

By PETER GODDARD  
Star rock critic

Rock narrowed its scope this year: Fewer artists, mostly big names, recorded more albums. Still, there's enough variety around for someone to find something for just about anybody.

33 1/2, George Harrison. Dark Horse Records DH 3005. Here we have an ex-Beatle singing True Love, which Grace Kelly and Bing Crosby recorded for High Society. Do you need any more evidence that the silent Beatle has mellowed somewhat?

Best Of Leon, Leon Russell. Shelter Records 9309-52004. The music on this greatest hits effort, from the man who once made Joe Cocker what he was, ranges from good gospel stuff like Delta Lady to ballads like Song For You. The voice, as ever, is unmistakable — a gruff squawk recorded in stereo.

Never Too Tender, Offenbach. A&M SP 9025. This is the first effort by a major

# Rock superstars are recording more big albums

Quebec band to break into English-speaking Canada (Maneige, another Quebec group, tried more than a year ago, but used French material). Offenbach wants you to know they've arrived. This is a loud, raunchy album and quite impressive as a debut.

A Night At The Opera, Queen. Elektra 7E-1053. One of the best albums of the year by one of England's best bands. One suspects that if Gilbert and Sullivan were alive today they'd be writing the kind of inventive and witty music Queen is producing.

Rock'N'Roller, Kiss. Casablanca NBLP7037. This

is the perfect Christmas present for the kid who likes to paste white pancake make-up all over his or her face, listens to music at top volume and keeps mumbling about "boogie." Caution: do not play this album within a mile of a Lawrence Welk freak or you may be responsible for a cardiac arrest.

Dreamboat Annie, Heart. Mushroom MRS 5005. The San Francisco sound 10 years later. This Vancouver-based band has been one of the big surprises of the year, with their solid live performances and the first-rate rock on this album.

Big Beat, Sparks. Columbia PC 34359. There's something wholesome about a band that can record a tune, as Sparks does here, called Everybody's Stupid and mean it. If you don't take Sparks too seriously, though, you can have a lot more fun. This is rock for those who hate Led Zeppelin.

Hometown Boy Makes Good, Elvin Bishop. Capricorn CP 0176. This former blues guitarist is now out to make some hits. But as commercial as Bishop tries to be here, there's still far more substance to his music than you would find on any Olivia Newton-John effort.

Hejira, Joni Mitchell. Asylum 7ES-1987. We tend to listen to each new Joni Mitchell album as we might to a coded message broadcast across enemy lines. What's she really talking about? Who? What's happening with her life now? The music here is much more open. One song, Amelia — about Amelia Earhart — is especially appealing. You sense that some of the singer's reserve has slipped, at least the kind of reserve she maintains while recording, as she actually lets you feel what she's feeling.

## The proof is in -- jazz lives

Most major record companies won't touch jazz with a long-playing needle these days because it doesn't sell enough. This of course has only helped the quality and diversity of recorded jazz. Little companies, it seems, are willing to take big risks — and actually record what's good, whether it will sell or not.

Clark Terry And His Jolly Giants. Vanguard VSD 79365. This veteran trumpeter and flugelhornist is probably the sanest man in jazz. This album just bubbles with his good spirits through tunes like Charlie Parker's The Hymn and Terry's own Samba De Gumz.

Country Place, Don Thompson. PM Records PMR-008. Bassist-pianist Thompson's talents are so considerable that no album seems to be able to contain them all. On this exceptional album he restricts himself to piano and vibraphone, leaving the bass work to Gene Perla, the drumming to Joe LaBar-

bera. This is small-group jazz with an enormous punch.

Commitment, Jim Hall. A&M Records A&M SP-715. This is an album of hors d'oeuvres. Everything's so different, everything's so tasty, that you don't mind that it's all not meatier. Guitarist Hall is, as usual, the master of the mellow tone.

Arbour Zena, Keith Jarrett. ECM 1070. This pianist is probably the only member of jazz's latest avant garde who actually sells records in any quantity. He's the Debussy of his generation: The surface of his music always seems more tranquil than it is, while the ideas flowing underneath have their own unique logic.

Windjammer, Freddie Hubbard. Columbia PC 34166. The new jazz gone Hollywood. Still, Hubbard's a formidable player, and he knows how to choose songs to shape an album so that it will eventually reach a rock as well as strictly jazz audience. —P.G.

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