


Courtney Jaye

Traveling Light

Island Records 

Courtney Jaye is a singer-songwriter on her way to winning the respect of many people who appreciate good coffeehouse performers. While her debut effort may not break big like Jewel's did in the Nineties, she'll certainly hold onto her niche on the national level. Jaye has a naturally sweet, smooth vocal approach that she wraps around her songs with honesty and tenderness. However, I'm not implying that Jaye can approach the songwriting skills of Carly Simon, Dolly Parton, or Shania Twain: not one of her songs has that gripping lyrical melodrama of top 40 stardom.

Jaye may not have a one-in-a-million voice, but she compensates for that with solid craftsmanship. Each song plays out with a strong narrative arc in the ballads she has written. The songwriter, though, does not have hit single potential. Her songs do not become catchy enough for that kind of success. She makes her mark by writing music that discriminating listeners will relate to personally and respect artistically.

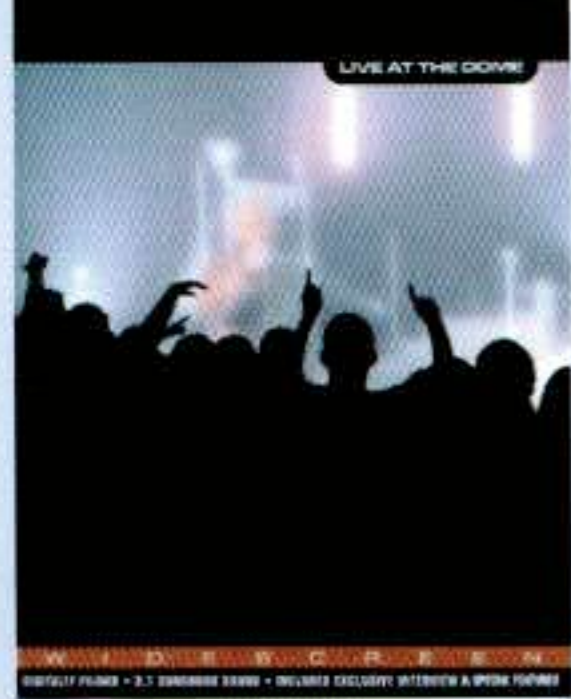
Her songwriting prowess functions along the lines of composition, with each bar and measure designed to augment her vocal agility. Her backing band make the most of their chops to bring vibrancy to her songs. Still, she cannot rise to the level of writing catchy hooks. She does, though, put together fairly intricate songs. This will help her to catch on with intelligent listeners who appreciate a good voice and a well-constructed melody.

-Bill Copeland



The Human League: *Live at the Dome*

THE HUMAN LEAGUE 



Even at the age of seven, I was listening to British synthesizer pop. I'm not sure what the other kids

League: *Live at the Dome* takes you back about two decades. I like Oakley's currently-bald head, especially because his recognizable vocals remain as they were in 1984. The music? Dated, of course, but I wouldn't want it any other way. The show charts the band's metamorphosis from an experimental electronic act to synthesizer pop wunderkind. They also play a few of their newer tracks, such as "Love Me Madly" and "The Snake."

If you're the casual Human League fan, don't despair. The group's most notable hits are here— "(Keep Feeling) Fascination" and the ubiquitous "Human."


What would a Human League show be without "Don't You Want Me?" In addition to performing it live in Brighton, the Extras portion of the DVD features a bittersweet clip of the band performing the popular track during Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

-Melinda Green

were listening to, but I was digging bands like the Human League. The group distinguished themselves from similar acts because their use of real vocals were as crucial to their music as the keyboard and drum machines. The popular 1980s trio of Philip Oakley, Susan Anne Sulley, and Joanne Catherall are still kicking and they sound remarkably good. They can still pack a massive venue with faithful renditions of their catchy classics while successfully interjecting new material.

Recorded in Brighton on the last stop of their "reunion" tour in 2003, Human

The Receiving End of Sirens *Between The Heart And The Synapse*

Triple Crown/East West 



This Boston-based band plays with a strong sense of urgency. The rhythm section pounds. The lead guitar pulses. And lead singer Casey Crescenzo pours energy into every high-strung verse. Bass and drums lock into solid patterns. The drummer slaps home each song with quick, snappy rolls that he plays over his heavy beat. Not only does he make the songs sound cool, he mans the main engine driving this rocket ship. Guitar solos and bridges sail over a driving beat while a singer emotes his heart out. The intensity of heavy metal gets fired and melded by the bracing smack of hard rock here. "The Evidence" finds Crescenzo putting the right touches to this tale of con-

cealing oneself from the world. He belts new life into the song on each chorus. The Receiving End Of Sirens unveil an experimental, mellow side with a spacey tune called "The War On All Against All" that provided the perfect break and sharp contrast to the explosive rock that comes before and after. The CD ties together nicely as a whole with the inventive lead guitar work that graces it way through each song. Guitar effects dovetail around the rhythms without blocking the bass and drums energy charging through this work. The Receiving End Of Sirens have given us a finely tuned document that surges without getting too self-indulgent and over the top.

-Bill Copeland