

First Half Holds Chart Surprises

Mendes, Bowie Hit While Cross, Fonda Fall Short

By PAUL GREIN

LOS ANGELES—Sometimes it seems the only predictable thing about the music business is its unpredictability. Who would have thought, in January, that Sergio Mendes, David Bowie and the Tubes would all collect top 10 hits by mid-year, or that George Clinton, Mtume and Gladys Knight & the Pips would all reach No. 1 on the black singles chart?

Who'd have guessed that Christopher Cross' followup to a quadruple platinum debut album would fall short of the top 10, or that Jane Fonda's followup to a robust-selling exercise album would fail to hit the top 100?

Every year has its share of unexpected hits and misses, and '83 has been no exception. Here are some key albums from the past six months that have done significantly better or worse than might have been expected. First, the disappointments:

1. **"Another Page," Christopher Cross, Warner Bros.** Cross' 1980 debut album sold four million copies and won five Grammy Awards. No one expected this followup to do that well, but most expected it to at least hit the top 10.

2. **"Jane Fonda's Workout Record For Pregnancy, Birth And Recovery," Columbia.** Fonda's first "Workout Record" climbed into the top 15 this spring. While this followup had a more limited potential audience, one would still have expected it to climb higher than 117.

3. **"Steve Miller Band Live," Capitol.** Miller must like to keep us guessing. His "Circle Of Love" was a "miss" in 1981 when it peaked at 26, but last year's "Abracadabra" was a decided hit when it climbed to number three. Miller returns to the "miss" column with this live set which stopped at 125.

4. **"Beatitude," Ric Ocasek, Gef-**

fen. Solo albums by group leaders are hard to gauge. Lionel Richie's first album apart from the Commodores is a multi-platinum smash, but Ocasek's first album away from the Cars stalled at 28 and failed to even go gold. By comparison, all four Cars albums are platinum.

5. **"Tougher Than Leather," Willie Nelson, Columbia.** Nelson reached number two and platinum with his last album, "Always On My Mind," which makes the number 39 peak of this followup a particular disappointment. The main problem: the lack of a multi-format smash single like "Always."

6. **"Money & Cigarettes," Eric Clapton, Warner Bros.** This album peaked at number 16, which is cer-

tainly no disgrace. But better things might reasonably have been expected from it, since it was Clapton's Warner Bros. debut. All of the artist's RSO albums went gold, which this did not.

7. **"Famous Last Words," Supertramp, A&M.** This album came out at the end of '82, but we gave it extra time to kick in. It never did, at least not to the degree of its predecessor, 1979's "Breakfast In America." That smash album logged six months in the top 10; this gold followup was in and out of the top 10 in seven weeks.

8. **"Records," Foreigner, Atlantic.** This had the earmarks of a monster album: all 10 cuts had been top 20 singles, and all four of the group's
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past albums had gone platinum. But the album was only a moderate hit, peaking at 10 and stopping at gold.

9. **"Powerlight," Earth, Wind & Fire, Columbia.** When this album peaked at number 12 this spring, it became the group's first release to fall short of the top 10 since 1974's "Open Our Eyes." That was especially disappointing because the group's last album, 1981's "Raise!," went top five and platinum.

10. **"The Final Cut," Pink Floyd, Columbia.** This is another album that did reasonably well, just not as well as had been expected. Pink Floyd's last studio album, "The Wall," logged 15 weeks at No. 1; this followup may not even manage 15 weeks in the top 100. In its 14th chart week, it drops to 83.

But the charts have also carried pleasant surprises. Here are some albums that did appreciably better than expected.

1. **"Let's Dance," David Bowie, EMI America.** Everyone expected this album to be a hit; it's the magnitude of its success that's surprising. The album is top five and platinum; the title track hit No. 1 and gold. Apart from a duet with Queen, Bowie hadn't reached the singles top 40 since 1976.

2. **"Pyromania," Def Leppard, Mercury.** This album has been in the top 10 for the past 18 weeks, and has climbed as high as number two. That's a quantum leap from the group's last album, "High & Dry," which peaked at 38.

3. **"Sergio Mendes," A&M, and "Killer On The Rampage," Eddy Grant, Portrait.** Former group leaders Mendes and Grant are back in the top 40 for the first time in 15 years with their singles "Never Gonna Let You Go" and "Electric Avenue." All the airplay is having the desired effect on the respective albums, which are also posted in the top 40.

4. **"All This Love," DeBarge, Gordy.** The biggest surprise of the past six months in terms of a better-than-expected performance may be the phenomenal ratings racked up by the "Motown 25" special. The exposure from that show helped this album climb to 24 on the pop chart, whereas the group had never before cracked the top 200.

5. **"Computer Games," George Clinton, Capitol.** Clinton made it back to number 40 on the top pop chart with this album, his best showing since his heyday in 1978 and '79

when he routinely hit big with Parliament, Funkadelic and Bootsy. Alternate picks: **Mtume's "Juicy Fruit," Epic,** and **Gladys Knight & the Pips' "Visions," Columbia.** All three acts scored on the strength of No. 1 black singles; respectively, "Atomic Dog," "Juicy Fruit" and "Save The Overtime For Me."

6. **"1999," Prince, Warner Bros.** This album has gone platinum and amassed seven weeks in the top 10, events that seemed unlikely when its first single, "1999," fell short of the top 40 last winter. But "Little Red Corvette" turned it around, and the rerelease of "1999" has kept it going.

7. **"Kihnsspiracy," Greg Kihn Band, Beserkley,** and **"Outside/Inside," the Tubes, Capitol.** Big things have been predicted for years for both of these acts. It all came together this year, in the form of top 10 singles ("Jeopardy," "She's A Beauty") and top 20 albums.

8. **"Cuts Like A Knife," Bryan Adams, A&M.** Adams' last album, "You Want It, You Got It," peaked at number 118 on the Billboard chart. This followup has already climbed 110 notches higher, and produced two top 30 singles.

9. **"Head Hunter," Krokus, Arista,** and **"Piece Of Mind," Iron Maiden, Capitol.** Heavy metal lives, via these current top 25 albums. Krokus' last set, "One Vice At A Time," peaked at 53; Iron Maiden's last effort, "The Number of The Beast," stopped at 35.

10. **"War," U2, Island.** This album climbed as high as number 12 a few months ago, a striking jump from the group's last album, "October," which peaked at 104.