One Of These Nights"
(Asylum)

IF THE Eagles are ever going to sell records in vast quantities over here, this has to be the album that breaks the ice.

And as it happens "One Of These Nights", released simultaneously in America and Britain on June 20, is probably the band's first wrong step.

Until now they've had a flawless career, releasing three albums that rank among some of the hottest this decade. Nevertheless the British public have stoically refused to pick up on the band, even resisting the heavy radio play the last two singles received.

In America the group have no problems as far as selling power goes. This album will probably march up the US album charts with all the assurance of a jet-plane taking to the skies.

So what's gone wrong here? For a start a lot of that characteristic Eagles' freshness, still evident on their third album "On The Border", has disappeared; making records doesn't sound like too much fun for The Eagles any more.

Moreover they've gone in for an even more commercial ap-

proach here, (which continues the pattern set by "On The Border", which had been more commercial than the first two albums), to the extent where some of the music comes across as self-parody.

Witness "Hollywood Waltz" where the melody line, vocal and whole approach is far too familiar, even if the song is taken at waltz time.

Perhaps The Eagles are now more interested in selling records than making good music, because overall the music lacks total commitment. It seems as if the group have overstated their most commercial devices in a bid to achieve even more success.

But most important is the fact that The Eagles aren't writing as well as they used to. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the closing tracks on each side.

A six-minute instrumental "Journey Of The Sorcerer" closes side one. The Eagles have no business making this kind of music, which amounts to little more than bad soundtrack muzak. The melody's slender, the arrangement dull and then there's side two's closing "I Wish You Peace", an over-hours ballad with heavily handed strings that has more in common with Chicago (and it really hurts me to say that) than



"Uh-huh, we'd better push on.
The opposition seems to be catching up".

it does with The Eagles.

Fortunately things aren't that bad. In fact those two numbers are the only bad cuts on the album, but there are a couple more which are just ordinary, "Take It To The Limit" and "Visions". The former has a melody reminiscent of their buddy Jackson Browne's "Late For The Sky" song, most definitely not such a bad thing in itself, but again the strings are heavily handled, not to mention superfluous anyway, and the arrangement is dull.

"Visions", a rocker, isn't really much of a song at all and would only make it as a filler on an album crammed with goodies.

On the positive side, the two opening cuts "One Of These Nights" and "Too Many Hands" show the band at their best.

"One Of These Nights" has to be the single (yeah, maybe that could break the band here). With an intro that pushes the bass riff right up front and an appealing chord progression, it demonstrates the band at their rock 'n' roll best. The guitar solo which starts off high and piercing, and ends up as a purr, is great and Glenn Frey (The Eagles' best vocalist) sings about searching for the perfect woman in true Sin City style, "I bin searching for the daughter of the devil himself/I bin searching for an angel in white/I bin searching for a woman who's a little of both."

Great stuff, but even here Bill

Szymczyk, a producer usually known for his diamond-hard preciseness, could have done better. Over-all the production is lacking in any depth. Maybe it's just that my test pressing is at fault.

Anyway, the following "Too Many Hands" is good too and once more allows The Eagles to show their prowess as an electric rock 'n' roll band (these days the group are about 90 per cent a rock band and about 10 per cent a country-rock band).

Lyricaly "Too Many Hands" covers familiar ground in that once more they're singing about a faithless woman. Instrumentally the group use tablas and either banjos or mandolins (I can't make up my mind which) which bolster the arrangement. There's also a shade of Stephen Stills in there, especially on the intro.

Despite their lack of originality (for The Eagles) "Hollywood Waltz" and "Lyn' Eyes", both illustrate the lighter side of the band and are more than okay.

At six minutes (way too long for its predictable chord structure) "Lyn' Eyes" is all low-key acoustic strumming, tasteful guitar fills and a lyric that once again tells the story of an old lady cheatin' on her old man.

There you have it; over-all a disappointing album from one of the hottest bands around. It isn't quite lame enough to make you want to trade in your cowboy boots. Probably, as with Steely Dan and "Katy Lied", this album — their fourth and weakest to date — could ironically be the one to break the band in this country.

Steve Clarke