

## Phonograph

November 1974

BADFINGER: “Wish You Were Here”

Ken Barnes

Badfinger have finally made the album I always hoped they would – an album whose tracks all match the standards of their brilliant Apple singles. *No Dice* has a few great cuts, but was inconsistent and rather drastically overrated since it came out at a time 60s-influenced pop-rockers were extremely scarce. *Straight Up* was a considerable improvement, but the last Apple (understandably, being a rather hastily-assembled affair) and the first Warners albums were marred by a disturbingly proportion of sub-standard material.

*Wish You Were Here*, though, is stronger than *Straight Up*, and the band seems recharged with enthusiasm. All their patented strengths are displayed – those sterling harmonies, delightful riffs, tuneful melodies and an essential economy keeping everything sharp and concise. The album is bursting with hits – or tracks that eminently deserve to become hits but probably don’t stand a chance, as the record representatives of a two-year-old British group competing in the Billy Preston/Olivia Newton-John radio jungle. Top single choice by me is the opener, “Just A Chance,” a terrific pop-rocker which grabs your attention in the first five seconds like the best rock & roll always does, and evokes favorable comparisons with the best Badfinger singles to date, “Baby Blue” and “No Matter What.”

But similar delights abound – there’s not a weak track on the album. ‘You’re So Fine’ and “Some Other Time” are my other upbeat favorites, while on the ballad side “Gotta Get Out Of Here” and “Love Time” stand out. The best thing about the album, though, is not so much the individual tracks as the way it plays so superbly as an entity – there’s nothing to skip, nothing to turn off. *Wish You Were Here* is a sparkling album, easily one of the years’ best.