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Reviews

C I U B S

nor ridiculously simple, the band's material is characterized by obvious hooks and strong melodies.

□ Musicianship: Mixed Emotions is a tight unit, the kind that reminds you of the old axiom, "a place for everything, and everything in its place." Save for a couple of fine turns by Lange on "Lady Doll" and "The Ram," there was little soloing to speak of, as the band concentrated on songs over personalities. Kirkorian was a marvel at pulling the right sound from his synthesizer. In "Only Human," his harmonica-like wail added the perfect extra dimension and gave the song its distinct flavor.

□ Performance: It was a straight-ahead set. Two things, though, took away from the music. The first was the overuse of the old smoke machine, which seemed to take each song into as a signal to belch it out again. The second was a similar reliance on echo. Robin's voice was clear, powerful, and dynamic; and supported as it was by the find backing vocals from the band, he simply didn't need the extra electronic help. A personable figure onstage, Robin related well to the audience. While his partners served mainly as backup, he provided the necessary focal point for the group.

□ Summary: Mixed Emotions put on a very enjoyable, if somewhat predictable, show. I kept waiting for a killer song that would knock my socks off, but it never came. Perhaps it would've been the scheduled encore, where the mavens of the Troubadour (despite the pleas of the crowd) refused to let them perform. In any case, they are a solid band. Keep an eye on them. —Steve Hecox

Bachelors Anonymous

Be-Bop Records
Reseda

□ The Players: David Berg, vocals; Robert Hughes, vocals, flute.

□ Material: The Bachelors are performance artists and social realists. Dealing principally with the trials and tribulations of modern gay life, this duo pulls



Bachelors Anonymous: This gay duo stresses the irony inherent in their material and in their lives.

no punches. Unlike certain more mainstream gay artists, Bachelors Anonymous refuse to dilute either their anger or their realism. As such, they are probably best taken in small doses by the uninitiated. Their five-song set here did feature some wonderful numbers. "Looking for You" is a dreamy ballad, "Victor the Beefcake" is bouncy and silly, and their version of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" should garner them some well-deserved attention come Christmastime. My only recommendation would be to shorten some of the numbers. Arrangements tended to be stretched out to make room for the band's theatrics. What works in a live setting is sometimes extremely difficult to transfer to vinyl.

□ Musicianship: What wonderful voices! Both Bachelors are obviously well-trained in classical harmony, and they make great use of their knowledge. Parts were defined and flawless at all times, and the two voices blended smoothly. Musicianship on the backing tapes, mostly keyboards, was competent though low-key (so as not to distract from the live show).

□ Performance: The black-garbed duo, with Berg dressed as a priest, stress the irony inherent in their material and their lives. It is a beautiful world and a good life, they seem to be saying, but one that can turn mean at the next press conference. Nowhere is this underlined with more intensity than during "Looking for You." The two stand facing the audience, Hughes searching through field glasses and Berg sighting through the viewfinder of a gun. Of course, not all is seriousness—they can be extremely lighthearted as well; nevertheless, I was always expecting that undercurrent of danger to rear its ugly head. Life is like

that sometimes, and you do not have to be gay to understand. My only qualm in this category is that Berg relied quite heavily on facial expressions to get his points across. While this kind of thing is effective in spades at a place as intimate as Be-Bop, it would be lost in a larger venue.

□ Summary: The Bachelors are planning soon to back off from live performance in order to concentrate on their recordings. This is a move that I highly disagree with. Songwise, they pretty much have a salable product just the way it stands. They could keep those long versions for live and simply tighten up the product for release. What they *seriously* need to do, though, is to start viewing themselves as a larger act. The guy by the back bar will never see those facial expressions, and unless one is paying attention, it is easy to miss some of the subtleties of the stage show. This is a group with a firm grasp on their substance; now they need to develop a wider style. —Tom Kidd

American Martyrs Club Lingerie Hollywood

□ The Players: Michael Kelly, vocals; Jeff Coulter, drums; Bryan Coulter, guitar; Michael Gilson, guitar; Bill Bowman, bass guitar.

□ Material: Those who admire Stan Ridgway and Wall of Voodoo will find that American Martyrs have the same sense of mindbending poetic lyrics, but set to guitars rather than WOY's synthesizer. The Martyrs manage to sound folksy without being folk, experimental without being esoteric, and new wave without being dated.

□ Musicianship: Much of the band's appeal lies in Michael Kelly's voice—it's one of the