

consistent. Somehow it gets past the fuzzy symbolism in "68 Guns," the vague vignettes of the disenfranchised in "We Are The Light," "Shout To The Devil" and "Howling Wind" need some editing and structure, both verbal and compositional. "Tell Me" has a hushed, pained acoustic opening, then vaults up into the militant tone and tempo that gets to be a bit too familiar and, thereby, ineffective by the end of the record. Declaration has some great lines (such as "Where Were You Hiding" as "selling out is a cardinal sin/sinning with a safety net") and some truly great moments (the last half of "Howling Wind"), but even the brave folks at the front lines need to put their fists down once a day and get to the quiet internal locale where "the courage to keep on marching" gets born.

Problems and all, Declaration is worth your cash and your time. Like Big Country and U2, the Alarm poses the theory that the '60s fight for a loving human world has actually been strengthened, not stopped, by the '70s pragmatism and self-absorption. It's been too corny for 15 years and now, suddenly, here it is again—music about hope and change and with the loaded-gun courageousness to do it.

Laura Fisinger



Their music conked out, but their hair didn't.

achieve mystery and impact. Jim Carroll has grown into the role of recording artist—he's now a true electric poet moving with startling confidence and grace.

In retrospect, it's understandable it took this long for Jim Carroll the singer/songwriter to mature. He had been a published writer for years and years but a comparative newcomer to the world of words and music. Mere time alone, though, is not a sufficient explanation for this growth. (Nor is a decrease in methadone dose, as one smart aleck suggested.) It is more: Carroll has forgotten who he wants to be, who he is supposed to be, and who he's expected to represent.

The difference here is that Carroll is finally painting, not just pointing. The lyrics sheet is withheld here by intent, not budgetary restrictions. He wants us to listen, not read.

And listen we do, with pleasure. "Love Crispes" is the perfect opening track: crisp and quick, melodic and commercial. Radio should have no problem playing this (or Side Two's first song, "Freddy's Store"). Despite the macho and swagger of the character ("Billy") we can still identify with his vulnerability: "Jealousy rose up right from its hole/just when I thought I had it all under control." "Freddy's Store" sounds like a New York munitions version of "L.A. Woman" replete with powerful images—and speaking of Jim Morrison (who wrote "Nothing left open and no time to decide"), Carroll goes him one for one updating that choice: "It's too much head and not much heart/if you think about the end it might never start." The Doom influence is also evident on "Black Romance," where Carroll muses, "I put a sign on my brain/it said 'Do Not Disturb,' but the maids keep walking in.../And they're making beds inside my

head/I wish they'd throw everything out instead."

And speaking of poets, were Arthur Rimbaud today alive and living in New York, it is not inconceivable the very first line he would write would be this one from "(No More) Luxuries": "C'est la vie...the color T.V." And he would no doubt proceed to take on the same Warhol consciousness this song attacks. Perhaps the best single line of the LP is on the album's closer, "Dance The Night Away," as Carroll sings, "I reach in the drawer and I take out respect...it doctors this sickness: it took years to perfect." What's significant here is that the "respect" mentioned could be anything: we all have our drawers that we reach in for help, and the bottom line is that it really doesn't matter whether it's a drug or a shirt or a book or a bible. We're all sick and we're all sinners and though

Jim recently began including making as part of his act.



Chick Weber/PhotoDisc

Carroll can't diagnose the problem, he can fill out the prescription to "Dance The Night Away."

The only filler on the record is the cover of "Sweet Jane"—done better by both Lou Reed and Mott The Hoople. It's a throwaway which may go over well live but here simply takes up space. The only other complaint is that Carroll still retains the annoying habit of shrilling the ends of words. But these are really minor quibbles over flaws on the surface of what sturdily remains a vibrant, glowing landscape of rock 'n' roll at its most beautiful. We'd be smart first and fortunate later to not let this boy slip out of our sight unappreciated.

Danny Sugerman

NENA 99 Luftballons (Epic)

If you don't already have a crush on Nena Kemner for the sweetly tumbling gutturals of her vocals, and the sexiness of her hands-in-pockets stride, then you haven't had your MTV or FM tuned in for the past



months. I had never heard of Nena (Nena is a group, as they used to say about Blondie) until I accidentally caught their "99 Luftballons" video on MTV at 9:30 one barren redecay winter morning, but since then I haven't been able to get enough of Nena and that propulsive song on my radio and TV.

Which were the best places to find Nena for a long time, as unlike most recent "overnight" phenoms, Nena didn't yet have a U.S. album out when the heavy rotation started. I bided my time with the single, employing my wretched college-German vocabulary to effect: a laborious word-by-word translation of "99 Luftballons." I gathered enough of the sense of the song to feel that it was an anti-war anthem of sorts, no big deal after the U.S. success of pop moralizers like U2, etc., but still the concept of real Krauts singing in real Kraut and being loved for that in the States seemed to possess the makings of a man-bites-Alsatian story.

Nena's album is finally available in U.S. release now, and while it obviously contains our bright-spot title tune, I have to report that there's no



JIM CARROLL I Write Your Name (Atlantic)

It is the Universal Language he seeks; the alphabet of the soul, pristine and indestructible. By means of it the poet, who is the lord of imagination and the unacknowledged ruler of the world, communicates, holds communion, with his fellow man.

--Henry Miller on Arthur Rimbaud,

Time Of The Assassins
I Write Your Name is the album Jim Carroll always wanted to make and should have made but couldn't until now. This is the one; not his other two. He showed great promise on the first, fell on his fair-skinned face on the second; now here comes the third pitch and the red-headed former athlete-cum-junkie/writer belts a home run. No longer just a poetic punk with famous friends relying on history and reputation to